Growing Up in the Transnational Family: Latino Adolescents
Adapting to Late Immigration and Family Reunification

by

Naomi A. Schapiro

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Nursing

in the

GRADUATE DIVISION

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

Growing Up in the Transnational Family: Latino Adolescents Adapting to Late

Immigration and Family Reunification

Naomi A. Schapiro

Abstract

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to explore the process of family

separation and reunification for Latino immigrant adolescents who have been separated

from their parents for at least four years during immigration, in the context of

transnational economic and family ties and changing gender roles. Focus groups,

individual interviews and participant observation were used to gather data from 20

Mexican and Central American immigrant adolescents. In their varied descriptions of life

in their home country, they experienced pervasive interpersonal and community trauma,

including gang threats in their home country that impelled migration. Using dimensional

analysis, an approach to the generation of grounded theory, a conceptual model was

developed, Believing in a Better Life, to explain the conditions that facilitated and

hindered family re-engagement and overall adaptation. Adolescents used four strategies

to reconnect: 1) letting time take its course, 2) reconnecting through crises, 3) isolating

and holding a grudge, and 4) telling their story and actively renegotiating parent-child

relationships. Most youth were reuniting with single mothers, and young men were

disadvantaged in two ways: they had experienced more trauma before migration and used

less active strategies to reconnect with their parents than young women.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Prepared for journal submission

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction

I was working at San Francisco General Hospital in the 1980s when a nine-year old girl who had recently arrived from Guatemala surprised us all by asking to have her mother leave the room during her physical examination. Soon after, a hospitalized teenager told me that she cried every day for her grandmother who had raised her in El Salvador and was unable to connect with her mother. Both children had mothers who had fled civil wars in their home countries and sent for their children after separations of many years. While sensitized to their situations by prior life experiences, I did not know how to help them begin the reconstruction of their family life in the United States (US).

When I first started writing papers on this topic during my Masters program (1994- 1996), I had to go back to World War II era studies on the effects of separation on children and the only contemporary studies of serial migration and maternal separation were the groundbreaking work about immigrant mothers by Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered transitions: Mexican experiences of immigration* (1994), one study of children of European migrant workers (Dikaiou, 1989) and a small case study of group therapy with Caribbean migrant adolescents in Canada by Glasgow and Gouse-Sheese (1995). The obvious and helpful conceptual model used to describe the behaviors and difficulties of reconnecting separated children and their parents was Bowlby's attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973, 1977, 1980, 1988).

By the time I returned to doctoral study in 2006, there had been an explosion of research on this topic, and the difficulty now is in keeping up with the pace of the literature. There has also been an explosion in theorizing about the place of international migration in the globalized economy (Isaksen, Devi, & Hochschild, 2008; Levitt &

Jaworsky, 2007), the gendered effects of migration on mothers and children (Dreby,

2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005;

Schmalzbauer, 2004), and the concept of a transnational family interacting in real time

with the aide of globalized media and new technologies (Appadurai, 1996; Lan, 2006;

Rouse, 1991; Schmalzbauer, 2004).

In developing the approach to this study, I have been greatly influenced by the

writings of Carola Suárez-Orozco (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008;

Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002) and Celia Falicov (Falicov, 2005, 2007) on

their research and clinical work with transnational families and for introducing me to the

concept of ambiguous loss (Boss, 1999, 2006). I have also found resonance in the

writings of Arlie Hochschild about the management of emotions (1979;1998/2003), the

differences between the gendered narrative and the lived reality of families (Hochschild

& Machung, 1989/2003) and the influence of monetary transactions on the

transformation of caring relationships in transnational families (Isaksen et al., 2008).

Finally, as a nurse practitioner who continues to work with adolescents,

immigrant and otherwise, I have been encouraged by the recent trend to strength-based

approaches to clinical work in pediatric and adolescent care (Duncan, 2007; Ginsburg,

2011) and from this clinical influence returned to the resilience literature (Luthar,

Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten & Obradovic, 2006).

Significance of the Problem

Migration-related family separation and reunification are not just confined to

countries experiencing war or political upheaval. As many as 80% of children who

immigrate to the US in late childhood have been separated from one or both parents,

living with relatives in their home country for several years while their parents work in the US (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002). An emerging body of research describes difficulties with both family separation and reunification, yet few studies explore the meaning of these transitions, especially reunification, from the viewpoint of the adolescent.

Migrating mothers may now be as prevalent as migrating fathers (Cerrutti & Massey, 2001), and may stay in the host country longer than male compatriots (Isaksen et al.,2008), with lengthy separations from their children. Long-distance parenting with paid or family caretakers in the home country are characteristic of transnational families, with social, economic and emotional ties that span national borders (Falicov, 2005; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

Latino youth in general and Latino immigrant youth in particular are at risk for a number of poor health outcomes, including higher rates of depression, substance use (Eaton et al., 2012), pregnancy and birth rates (Ventura, Abma, Mosher, & Henshaw, 2009), and failure to complete high school (Child Trends Data Bank, 2007). Family interdependence and parental support may promote adolescent strengths (Ong, Phinney, & Dennis, 2006), while family disruption and separation have been shown to adversely affect mental health outcomes in children and parents, both in Mexico and the US (Aguilera-Guzman, de Snyder, Romero, & Medina-Mora, 2004; Borges, et al., 2009; Rivera, et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2002).

There is a growing body of literature describing the problems that occur during immigration-related family reunification from the adolescent's point of view (Artico, 2003; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Lashley, 2000) and their potential long-term effects (Arnold, 2006; Smith, et al., 2004). There are studies

documenting greater pre-migration stress (Aguilera-Guzman, et al., 2004; Pribilsky, 2001) and poorer post-migration adaptation (Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002, 2008) in boys relative to girls.

However, the literature remains problem-focused, does not explore factors contributing to successful family reunifications, does not tease out the impact of gender on family reunification and may still be studied more from the parent's point of view (Mazzucato & Schan, 2011). In addition, there are gaps in the nursing literature. In the scant nursing literature on migration-related family separation, research has focused on adult and parent perspectives (Boehm, 2011; McGuire & Georges, 2003; McGuire & Martin, 2007; Sternberg, 2010; Sternberg & Barry, 2011), with some literature reviews on globalization (Brush & Vasupuram, 2006; Duffy, 2001), and two literature reviews on adolescent adaptation (James, 1997; Schapiro, 2002). There is no nursing research on family reunification. The goal of this study, therefore, is to better understand the experience of Latino immigrant youth in order to optimize their successful family reunification and ultimately improve health outcomes.

Dissertation Study

The specific aim of this grounded theory study was to explore the subjective process of family separation and reunification for Latino immigrant adolescents who have been separated from their parents for at least 4 years during immigration, in the context of transnational economic and family ties and changing gender roles. The following research questions were addressed through focus groups, individual interviews and participant observation:

What is the process by which Latino adolescents and their parents maintain and/or re-establish family ties during and after prolonged separation during immigration? What are the strengths and protective factors that help adolescents and their families to reunify successfully? How do they define or describe successful reunification? How do adolescents make meaning out of the prolonged separation and reunification process? Does the process of family reunification differ by the adolescent's gender and the gender of the parent from whom they have been separated?

How do family separation and reunification affect the adolescent's adaptation to the host community and educational system?

Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed in the language of the interview (usually Spanish) and translated and coded in both languages together using Atlas ti, with as many as 183 open and in vivo codes at the broadest data expansion. Analysis and data collection occurred simultaneously using constant comparative analysis, situational mapping and dimensional analysis. Several important concepts were auditioned as the organizing perspective for an explanatory matrix, with "Believing in a better life" ultimately chosen as the perspective that most clearly illuminated the experiences of separated and reunified Latino immigrant youth and addressed all of the research questions. Methodology will be described in more detail in Chapter 4. The overall conceptual model will be described in Chapter 6, with additional findings described in Chapters 5 and 7 and implications in Chapter 8.

Brief Findings

Two focus groups were conducted with high-school aged peer educator trainees at two participating community organizations to refine outreach and interview questions.

Twenty youth aged 16-19, 8 girls and 12 boys, were interviewed once or twice for a total of 26 interviews. Youth came from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, and their legal status ranged from permanent resident to undocumented. Only 4 of the 20 youth migrated to rejoin a biological mother and father who were still married to each other, 1 migrated to join his father, and 15 migrated to rejoin a single mother. Some parents prepared their children for the separation well in advance of their leaving, while others left in the middle of the night or used more active methods of deception. Some youth were too young to remember their parent(s) leaving, while others described periods of intense mourning. Some youths reported warm, loving and supportive caretakers, while others told stories of frequent moves, caregiver fatigue and sometimes abuse and abandonment by relatives.

Communication with distant parents ranged from lengthy daily phone calls discussing important content and frequent web chats to brief and superficial weekly calls. In many cases the youth wanted to migrate to the United States, while in other cases they were pressured by their parents to come or were forced to flee after threats of violence from local gangs or drug cartels. The majority of youth traveled "through the desert" with a guide paid for by their parent(s), making the trip without an adult family member. These journeys were dangerous and life-changing experiences, and the details were rarely shared with their parents on arrival. After an initial warm and emotional reunion, adjustments to family life, school and the community were variable among the study participants. For some youth, family re-engagement proceeded successfully despite lengthy separations from early childhood, adverse caretaking experiences and blended family constellations on arrival. Other youth who rejoined two-parent families after a

relatively brief time apart were struggling to reconnect emotionally and thought about returning to their home countries. Gender had variable impacts, as most but not all young women described more family obligations and more skills at re-engaging with the parents, and most but not all young men reported more difficulty in discussing their feelings and finding same-gender role models. Siblings and other extended family members in both countries often helped broker re-engagements between youth and their parents. Friendships in the US were often compared unfavorably with remembered friendships in their home country. Adjustment to school was greatly influenced by the speed with which the immigrant youth was able to learn English, as well as by supportive teachers and school health staff. Almost no youth endorsed significant educational help from family members, no matter how close their relationships or how much guidance they received from parents or step-parents in other areas.

Dissertation Chapters

Chapter 2- Theoretical Underpinnings

Chapter 3 – Literature review, prepared for submission to *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health*

Chapter 4- Methodology

Chapter 5- Chronological description of findings related to maintaining and re-establishing family ties

Chapter 6 – Conceptual Model: Believing in a Better Life, prepared for submission to *Qualitative Health Research*

Chapter 7 –Telling My Story, prepared for submission to *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*

Chapter 8 - Discussion and Implications

Chapter 2: Theoretical Underpinnings of the Research

In deductive research, a theoretical framework informs the hypotheses that are developed and then tested in gathering and analyzing data. In abductive research such as grounded theory (GT), all possible theoretical explanations for the data are considered, and hypotheses are generated during the data collection and then further tested, pursuing the most "plausible explanation" for the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006, p. 104). Given this approach, grounded theorists have had an uncomfortable relationship with the concept of a pre-existing theoretical framework. Glaser (1992) believed that the researcher was an observer who tried to remove all preconceptions in order to allow theory to emerge from the data. Others have contended that the researcher, with all of the background in the literature of his or her discipline, is part of the data and that removing all preconceptions is not possible (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Although Clarke embraced the researcher's prior theoretical knowledge, she cautioned against using "received theory" as a substitute for doing one's own analysis (Clarke, 2005, p. 13). Charmaz recommended that the researcher put aside pre-existing theories while working on data analysis, returning to them after analysis is complete.

In this chapter, I will review two major theoretical frameworks that have informed my general approach to the phenomenon of parent-child separation and reunification in the context of international migration and transnational family life: attachment theory and the theory of ambiguous loss. I will address each theory's origins, major assumptions and propositions, and research validation. Other migration research that has referenced these theories will be reviewed. Finally, I will discuss ways in which these theories have informed and shaped my approach to the research.

Attachment Theory

Origins of attachment theory. John Bowlby (1980) was trained as a psychoanalyst, but found that traditional theory by Freud and his adherents did not adequately explain the effects of short-term maternal deprivation and the behaviors in which children engaged on reunification with their mothers. According to Bowlby (1988), Freudians derived their theories about mourning in young children from inferences made during psychoanalysis of disturbed adult clients. He began, on the other hand, to prospectively study normal infants and children who experienced temporary separations from and reunifications with their parents, in order to make generalizations about their mourning behaviors.

By studying the behavior of children during a separation from their mothers for periods of days to weeks, and then their behavior when reunited with their mothers, Bowlby (1973) became convinced that contemporary theorists generally underestimated both the young child's capacity for mourning and the depth of the child's anger when reunited with the attachment figure. Robertson, a British social worker and colleague of Bowlby's who had been placed as a conscientious objector to work in Anna Freud's nursery for displaced and orphaned children in England during World War II, had identified three phases of separation response in children (Bretherton, 1992): protest (related to separation anxiety), despair (related to grief) and denial or detachment (related to defense mechanisms). Bowlby (1980) elaborated on the concept of detachment to characterize the behavior of a child who has been reunited with his or her mother after a separation. In detachment, the child does not exhibit any attachment behaviors to the mother. Bowlby and Robertson found that children who were in an institutional

environment experienced longer periods of detachment after reunification with their parents than children who were in a more social environment (Bowlby, 1973).

Mary Ainsworth worked with Bowlby on his early research in London, and then conducted naturalistic observations of mothers and infants in Uganda and in the United States (US) (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). During these observations, Ainsworth noted three styles of maternal-infant interaction, which she labeled securely attached, insecurely attached and nonattached. A fourth style, insecure-disorganized-disoriented, was associated with children whose mothers had been severely traumatized, and was added later by Main, Kaplan and Cassidy (1985). Ainsworth and Main further developed research on attachment styles, described below.

Assumptions of attachment theory. The assumptions for attachment theory are drawn from ethology, or the study of animal behavior in natural settings (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1982). Bowlby (1980) described attachment behavior as "any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual" (p. 39). From an ethological perspective, the biological role of attachment was seen to be protection of the young, as both the newborn animal and the mother engaged in behaviors designed to keep the young animal in close proximity to the mother: the young animal both cried out to and moved toward the mother, and the mother preferentially sought out and moved toward her young (Bowlby, 1982). Bowlby found confirmation of his theories in Harlow's monkey experiments, in which infant monkeys preferred bodily contact to a mother figure even without food, to food without contact (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). These experiments were actually designed after Harlow had been exposed to Bowlby's initial work (Haraway, 1989).

While initially trained in the object relations school of psychoanalysis associated with Melanie Klein, Bowlby broke away from psychoanalytic assumptions of basic drives as explanations of infant and child behavior (Osofsky, 1995). He was also influenced by both cognitive and systems theories (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991), and these theories may have led to his assertion that infants developed internal cognitive working models of relationship based on the responses of their primary caretakers to their attachment seeking behaviors.

Propositions of attachment theory. Attachment theory encompasses a rich and complex body of propositions that have been refined by many subsequent adherents and researchers (Bretherton, 1992). For the purposes of this chapter, I will review mechanisms of attachment, internal working models of the infant, the concept of a secure base, the existence and depth of infant mourning behaviors, and detachment.

Bowlby (1980, 1988) described attachment as a homeostatic control mechanism that is preferentially responsive to a small number of familial caregivers, maintaining the relationship with the attachment figure within certain limits of distance and accessibility. In human infants, attachment behaviors included "active proximity- and contact-seeking behaviors such as approaching, following, and clinging, and signaling behaviors such as smiling, crying, and calling" (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970, p. 50).

Bowlby (1973) proposed that infants developed an internal working model of the world including "who his attachment figures are, where they may be found, and how they may be expected to respond" (p. 203). Similarly, the working model that the infant builds of self, in response to caregiver reactions, includes how "acceptable or unacceptable" she is in the eyes of her attachment figures (p. 203). He asserted that the infant's response to

potentially fearful situations was partly dependent on predictions of how available the attachment figures were going to be. Bowlby (1973; Bretherton, 1992) also felt that attachment patterns stabilized and could be transmitted intergenerationally.

In humans as in studies of other animals with prolonged infancy, Ainsworth and Bowlby described a balance between attachment and exploratory behaviors, as the young animal (or human) would not acquire necessary knowledge and skills without an interest in novel features of the environment (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Ainsworth and Bell noted that the infants explored their environment more during the mothers' presence than during their absence, using her as a "secure base" (p. 61) from which to explore. Infants would move away from the mother to play with toys in a laboratory setting, periodically seeking the mother's attention through noises, visual searches, and moving partway toward the mother. These exploring behaviors would decrease markedly when the mother was out of the room.

Mourning was defined by Bowlby (1980) as "all the psychological processes, conscious and unconscious, that are set in train by loss" (p.18). In contrast to psychoanalysts who trained him (Osofsky, 1995), Bowlby felt that infants were capable of mourning an attachment figure and that this mourning could take healthy or pathological forms. He used Anna Freud's definition of healthy mourning as the recognition that a change has occurred in the external world and the individual must make a change in his interior world, including a change in attachment figures (Bowlby, 1980). Pathological mourning was defined as either a failure to recognize the loss of the attachment figure or a failure to re-orient attachments.

Bowlby (1980) described the defensive process of detachment as the failure of a young child to engage in attachment behaviors when reunited with the attachment figure (usually the mother) after a period of separation. He suggested that defensive processes constituted a normal part of mourning at every age and that pathology was characterized not by their occurrence, but by the forms they take and especially the degree to which they are reversible. According to Bowlby, defensive processes were apt to stabilize and persist in infants and children. He theorized that early grief could have devastating effects on the child's later development, by changing the pathway of that development. He cited case studies of clients whose abilities to engage in adult relationships and capacities to experience an emotional life were blocked by an inability to reactivate attachment behaviors (Bowlby, 1988). Adults whose own parental attachment had been disrupted developed what he termed compulsive self-reliance (Bowlby, 1977).

The Strange Situation research. As an adjunct to periodic naturalistic observations of mother-infant dyads during the first year of life, Ainsworth proposed a laboratory experiment for year-old children that would simulate features of separation from the mother, features of stranger approach, and features of a novel environment. Ainsworth and a series of colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Ainsworth & Bell, 1970) conducted the Strange Situation research, in which a 12-month-old was introduced into a previously-unknown room with toys, separated from the mother for several minutes, given the opportunity to interact with a stranger, and reunited, separated and reunited again with the mother, in a series of standardized episodes (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Infants who protested loudly when the mother left them in the strange situation, greeted the mother with attachment behaviors (crying, smiling,

approaching, clinging) on her return, and then quickly returned to exploration, were

considered to be securely attached. Other infants who either avoided the mother on her

return during the strange situation or displayed some rejecting and some approaching

behaviors were classified as avoidant and ambivalent-resistant, respectively (Ainsworth

et al., 1978; Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). These behaviors were considered to be two

different variations of insecure attachment.

Research validating and expanding attachment theory. A search of attachment

theory through databases such as PubMed, PsycINFO and CINAHL will bring up

hundreds of studies. Only two longitudinal studies will be mentioned here, as they

support the robustness and stability of attachment styles, as well as the interaction of

attachment styles with environmental factors.

Main (1996) developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), designed to elicit adults'

views of their attachment styles with their own parents. Categories on the AAI were

found to predict attachment styles of the subjects' own children in the Strange Situation

procedure. Main, Hesse and Kaplan (2005) followed low risk children for 19 years in the

Berkeley Longitudinal Study, assessing their attachment styles using the Strange

Situation technique, observing their reunion responses at age 6 after a separation of one

hour while parents were interviewed and given the AAI, and finally administering the

AAI to the study children when they reached 19 years. They found that attachment styles

on the Strange Situation experience generally predicted attachment styles on the AAI.

A 30-year longitudinal study of children of disadvantaged mothers was conducted

in Minnesota (Vaughn, Egeland, Sroufe, & Waters, 1979). Following Ainsworth's

strange situation procedures exactly, 22% of children were insecurely attached at one

year, more than double the 10% noted in Ainsworth's study, and an even higher percentage of toddlers was found to be insecurely attached at 18 months. The researchers felt that this change was due to stresses and instability in the family's lives. At the study's end, initial attachment styles were somewhat predictive of later mental health outcomes, with a secure attachment style related to self-regulation and social competence. There were, however, many additional mediating factors, including parenting behaviors in the realms of stimulation and limit-setting that were not measurable through attachment, and stressors and social supports outside of the nuclear family (Sroufe, 2005).

Uses of attachment theory in immigrant studies. The cross-cultural validity of attachment styles and interpretations of the Strange Situation have been challenged and defended (Artico, 2003; Behrens, 2010; Peluso, Miranda, Firpo-Jimenez, & Pham, 2010; Rothbaum, Rosen, Ujiie, & Uchida, 2002), and that controversy is beyond the scope of this chapter. Whether or not attachment is merely a reflection of Western cultural assumptions about the psyche, it has a broad appeal among clinicians and researchers in helping to explain observed behavior (Osofsky, 1995). Attachment has been cited as part of the theoretical framework for several contemporary studies about families who have been separated and then reunited through immigration (Arnold, 2006; Artico, 2001, 2003; Black, 2006; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Lemy, 2000; Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002).

Glasgow and Gouse-Sheese (1995) used attachment theory to explain the difficulties of Caribbean adolescents reuniting with their parents in Canada. In case reports of therapy groups they ran in the Toronto school system, they noted that the adolescents expressed anger and resentment at the prolonged separation, and did not

respond to parental attempts at caretaking following reunification. Parents, after having their overtures rebuffed, developed hypercritical and rejecting behaviors. Adolescents were discouraged from mourning the loss of their childhood substitute caretakers in their home countries. And, in their current situation, neither parent nor child was given the opportunity to express disappointment in their relationships, which the authors saw as an essential step towards reconnection. These findings resonate with Bowlby's (1980) descriptions of mourning behaviors and detachment. In Arnold's (2006) interviews with young adults from the Caribbean who had been reunited with parents in England after prolonged separations, research participants described being physically at a loss as to whether to hug the parents they barely recognized or rebuff their advances, in classic description of ambivalent attachment style (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970).

Other research is more equivocal. In a study of 119 Haitian adolescents in the US, some of whom had been separated from their parents during early childhood, Lemy (2000) did not find more problematic behavior among previously separated youth than among comparison youth who had not experienced parental separation. Young men who had been separated from their parents were more likely to express anxieties about future separations relative to non-separated youth, but previously separated young women expressed less anxiety about future separations. In Hine-St. Hilaire's (2008) study of 12 adolescent-mother West Indian dyads in the US, the adolescents' length of separation, their age at separation, experience during separation, and quality of childcare during separation, all affected their subjective ability to adapt to life in the US. In most participants, separation during infancy or early childhood negatively affected their ability

to re-engage emotionally with their mothers. Presence of extended family members was particularly important in facilitating adaptation.

Theory of Ambiguous Loss

Origins of the theory. The theory of ambiguous loss was developed by Pauline Boss after working with families of pilots who were Missing In Action (MIA) during the War in Vietnam. Ambiguous loss is defined as grief that is "unclear, indeterminate" (Boss, 1999, p. 6), either because of a lack of knowledge, or because of a lack of clarity as to whether the individual is in the family or not. There are two types of ambiguous loss: in which a family member is physically absent, but psychologically present (such as a missing person or a spouse after divorce) or physically present, but psychologically absent (such as in someone with dementia or brain damage).

Assumptions of ambiguous loss theory. Ambiguous loss is based on a family stress model (Boss, 1999; 1988), in which the therapeutic approach is to help families who are in distress to manage the load of pressures and events that temporarily overwhelm them. The underlying assumptions come from family stress theories (Boss, 1988) and from symbolic interaction (SI), particularly the concept that a stressed family constructs its own symbolic reality from shared meanings and role expectations with the family and that this psychological reality may differ from physical or legal family structures (Boss, 2007; 1999; 1988). A second assumption involves family boundary ambiguity, which is defined as a lack of clarity about who is considered inside the family and who is not, as well as lack of clarity as to the roles that each family member plays (Boss & Greenberg, 1984; Carroll, Olson, & Buckmiller, 2007). While loss as an external situation is assumed to be neutral, the degree of perceived boundary ambiguity has

"valence," with higher boundary ambiguity leading to more negative outcomes (Boss, 2007, p. 106). Third, a family's tolerance for ambiguity is influenced by cultural beliefs and values. Fourth, in situations of ambiguous loss, "truth is unattainable and therefore relative," (Boss, 2007, p. 106). Fifth, ambiguous loss is a relational, rather than an individual phenomenon. Sixth, resiliency in families is "natural" and resilience is related to the family's ability to find meaning in an ambiguous situation (Boss, 2007, p. 107). Finally, the phenomenon of ambiguous loss exists whether or not it can be measured. Although Boss developed a boundary ambiguity scale as she was developing the theory, (Boss & Greenberg, 1984; Carroll et al., 2007), she has since moved away from quantitative measures of ambiguous loss and has more recently advocated interpretive evaluations of the phenomenon (Boss, 2007).

Propositions of ambiguous loss theory. In ambiguous loss theory, Boss (1999) proposed that stress is caused by change, or the threat of change, in the composition of the family and in the boundaries of "who is performing what roles and tasks within the family system" (Boss & Greenberg, 1984, p. 536). The situation, not the family, is seen to be sick, although family members may be adapting in more or less functional ways. The stress of ambiguous loss persists, as there is no closure in the traditional sense of grieving and at times the loss itself may be disenfranchised, as in the failure of infertility treatment or the break-up of a lesbian couple with children (Boss, 2007; Boss, Roos, & Harris, 2011). Disenfranchised loss is defined as a loss that is not "recognized, validated, or supported by the social world of the mourner" (Walter & McCoyd, 2009, p. 18).

Despite the ongoing nature of the loss, individuals and family members have the potential to recover and thrive by learning how to manage the stress. Information should

be shared with the family, even if that information is "I don't know what the outcome will be" (Boss, 1999, p. 23). In contrast to traditional grief, ambiguous loss often involves ongoing losses, as in reminders of a distant parent, or a series of continuing losses, as with the decline of a loved one with a debilitating disease (Boss, 2010).

Research validating and expanding ambiguous loss theory. In a 30-year review of family boundary ambiguity, Carroll and colleagues (2007) found 37 published research studies and 18 dissertations using boundary ambiguity as a primary variable. In early studies, Boss established construct validation of a Psychological Presence Scale (Boss, 1977), later renamed the Boundary Ambiguity Scale (Carroll et al., 2007). At three-year follow-up, low psychological presence of a missing father was the strongest predictor of good wife and family functioning outcomes as measured by quantitative personal/emotional adjustment and family environment scales (Boss, 1980). In a recent overview of ambiguous loss theory, Boss (2007) suggested that even though boundary ambiguity can be measured quantitatively, the larger construct of ambiguous loss lent itself to more qualitative methods, as a socially constructed perception of relationships and grief that changes over time.

Two recent research studies of children who have been separated from parents have cited ambiguous loss as a theoretical framework. Lee and Whiting (2007) interviewed 23 children in foster care and documented the response of 182 foster children, from ages 2 to 10, to pictures of a puppy shown in relationship to his family. Through open coding (specific methodology not described), the researchers found many themes related to ambiguous loss theory, such as "frozen" grief (p. 419), confusion distress and ambivalence, and uncertainty leading to immobilization. They suggested that

20

professionals in the field should be helped to understand the confusion, helplessness and displaced rage of children in foster care as normative, rather than pathological, and that the "lens" of ambiguous loss (p. 427) might lead to more helpful interventions.

Bocknek, Sanderson and Britner (2009) interviewed 35 school-aged children with incarcerated parents who were involved in a mentoring program, for a mixed methods descriptive single-group design. In addition to a number of quantitative scales measuring family support, emotional functioning and post-traumatic symptoms, semi-structured interviews covered topics of family relations, coping and context. The authors indicated that the topics were guided by ambiguous loss theory and open coding was guided by grounded theory methodology. Findings showed high levels of emotional stress and post-traumatic symptoms, and qualitative data indicated a lack of clarity about the whereabouts or reasons for incarceration of parents, as well as tendencies to avoid uncomfortable feelings. The authors noted that the intake interview for the mentoring program often provided the first opportunity for children to tell about the ongoing trauma in their lives.

Uses of ambiguous loss theory in immigrant studies. Researchers studying immigrant families from Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America have turned at least tentatively to this theory (Pottinger, 2005; Rousseau, Rufagari, Bagilishya, & Measham, 2004), sometimes in conjunction with attachment theory (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). In the narrative research conducted by Rousseau and colleagues with Congolese refugee parents, the political refugees in their study had generally spent extended periods in boarding schools as adolescents and had a greater expressed understanding of the

ambivalent feelings their children might express on reunification. The authors felt that these previous parental experiences aided in parent-child reunification.

A modified grounded theory study of the *Lost Boys* of the Sudan was conducted with 10 Sudanese male survivors of an Ethiopian refugee camp who had been separated from family in Sudan and were resettled with relatives in the US between 2000 and 2001 (Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson, & Rana, 2009). The authors were guided by both ambiguous loss theory and "emergent theory" from the participants themselves (Luster et al., 2009, p. 204). Interviews were conducted by two researchers and coded by a team of four coders, progressing from open coding to axial coding and finally selective coding, using Strauss & Corbin's (1990) grounded theory methodology. Findings were reported in three sections: experiences of ambiguous loss and separation from parents, individual coping strategies, relationships with peers and elders in the refugee camps, and community and culture. Every participant was still separated from at least one parent, whose whereabouts was unknown. Notable findings included the positive impact of a culture in which adults shared responsibilities for all youth, previous experiences of separation from parents as part of tribal customs, and the ability to share experiences with peers, who were perceived as second families. In contrast to the wives of MIA soldiers, for whom the psychological presence of the missing husband impeded recovery, for these youth the psychological presence of their missing parents was described as a source of comfort and of internalized moral expectations.

Synthesis and Foundations of Current Research

Youth who have been separated from their parent(s) at a young age may or may not have developed secure attachment to their primary caretaker – who may have been

their mother, may have been their grandmother or aunt. Although it might be ideal to follow families prospectively from the birth of the child through migration-related separations and reunifications, accounting for attachment styles, temperament, community stressors, and social protective factors, like the Minnesota longitudinal study (Sroufe, 2005), longterm binational studies are logistically difficult to conduct. In addition, it is hard to predict which parents, especially mothers, are going to migrate, which transnational families will reunify in the destination country, and which children in those families will agree to or need to migrate.

Attachment theory was originally developed through close observation of mother-infant pairs and of children in institutional settings, such as hospitals and foster care nurseries, who had been separated from their parents. In a way, the translation of ethological animal studies to observational studies of humans in naturalistic settings was very much like ethnographic research, although it was not labeled as such. The descriptions of both attachment behaviors and mourning behaviors would fit standards for rigor currently used in qualitative research, such as rich description, prolonged engagement with the literature, multiple examples and variations of feeling (Charmaz, 2009; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

Some key concepts of attachment theory can be useful in studying migration-related separations and reunifications. The internal working models that young people develop of their attachment figures and how they may be expected to respond may be able to carry them through prolonged separations from their attachment figure, and may help sustain beliefs that the temporary separation is for the best. Some youth are more adventurous and flexible than others when arriving in a new country, and these

differences may be partly temperamental and partly based on their attachment styles. In the ideal settings, safe home country environments with warm and responsive alternate caregivers who are known to the child, the child may be well-attached to their caregiver, and the disruption may occur when they have to rejoin a parent.

Mourning behaviors and defensive processes such as detachment are relevant to family reunification studies. Adolescents and their mothers relate to each other in very different ways than mother-infant pairs, and yet when Caribbean youth in Canada rebuffed their parents' attempts at affectionate outreach (Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995), they were exhibiting detachment, as described classically by Bowlby (1980). When Caribbean parents and their teenaged daughters did not know how to greet each other after long separation in England (Arnold, 2006), they were having difficulty re-engaging in attachment behaviors.

In line with Bowlby's emphasis on the importance of family relationships in child therapy, he published a paper in 1949 about his successes in interviewing parents about their past traumatic experiences in front of their children, credited as the first published paper about family therapy (Bretherton, 1992). This approach has been used in other work with traumatized families and is similar to one aspect of Boss's (2006) assertion that sharing information and stories can help families live with ambiguity.

Among the key concepts in ambiguous loss that may be applicable to work with separated and reunified families are the concepts of disenfranchised loss or grief and the value of holding and tolerating mixed feelings and ambiguity of family roles (Boss, 2010). When parents leave, caretakers in the home country may have difficulty acknowledging the child's ongoing loss of the parent. When children migrate to rejoin

their parents, it may be thought of as the happy ending to the story, instead of a time of mixed emotions and grieving for caretakers, family and friends in the home country. Using ambiguous loss theory, the child can be encouraged to acknowledge both the joy of seeing a parent and the sorrow of missing a grandparent, the excitement of new school and neighborhood and the pain of saying goodbye to close friends.

Ambiguous loss was originally developed for work with adults (1999) and adult children in families. However, recent research has shown its applicability to children and adolescents (Bocknek et al., 2009; Lee & Whiting, 2007; Luster et al., 2009). Falicov (2003, 2005, 2008), a family therapist who has written much on therapeutic work with transnational families, also includes ambiguous loss approaches in her work with reunifying families (Falicov, 2007), specifically having family members tell each other their migration histories, and validating all caretakers in the multigenerational transnational family.

Theories of attachment and ambiguous loss were used to inform the design and implementation of this research, "Growing up the in the transnational family: Latino adolescents adapting to late immigration and family reunification." Specific aims that were underpinned by these theoretical perspectives include the processes of separation and reunification, strengths and protective factors that helped families to reunify, and the meanings that adolescents make out of separation and reunification.

Interview themes were characterized by questions about relationships with caretakers in both home and host countries, reactions of the adolescent to separation from parents, separation from home country caretakers and ease as well as difficulties with reunification. While my knowledge of this theoretical literature informed design, it was

held in check while engaging in analysis of the research interviews (Charmaz, 2006).

These theories were again useful in the interpretation of the research findings.

Chapter 3: Separation and Reunification: The Experiences of Adolescents Living in

Transnational Families

Formatted and prepared for submission to *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent*

Health

Abstract

There are increasing numbers of mothers as well as fathers who engage in long-term migration to support their children and other family members in their home countries. In this article, the current state of the literature about children and adolescents left at home in these transnational families is surveyed and reviewed. The article reviews the effects on children of the process of separation from parents, the impact of gifts and remittances home, communication with distant parents and the quality of life with their substitute caregivers. The effects of immigration in late childhood or adolescence on these separated children is examined, as well as what is known about the processes of adaptation and family reunification, including migration traumas, impact of gender, and educational outcomes. Suggestions are given for pediatric clinicians working with reunifying families. Gaps in the literature are highlighted and the need for research into factors that promote successful family re-engagement and overall adaptation upon reunification.

In Chicago, a Spanish language television commercial shows a warehouse store where immigrants can buy computers, appliances, and furniture with direct shipping to Mexico and Central America. Fathers enter the store and, in an inset, smiling children, surrounded by tropical greenery wave, and shout "gracias, papi!" In the fictional movie *Under the Same Moon*,[1] and in the journalistic account *Enrique's Journey*,[2] boys travel alone from Mexico and Central America to find and reunite with their mothers who are working in the United States. In film and print, these are stories of transnational families, with social, economic and emotional ties that span national borders.

But what happens at the end of Enrique's journey? How are children faring when their mothers and fathers work countries and continents away, and what happens when families reunite? Do the sacrifices made by parents and children pay off in improved educational, developmental and mental health outcomes for children and families? In this paper, we address issues confronting youth living in transnational families by reviewing the research literature on the effects of migration-related family separation and reunification on children and adolescents, with implications for health care and suggestions for future research.

Significance

There are an estimated 214 million immigrants and refugees worldwide, 20% of whom are in the United States.[3] Unauthorized immigrants comprise approximately 28% of the total U.S. immigrant population.[4] The majority of all U.S. immigrants, as well as the majority of unauthorized immigrants, are from Mexico.[5,6]

In contrast to earlier waves of migration, women are now as likely as men to be the first immigrant in a family[7] and may stay in the host country longer than male compatriots.[8] In fact, nearly half of U. S. migrants are now women.[9] Historically, women have migrated both within and across national borders to improve the lives of their own families by caring for the homes, children and elderly relatives of wealthier women.[8] Currently, many hail from the urban and rural poor in the Caribbean,[10] Mexico and Central America.[11,12] However, in recent years middle class women have joined this migrant stream. Since the 1980s, most female migrants from the Philippines have been college-educated and professionally-trained women who can earn more in domestic work in wealthier countries than they can as professionals at home.[13-15] There has been large-scale internal migration in China,[16] migration out of other South Asian [8,17] and Southeast (SE) Asian countries,[14,18] as well as migration out of Africa,[19] all of which involves maternal-child separation to greater or lesser degrees.

Migrant children and youth

One fifth of US immigrants are children, and 40% of child immigrants are unauthorized.[20] Their proportion in the US population rises with age, accounting for children who migrate in late childhood, often called the 1.5 Generation.[21] Unaccompanied minors, crossing the border without a parent or guardian, have long been an acknowledged and undercounted part of the immigrant stream to the US, [22,23] and at least 20,000 youth may be crossing the border from Mexico alone every year.[24] Numbers and particulars of unaccompanied and other undocumented immigrant youth are largely unknown, as most apprehended youth (over 100,000 in 2006) agree to return to Mexico without formal detention and processing.[22] The majority of detained minors are from

Central America[22] and limited data indicate that most are male and migrating to find work and reunite with parents.[25]

Impact of transnationalism

Transnational families visit, call and participate in decisions and celebrations on both sides of the border, and these ongoing connections have led researchers and clinicians to question traditional concepts and measures of acculturation.[26,27] Anthropologists[28,29] and sociologists[30] have theorized about the impact of modern mass migration on identity formation and the globalization of electronic media that allow migrants and distant family members to be immersed in two cultures simultaneously. Health researchers and clinicians have just begun to understand the impact of these changes on the lives of immigrant families.[27,31-34] As Falicov[31] (p. 339) noted, "Because lives and relations are linked across borders, transnationalism offers an attractive, and at times deceiving, imagined possibility of living with two hearts rather than with one divided heart."

Migration and gender relations

Traditional immigration scholarship viewed families as indivisible units surrounding male wage earners.[8,35] Breaking with this tradition, Hondagneu-Sotelo[33] studied the impact of gender on all aspects of migration, starting a rich and ongoing body of literature about migration in which gender is prominent.[11,14,15,36-45]

How do gender relationships, changing or traditional, impact children in transnational families? While immigrant parents share household chores and childrearing when both are working,[36,39] traditional ideals of father as breadwinner and mother as nurturing parent in the home are remarkably similar across cultures. Immigrant families

from Mexico,[11,45,46] Ecuador,[42] the Dominican Republic,[39] and the Philippines[15,36] describe the father's parenting role as providing economically, engendering respect and disciplining children, while mothers are in charge of emotional and moral development. A father migrating for work without his children is fulfilling the traditional provider role, while a mother who migrates for work is breaking with tradition. While both mothers and fathers in the transnational literature report sadness about their distant children,[38,40,47] only mothers report feeling guilty[40] and the impact of paternal and maternal migrations on parent-child relations may differ.

The children of distant parents: strategies for care

Migrating mothers may leave children at home for economic and political reasons: legal restrictions on immigration and their own ability to pay for better childcare at home.[8,12,14,15] However, others feel that their children receive a better upbringing in their home country,[36,48] are safer and better supervised,[12,49,50] and protected from racial and anti-immigrant prejudice.[51] A study of 157 Mexican and Central American domestic workers in the Los Angeles area found that 75% were mothers, and of these 40% had at least one child living in their home countries.[12]

When mothers are not able to take their children with them, they use a variety of caretaking strategies from a distance, including paying childcare workers[12,52] and placing children with family members, such as grandmothers, aunts, or older sisters, who then receive regular remittances and gifts to improve the economic stability of the household.[12,15,43] Child shifting, or placing children with relatives or friends for a variety of reasons, is a relatively common practice in the Caribbean,[48,53,54] Africa,[49,55] the Philippines[56] and Peru, [57,58] even when parents have not left the country. But when the

migrant mother pays extended family for childcare with remittances and gifts, social and economic relationships of caring co-exist, and the impact of these transformations on children is unknown.[8,52]

Literature Review

Migration studies, research about transnational families, and family adjustment to immigration are dynamic areas in current health and social sciences literature. There are many different types of parent-child separations related to migration. In some instances, parents migrate as temporary workers in another, wealthier country, with legal employment and no chance of permanent settlement; in these cases, any reunifications will occur when parents return to their home country. In the research literature these situations are usually found under "transients and migrants," and more of the literature pertains to internal and external labor migration in Asia. In other situations, parents hope to bring their children after them to the destination country, whether or not they are working and living in that country legally. In the research literature these situations are coded under "immigration and emigration," and the literature generally pertains to workers who originate in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, family strategies in these different regions may be similar: some Mexican migrant workers never intend to bring family with them and eventually return to their home country, and some internal migrants in China bring family members with them to the cities, even though they are not authorized to live there and their lives are similar to undocumented workers in foreign countries.

We searched PubMed, CINAHL, and CSA Illumina Social Science databases using the terms: "adolescent," "immigration and emigration," "transients and migrants,"

"human migration or immigration," "immigrants," "family relations," "parent/child relations," "mother-child relations," "family structure," "parenthood status." "adolescent/behavior/ethnology," "separation or reunification," "family separation," "separation reactions or reunification", "transnational," "globalization," "psychosocial factors," and "family separation." This review includes published studies and dissertations in which children, adolescents, and adults who experienced migration-related parental separation and/or reunification were studied in real time or retrospectively, using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. This article will review migration-related separation literature from the Western hemisphere and from Asia, where larger studies allow for some generalization, and family reunification studies in the US and Canada. With the large and ever-growing body of research on migration and transnational families, the aim is to focus on literature of most relevance to clinicians practicing in North America.

Reflecting many social science disciplines, the articles reviewed use a variety of theoretical frameworks to explain family separation and reunification effects, including Bowlby's attachment theory,[59-66] Boss's theory of ambiguous loss,[48,66] ecological approaches to child and family development, [67,68] theories of adolescent individuation,[60,69] gender roles,[11,15,70] and acculturation.[61,67] We agree with Falicov [26] that the care of children and families can be improved by taking into account relational, community, and socio-political contexts of their lives and have found valuable insights from a variety of theoretical approaches. The paper will first review studies of children who are separated from migrant or immigrant parents, the effects gender of parent and child, and the impact of remittances on home country households. Reviews of research

literature about reunified children start with pre-immigration conditions, explore effects of immigration itself, early reactions to family reunification, effects of gender, educational issues and longterm effects of reunification. Studies focusing on the reactions of children to separation are listed in Table 1 and studies primarily addressing reunification are in Table 2.

<div align="center">Separation</div>

Reactions of children to separation

Whether expressed through interviews with parents,[11,36,43,71,72] caretakers,[43,73] or children,[15] pain at parent-child separation is a universal finding (see Table 1). Parents viewed the separation as a sacrifice for the benefit of the children,[11,12,36,43,74] but children showed some ambivalence at being the beneficiaries of such sacrifices.[15,70] Researchers documented various ways that children expressed reactions to their parents leaving, including anger, distress, feelings of vulnerability, abandonment, and somatic complaints.[48] Children reported being deceived about the timing or the fact of their parent's departure,[38,48,75] being told, for example, that their parent was going on an errand or working in another part of their home country, and reported that the lack of preparation for parental departure increased their initial distress.

Communication between distant parents and children may be fraught with emotional, as well as practical barriers. All studies documented parental strategies for connecting with their children, including regular phone calls home [11,14,15,43,70] and, more recently, e-mails, web chat, and social networking.[14,75,76] Unless the child had access to a computer, however, these contacts tended to be parent-initiated, due to expenses of calling out from home countries.[35] Children reported that phone calls were difficult if

they had no shared daily life experiences to discuss or if they had only dim memories of their parent,[40] and in some cases refused to come to the phone when parents called.[70] Filipino adolescents with migrant mothers did not find that frequent phone calls diminished their sense of abandonment.[15]

There were also neutral or positive responses to separation. Children of Jamaican migrants showed no more overall psychological or academic distress than the comparison group, unless they were specifically unhappy with their parents' migration.[48] Benefits of parental migration were found in Mexico, where children of migrant fathers reported a calmer home atmosphere and less family violence,[77] and children in Jamaica whose parents were migrants reported less abuse by caretakers and less exposure to community violence.[48] These small pioneering studies compared children of migrant parents with children of nonmigrant parents. However, some of the comparison group children also experienced parental absence (Mexico) and child shifting (Jamaica). The complexities of life in sending locales, including poverty, community violence, and additional family stresses, as well as the common practice of sending children to other families and internal migration for work, add to the difficulties in measuring the independent impact of family separation.

Reactions to separation may vary by gender, with two Latin American studies noting more behavioral issues in boys whose fathers had migrated.[74,77] Sons of migrant fathers in Ecuador suffered an outbreak of *nervios,* a culturally specific syndrome of anxiety and depression usually associated with adult women.[74] The researcher suggested that *nervios* was a culturally acceptable way of acting out against their own preparation for future migration. A study of early adolescents in Mexico, noted higher distress levels

in boys, and also postulated that the pressure of future migration was a contributing factor.[77] One Chinese study of children of migrant families found that girls whose parents left at younger ages had higher depression and anxiety scores than boys.[78]

Gender of the migrating parent was seen as significant in a study of college-age Filipino youth.[15] Migrant fathers called less frequently than mothers, using calls as a mode of discipline, rather than emotional connection, but this distance was not nearly as distressing to the youth as the absence of their mother. Children of migrant mothers expressed feelings of abandonment, longing and regret, even when their extended family seemed to be devoted to their well-being.[15] Children of migrant mothers fared less well on psychological measures, school engagement and behavioral issues than children of migrant fathers or two-parent migrant families in several large Chinese studies.[16,78,79] However, one large-scale comparison of migrant families in SE Asia found that having a migrant mother was actually protective in Vietnam compared to Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines,[18] and a companion ethnographic study described Vietnamese caretaker fathers as very involved with their children.[80]

Children's reactions to separation may vary by age of the child. Dreby[70] found that preadolescents reacted to migration by naming their caregivers as parents, appearing indifferent to parental phone calls and visits, deferring parental authority to their substitute caregivers, and refusing to migrate. Adolescents, in contrast, were more defiant of home country caregiver authority, and had behavioral and academic problems. Parents, confronting these problems from a distance, increased their emotional involvement with their children, including visits to Mexico, at considerable economic sacrifice and legal risk. In contrast to pre-adolescents' refusal to migrate, adolescents

sometimes insisted on migrating to a low wage job in the US, despite parental desires for them to pursue higher education in Mexico. In one Chinese study, quality of life scores were lower for children who had been left behind than for children in non-migrant households, however within the group of left behind children, scores were higher in older children and in those households with a higher socioeconomic status.[81]

Remittances

Parents who are working abroad send money and gifts back home, which may benefit both their children and the households in which they live. Remittances make up 19% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Honduras, 16% in El Salvador, and 12% in the Philippines.[82] The average monthly remittance to Mexico may comprise up to 34% of income in poor and middle class households, increasing spending for health care and school expenses.[83] However, some research suggests that the economic benefits of remittances may be canceled out by parental absence, with children of migrant parents showing poorer educational outcomes.[84,85]

Remittances have symbolic meaning in transnational households. Salvadoran migrant mothers sent a greater percentage of their income more regularly and over longer periods of time than migrant fathers, despite lower earning power.[86] The researcher suggested that gendered expectations of maternal responsibility and self-sacrifice contributed to this difference. Parents use frequent gifts as a way to stay connected and show their love for children and other family members.[48,70,74] Larger houses and consumer goods bought with remittances also demonstrate differing class status of migrants' families within small communities.[35,87] These changes have mixed results, as Pribilsky noted in an ethnographic study in Ecuador, where larger houses with more

private spaces led to changes in family socialization patterns.[74] He theorized that gifts from migrant fathers entailed reciprocal obligations of attending school and acquiring English language skills to prepare for future migration.[74]

Summary of the effects of separation

There is variation in child responses to parental separation. While pain and distress were compelling and most common, others included anger, feelings of abandonment and insecurity, ambivalence, poorer school performance and anxiety and depression. There were also positive outcomes such as less interpersonal violence and turmoil at home. Gender of the migrating parent and age of child at migration were associated with differential responses, and these also varied by country.

Reunification

Studies of children or adolescents who have migrated to rejoin their parents have covered a broad range of designs, locations, and time frames and include retrospective studies of adults. To the extent that premigration experiences affect the adolescent's adaptation to life in the US or Canada, these studies also address the impact of prior separation. This section will cover the effects on children and adolescents of the timing of migration, the stressors before and during migration, early and late family adjustment, and educational and community issues.

When children migrate to rejoin their parents, the timing is typically set by legal and economic factors over which they have no control, and they may have very little warning of the impending change.[10] This process is best described in the literature about Caribbean migration.[10,53,62,65] Migrating children experience an often extreme climatic and cultural change, as they leave a society where they are in the racial and cultural

majority and join one where they are part of a racial minority that is treated as inferior, without feeling connected to native born African-American or African-Canadian children.[10,54] Parents and children may be unprepared for the difficulties of living together again, resuming relationships of affection and authority as relative strangers, and major relationship crises may develop after a period of initial calm.[10]

Impact of pre-migration conditions on the reunifying adolescent

Central American adolescents who were interviewed after reunification stated that they were more likely to have felt proud of their parent's sacrifice in migrating if the move was necessary in order to escape the dangers of civil war, or if the family's economic situation improved drastically.[88] Appreciation of migrating parents' sacrifices had positive effects on the adjustment of Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong[89] and Filipino adolescents in Canada.[90] Conversely, adolescents were more likely to have felt abandoned by parents if the move seemed to be motivated by parental desires for self-improvement or to leave a marriage, factors that were internal to family functioning and possibly elicited conflicting loyalties for the adolescents.[60] Failure of the parent to inform the child about leaving not only increased the child's distress on separation, but made reunification more difficult, as children saw their parents as less trustworthy.[88]

Caretakers in the home country could provide emotional connections that mitigated the child's feelings of abandonment,[63] yet these same connections made leaving to rejoin the parent more difficult.[53,89] Caretakers played a crucial role in maintaining the child's memories of distant parents, and could positively affect the child's adjustment to separation by supporting the parent's migration,[88] or reinforcing a sense of abandonment by criticizing the parent for leaving.[62]

Effects of migration stressors on the reunifying adolescent

Researchers have started to address the impact of trauma on family reunification, including pre-migration violence in and outside of the home and the migration itself. Almost half of unaccompanied Central American youth who were detained at the US border and then surveyed in a Mexican shelter reported that they had been victims of robbery, extortion, physical, verbal, and sometimes sexual abuse at some point in the journey, many during the processes of apprehension, arrest, and detention.[25] In one study of youths who had been reunified with their parents after the Central American civil wars of the 1980s and 90s, war-related trauma was so prevalent that its impact was difficult to disentangle from the impact of family disruption.[60,88] Another study of Caribbean families in New York[63] found that 8 of the 12 adolescent participants had suffered harsh treatment by home country caregivers, including physical and sexual abuse, and these prior traumas negatively affected their adjustment to life with their parents.

Many of the adolescents interviewed in family reunification studies (See Table 2) were unauthorized immigrants [60,63,88,91,92] and while documentation status was discussed in individual interviews, the impact of the journey across the border was highlighted in the analysis of only one qualitative study.[67] Documentation status also affected the length of separations and the ability of parents to visit prior to reunification.[38,40,91] One study of Mexican families in Texas reported relatively short separations and smooth reunifications; this study included only authorized immigrants,[61] and is difficult to compare with other studies of Mexican or Central American immigrant families, with many undocumented or mixed status families.[93].

A recent randomized sample of Latino immigrant adolescents and their parents in North Carolina (Latino Adolescent Migration Health and Adaptation or LAMHA) is unique in being a large mixed-methods study that specifically addresses family separation, documentation, and the traumas of migration.[94] Adolescents filled out depression and anxiety scales, as well as questionnaires about length of family separation, legal status in the US, and any traumatic events during migration. Unauthorized teens reported more anxious symptoms, although family separation was not an independently associated factor.

Adolescent involvement in the decision to migrate affects post-migration adaptation. In the LAMHA study,[94] youth involvement with migration was part of the migration stressors scale, and higher involvement predicted lower anxiety and depression scores. In contrast, in a retrospective study of Caribbean adults with difficult reunification trajectories, many believed that they had been brought to England for practical reasons, and not because their mother might have missed them, and this distrust colored their reunification experiences.[59]

First impressions: The impact of early reunification experiences

Some adolescents reported warm and tearful reunions with parents [88,91] and a period of relative calm with little interpersonal conflict shortly after reunification.[53,89] Others stated that they immediately felt disoriented, did not recognize their parents,[68] or were greeted formally, with no signs of physical affection.[59] The close relationships that youth had with caregivers in their home country increased their ambivalence about migration and contrasted with their sense that their parent was a stranger.[59,66,88,92] Some adolescents reported withdrawing emotionally from their parents after reunification and

rejecting parents' attempts to engage them, while neither parents nor teens were able to talk about their disappointment constructively.[53,62] When initial attempts at engagement were rebuffed, parents were described by youth as resorting to harsh criticism and punishment, including physical punishment. Adolescents reported that their parents threatened them with deportation, expressed regret that they had been born,[53,62] criticized home country caregivers for spoiling them[88] and disparaged their home culture.[53,62] Arriving adolescents did not feel that they were allowed to express sadness at losing their home country caregivers and additionally felt that their accents, dialects or lack of English were mocked both at home and at school.[59]

Youths had been led to believe that their parents had achieved wealth by the gifts they received during separation, and were surprised and disappointed by harsh living conditions in their host country.[53,62,89] The contrast was particularly harsh in one study,[89] where teens had gone from multi-room houses in China paid for by remittances to apartments in Hong Kong shared by ten families. After reunification, adolescents struggled with the realization that it was now their turn to sacrifice, by working hard in school, caring for younger siblings, refraining from complaints about life in North America, and looking for paid work.[88,90] Teens expressed resentment at the long hours parents had to work in the U. S., compared with the relative availability of their caregivers in their home country,[53,62,88] though a few teens in one study found parents to be more available in the U. S.[67] Reuniting with both biological parents eased the re-engagement process,[61,63,66] while the presence of step-parents and new siblings increased reunification difficulties.[53,63,66] Immigrant children in two studies who had previously been separated from their parents reported higher levels of depressive symptoms than

non-separated children,[64,66,68] however, in two larger surveys, parental separation was not significant as an independent risk factor for depression.[90,94]

Impact of reunification on school and social outcomes

Children who moved from a majority culture to a country where they were a stigmatized minority confronted racism and anti-immigrant prejudice for the first time,[53,90] and expressed distress that parents did not share survival strategies with them[53] or actively confront discriminatory treatment.[90] In one survey, experiences with discrimination in Canada were more important predictors of Caribbean youth mental health than family separation, and for both Caribbean and Filipino youth, current family functioning was more important than separation experiences in predicting youth attitudes toward school.[90]

Neighborhood contexts were specifically addressed in two studies. In one, adolescents arrived to a new migration destination with safe neighborhoods and adequate school resources.[91] In contrast, in the Harvard Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation (LISA) study, Haitian, Dominican, Mexican, and Central American adolescents were likely to be attending segregated schools in high poverty neighborhoods where gang activity was prevalent.[92] Further, parents who were working long hours in the U. S. and Canada had little time to help children navigate their new environment, and one author noted that children spent more time with their peers than they did in their home country, putting them at higher risk of gang involvement and criminal activity.[53]

The migration research literature has documented the importance of social networks for adult immigrants,[12,33,41,43] assisting with migration routes and destinations, places to live, jobs, and other practical, social and emotional support. Networks also have

the capacity to spread gossip both locally and transnationally,[37] and parents may be reluctant to seek non-family community support when children are misbehaving.[53] Despite the importance of peer relationships to adolescent development,[53,88,95] the impact of social networks on newly arrived adolescents has remained elusive.[53,63,92,96] Newly arrived Caribbean adolescents in Canada were drawn to an oppositional culture of Afro-Canadian peers in one study,[53] but another researcher found that relatives and friends provided a buffer for teens experiencing difficult reunifications with their parents.[63] One quantitative study measured the impact of early separation on familial and peer social networks for Caribbean late adolescents in New York.[96] A mixed method study explored the impact of relational networks on academic achievement on immigrant adolescents.[92] Though neither of these explorations had statistically significant results, the importance of relational networks outside the nuclear family for reunified youth is an emerging finding that deserves further research.

Adjustment to a new educational system was a challenge, even for children who spoke the same language,[53,62] and harder still for children learning English.[66,88,92] Immigrant adolescents reported that they were struggling in school, even if they had done well in their home country, and that their parents were unable to help them with their schoolwork.[88] In the LISA Study, almost 400 immigrant children with a high proportion of past family separations were followed longitudinally for five years after their first entry into U. S. schools.[66,92] Grade point averages for 2/3 of the participants declined over time, though 22% of students excelled consistently, and another 10% were able to improve during the course of the study. Academic achievement had weak though

consistent statistical links to parental educational levels, having two adults in the home, and a father working outside the home.[92]

Gender

Findings consistently showed that young women had an easier time adapting to life in their host country than young men. In the LISA study, Qin-Hilliard[97] noted that boys had worse educational outcomes than girls, who were more able to connect to helpful peers and school personnel and tended to be more consistent in school attendance and homework completion.[92] Of interest is that there was no gender difference in this sample in performance on standardized tests.[92]

In a retrospective study of a convenience sample of Caribbean youth, young adult women showed higher self-esteem, lower rates of deviant behavior such as truancy, and more conformity to parental wishes than young men.[65] The authors suggested that same gender-attachment figures might have eased the transition for young women, as all young adults were more likely cared for by female relatives and more likely to reunite with a mother than a father.

In contrast to an earlier literature review suggesting that separated Latina girls were at higher risk than boys[98], more recent studies have shown that boys may be at higher risk, both in the home country and after arrival in the U. S.[66,74,77,92,97] Factors that may increase male risk include increased pressures on boys as future migrants and breadwinners[66,74,77,92] and their decreased propensity to seek and receive helpful mentoring and other support.[66,92,96] While girls report more depressive symptoms than boys, they also report more family responsibilities and closer family ties, which may be

protective,[65,97] as these responsibilities anchor the adolescent and provide them with pathways to establish a new identity.

Long-term effects of late migration and family reunification

In this emerging area of scholarship, long-term outcomes in reunified families have been documented primarily in retrospective studies of adults.[59,65] In one convenience sample partly recruited through therapists,[59] Caribbean women aged 35 to 50 and living in England told of continuing disappointments in their relationships with their mothers. These were perceived to be continuations of their initial difficult and emotionally distant reunification experiences as adolescents. While participants who were not in therapy tended to report warmer experiences with caretakers during separation, none of the women reported current close emotional relationships with their mothers. Given the age of participants, their separations occurred during the pre-digital era, with costlier and less frequent communication than current transnational families. The findings of a survey of a younger reunified Caribbean cohort in Canada are more equivocal.[65] While longer separations were associated with more difficult reunifications, half of this young adult sample reported having warm relationships with their parents. Age of migration affected the participants' willingness to obey their parents' wishes, but did not affect overall adaptation, and the authors noted that this finding might be developmentally appropriate, rather than migration-related.

Some Central American late adolescents noted that "relationships with their parents would never recover from lost time and lost connections"[88] (p. 164). Others, having assumed responsibilities of work or parenting themselves, were able to appreciate their parents' sacrifices and re-establish a close relationship on a more equal footing. The

LAMHA study [94] found that adolescent mental health symptoms, even for those who had suffered migration trauma, diminished with longer time in the U.S., and the LISA study[68] findings showed decreased symptoms of anxiety and depression for most reunified youth in the study at the 5-year mental health surveys.

Summary of effects of late migration and family reunification

While a retrospective study of adults who reunified after prolonged separations showed enduring difficulties with family re-engagement, current real time studies show an adjustment over time, with diminishing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Qualitative studies show that some youth have accepted the inability to recreate their imagined or remembered family from childhood, while others have been able to re-establish warm and close ties with their parents. The late immigrants in these studies generally struggle educationally, although it is not clear that histories of family separation added to this problem. Some of the researchers suggested that child-parent contact during the separation,[65] the configuration of the family,[63,66,68] and the presence of extended social networks[63,99] affect the reunification process. Gender may affect re-engagement with parents [65] and educational outcomes,[92,97] with young men faring worse. One Canadian study[90] suggested that encounters with racial stereotyping and job discrimination may have a bigger impact on adolescent mental health than prior histories of family separation.

Research Implications

Recommendations during separation

While parents report that their distant children are always in their hearts,[38,40,43] they may not be effectively communicating this love across borders.[59,68] Despite the

technical and emotional difficulties with parent phone calls,[15,70] interviews with children or adults after their own reunification have underscored the importance of steady communication and visual representations of parents while children are apart.[63,68,91] Resentment may be unavoidable. It has surfaced as a barrier to re-establishing warm relationships,[53,59] and researchers recommended open communication with children before and during separation in order to diminish resentment.[38,88]

Recommendations for family reunification

Researchers also recommended that parents take time off work whenever possible when children are arriving, [61,88] recognize the importance of a warm extended family network,[53,89] and avoid criticizing previous caretakers.[68] Researchers[68,88,92] and clinicians[26] recommended that parents and providers embrace all of the caretakers in the child's life, rather than trying to replace one with another. Further suggestions include school orientations for parents of newly arrived immigrant students to academic expectations, as well as family issues,[61,63] school-based support groups for adolescents,[62] and setting up community- or faith-based sources of support for parents who may be reluctant,[40,53,63] or unable[100] to access mental health services.

Implications for education, health care and health policy

Educational barriers. Children who join parents after prolonged separations are members of the 1.5 generation, those who migrate in late childhood.[21] While some late immigrants attain educational outcomes superior to second generation children, others may be derailed by early pregnancy, incarceration[101] or simply the inability to learn academic skills in English.[92,102] For the estimated 40% of these children who are unauthorized,[20] current legal and financial barriers to college education in most states may prevent them

from attaining or applying the skills that are needed in the future labor force of the US,[92,102] locking them into low wage jobs without health benefits.

Health care needs. Unauthorized immigrants and even some authorized immigrants are prevented from obtaining public health insurance under current Federal and State laws and are excluded under the Affordable Care Act.[100,103] It is possible that many of the children described in this review encounter the health care system only for the vaccines and examinations needed to enter school or in emergencies, meaning that their health care needs are not only unmet, but also largely unknown in the health policy arena and there is a likely need for counseling and mental health services.

Current immigration enforcement

The pain of separation, difficulties with reunification and related trauma documented by the studies above are being reproduced in a different direction, as an estimated 1.5 million families have been separated by immigration raids and deportations since 2002.[102] In addition to undocumented adults, children without legal status in the US may be deported to countries in which they have not lived since early childhood, or which they may have fled as adolescents from unstable caretaking arrangements or threats from gangs or drug cartels.[104]

Gaps in the Literature and Suggestions for Future Research

Changing views of parenting and childhood in sending countries may impact the child's and parent's interpretation of and interaction with family separation in succeeding cohorts.[42,105] Whether gender relations are changed in migrating families [33,42] or are reified in the parents' and children's longing for a culturally consonant definition of normality[15] remains an open question. Relationships may be configured differently,

depending on the contexts of the sending and receiving countries, as well as the gender of the migrating parent(s) and the motivation for immigration. While some research with migrating mothers shows that they do more emotional work to maintain relationships with their children than migrating fathers,[15,40] this contention has been disputed, especially in cases of parental divorce.[11] The current literature suggests that young women are in some ways more protected than young men as new immigrants, though they often endorse more depressive symptoms.[66,97] Whether or not young women and young men who migrate as teens engage in the same gendered behavior as their parents in reconstructing relationships, and what factors might be involved in risks for poor emotional and health outcomes or resiliency remain to be explored in future research.

For any adolescent, migrating alone across a militarized border may add to migration stresses in largely unexplored ways.[67] Researchers are starting to interview unaccompanied minors as part of family reunification[91] and educational studies.[23] Additionally, the stresses of the journey itself, the increasing drug- and gang-related violence in sending countries, trauma during migration, and the ongoing concerns about immigration enforcement should be addressed in future studies.

The earliest years of late-immigrant entry, in upper elementary school, middle school, and high school, merit additional attention, in order to see how the adaptation process begins to unfold for the 1.5 generation. The LISA study[66,68,92,97] provides a rich foundation for future studies that could further explore the relative educational and developmental problems or benefits of migration during adolescence, and could disentangle these from family reunification issues. Some studies have shown that remittances and alternate caregivers do not ensure improved home country educational

outcomes for children of transnational parents,[84,85] and additional research could also address potential protective factors of socialization in the home country, increased availability of extended family supports, and protection from discrimination that have figured into parental decisions to extend periods of separation.

There is an increasingly robust body of literature describing problematic parent-child relationships during reunification[53,62,63,68,88,91] and their potential long-term effects.[59,65] The one study reporting relatively smooth transitions sampled two-parent Mexican families with short durations of separation.[61]

There are several important gaps in this literature. One is that the qualitative literature, for the most part, remains problem-focused, without enough exploration of factors related to easier separations or smoother reunifications. Another is that there is little agreement between the qualitative and quantitative literature about the essential question: the impact of prolonged family separations. Studies of migrant families in Asia have shown mixed effects, depending on measures used, caretakers, migrant parent and country,[16,18,78] with some measures improving in older children.[81] Neither of the two studies of reunified families using a stratified cluster sample found that family separation was statistically significant as a modifier of mental health status.[90,94] While family separation was not a predictor of academic outcomes in the LISA study,[92] it was linked with short-term increases in depression and anxiety. It is possible that the parental and teen reluctance to discuss family reunification problems noted in qualitative research[68] manifests as a reluctance to answer similar items on questionnaires or even a reluctance to participate in research.[90] It is also possible that the questions themselves are not eliciting the kinds of information in surveys that are emerging in more free-ranging

discussions. Finally, it is also possible that the qualitative literature is too narrowly focused on family dynamics.

While the focus on parent-child relationships is important, young immigrants are coming from cultures where extended family relationships are important and they also are migrating into pre-existing social networks that may extend beyond the nuclear family.[68,99] As adolescents, they may be reaching out to peers within and outside their families, and extending the focus of prior researchers on their contexts and development as adolescents[53,68,88] and this will add to the literature. This research could explore the social networks, processes and interactions at work in successful, as well as problematic family reunifications. It is possible that some reunifications are not coming to the attention of clinicians because of their relative lack of problems, even under adverse circumstances such as long separations, late migration, lack of legal status and uneven contact during the separated years. In addition, greater access to electronic communication, from cell phones and texting to webcams and instant messaging, may be changing the quality of long-distance parent-child contact. Because this change is so recent, it is not reflected in the parent-child studies above and is only starting to appear in transnational literature.[14,76]

The most profound insights into this population, so far, have come from qualitative and mixed method studies. Qualitative approaches may allow for continued fresh and original means to understand the complexities of these experiences,[106] as well as a move from description to theorizing,[107] providing directions for health care providers and policy makers.[108] Further, adolescent viewpoints on successful, as well as problematic family reunification can be incorporated, as well as allowing for

consideration of the impact of changing political and technological influences on this

experience. Continued knowledge development in this field can inform family and

immigration policy, as well as provide insights to health and other professionals working

with reunifying families.

1. Riggen P. Under the same moon. Fox Searchlight2008.
2. Nazario S. *Enrique's journey: The story of a boy's dangerous odyssey to reunite with his mother*. New York: Random House; 2006.
3. International Organization for Migration. International Organzation for Migration facts and figures. n.d.; http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/facts-and-figures/global-estimates-and-trends. Accessed 10/20/08.
4. Johnson H, Hill L. *Illegal immigration.* San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California; 2011.
5. Batalova J. Mexican immigrants in the United States. *Migration Information Source.* 2008(April 2008). http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=679. Accessed 2/9/10.
6. Passel JS, Cohn DV. *A portrait of unauthorized immigrants in the United States.* Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center; April 29, 2009 2009.
7. Cerrutti M, Massey DS. On the auspices of female migration from Mexico to the United States. *International Migration Review.* 2001;372:187-201.
8. Isaksen LW, Devi SU, Hochschild AR. Global Care Crisis: A Problem of Capital, Care Chain, or Commons? *American Behavioral Scientist.* 2008;52(3):405-425.
9. Batalova J, Terrazas A. Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States. *Migration Information Source.* 2011(December 2010). http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/print.cfm?ID=818. Accessed 11/20/11.
10. Crawford-Brown CPJ, Rattray JM. Parent-child relationships in Caribbean families. In: Webb NB, ed. *Culturally diverse parent-child and family relationships: A guide for social workers and other practitioners*. New York: Columbia University Press; 2001:107-130.
11. Dreby J. Honor and Virtue: Mexican Parenting in the Transnational Context. *Gender & Society.* Feb 2006;20(1):32-59.
12. Hondagneu-Sotelo P, Avila E. "I'm here, but I'm there": The meanings of Latina transnational motherhood. *Gender & Society.* Oct 1997;11(5):548-571.
13. Barber PG. Agency in Philippine Women's Labour Migration and Provisional Diaspora. *Women's Studies International Forum.* 2000; 23:399-411.
14. Lan P-C. *Global Cinderellas: Migrant domestics and newly rich employers in Taiwan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; 2006.

15. Parreñas RS. *Children of global migration: Transnational families and gendered woes*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; 2005.
16. Wen M, Lin D. Child development in rural China: children left behind by their migrant parents and children of nonmigrant families. *Child Dev.* Jan-Feb 2012;83(1):120-136.
17. George SM. *When women come first: Gender and class in transnational migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press; 2005.
18. Graham E, Jordan LP. Migrant Parents and the Psychological Well-Being of Left-Behind Children in Southeast Asia. *J Marriage Fam.* Aug 2011;73(4):763-787.
19. González-Ferrer A, Baizán P, Beauchemin C. Child-Parent Separations among Senegalese Migrants to Europe. *The Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science.* 2012;643(1):106-133.
20. Passel JS. Demography of immigrant youth: past, present, and future. *Future Child.* Spring 2011;21(1):19-41.
21. Rumbaut RG. Ages, Life Stages, and Generational Cohorts: Decomposing the Immigrant First and Second Generations in the United States. *International Migration Review.* 2004;38(3):1160-1205.
22. Haddal CC. *Unaccompanied alien children: Policies and issues.* Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service;2007.
23. Martinez I. What's Age Gotta Do with It? Understanding the Age-Identities and School-Going Practices of Mexican Immigrant Youth in New York City. *High School Journal.* 2009;92(4):34-48.
24. International Organization for Migration. New center for unaccompanied minors opens on Mexico's southern border. *International Organization for Migration Press Briefing notes.* 2009. http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/media/press-briefing-notes/pbnAM/cache/offonce/lang/en?entryId=25843. Accessed 9/4/11.
25. Wier B. *Child Migration: The detention and repatriation of unaccompanied Central American children from Mexico.* Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services - US Conference of Catholic Bishops; January, 2010.
26. Falicov CJ. Working with transnational immigrants: expanding meanings of family, community, and culture. *Fam Process.* Jun 2007;46(2):157-171.
27. Sánchez P. Cultural authenticity and transnational Latina youth: Constructing a meta-narrative across borders. *Linguistics and Education. Special Issue: Transnational literacies: Immigration, language learning, and identity.* Win 2007;18(3-4):258-282.
28. Appadurai A. *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 1996.
29. Rouse R. Questions of identity. *Critique of Anthropology.* 1995;15(4):351-380.
30. Levitt P, Jaworsky BN. Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends. *Annual Review of Sociology.* 2007;33:129-156.
31. Falicov CJ. Emotional transnationalism and family identities. *Fam Process.* Dec 2005;44(4):399-406.
32. Furman R, Negi NJ. Social work practice with transnational Latino populations. *International Social Work.* 2007;50(1):107-112.
33. Hondagneu-Sotelo P. *Gendered transitions: Mexican experiences of immigration.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; 1994.

34. McGuire S, Martin K. Fractured migrant families: paradoxes of hope and devastation. *Fam Community Health.* Jul-Sep 2007;30(3):178-188.

35. Dreby J, Adkins T. Inequalities in Transnational Families. *Sociology Compass.* 2010;4(8):673-689.

36. Parreñas RS. *Servants of globalization: Women, migration, and domestic work.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; 2001.

37. Dreby J. Gender and Transnational Gossip. *Qualitative Sociology.* 2009;32(1):33-52.

38. Dreby J. *Divided by borders: Mexican migrants and their children.* Berkeley: University of California Press; 2010.

39. Levitt P. *The transnational villagers.* Berkeley: University of California Press; 2001.

40. Avila EM. *Transnational motherhood and fatherhood: Gendered challenges and coping*: Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences2009.

41. Menjívar C. *Fragmented ties: Salvadoran immigrant networks in America.* Berkeley: University of California Press; 2000.

42. Pribilsky J. 'Aprendemos a convivir': Conjugal Relations, Co-Parenting, and Family Life among Ecuadorian Transnational Migrants in New York City and the Ecuadorian Andes. *Global Networks.* 2004;4(3):313-334.

43. Schmalzbauer L. Searching for Wages and Mothering from Afar: The Case of Honduran Transnational Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family.* Dec 2004;66(5):1317-1331.

44. Schmalzbauer L. Gender on a new frontier: Mexican migration in the rural Mountain West. *Gender & Society.* 2009;23(6):747-767.

45. Smith RC. *Mexican New York: Transnational lives of new immigrants.* Berkeley: University of California Press; 2006.

46. Falicov CJ. Mexican families. In: McGoldrick M, Giordano J, Pearce JK, eds. *Ethnicity and family therapy* 2d ed. New York: Guilford Press; 1996:169-182

47. Dreby J. Negotiating work and parenting over the life course: Mexican family dynamics in a binational context. In: Foner N, ed. *Across generations: Immigrant families in America*. New York: New York University Press; 2009:190-218.

48. Pottinger AM. Children's Experience of Loss by Parental Migration in Inner-City Jamaica. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry.* Oct 2005;75(4):485-496.

49. Bledsoe CH, Sow P. Back to Africa: Second Chances for the Children of West African Immigrants. *Journal of Marriage and Family.* 2011;73(4):747-762.

50. Orellana MF, Thorne B, Chee A, Lam WSE. Transnational childhoods: The participation of children in processes of family migration. *Social Problems.* Nov 2001;48(4):572-591.

51. Ong A. Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States. *Current Anthropology.* 1996;37(5):737-751.

52. Hochschild AR. Love and gold. In: Ehrenreich B, Hochschild AR, eds. *Global woman: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. New York: Metropolitan Books; 2002:15-30.

53. Lashley M. The unrecognized social stressors of migration and reunification in Caribbean families. *Transcultural Psychiatry.* June 2000 2000;37(2):203-217.

54. Waters MC. *Black identities: West Indian immigrant dreams and American realities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation; 1999.

55. Gonzales NA, Coxe S, Roosa MW, et al. Economic hardship, neighborhood context, and parenting: Prospective effects on Mexican-American adolescent's mental health. *American Journal of Community Psychology.* 2011;47(1-2):98-113.

56. Peterson JT. Generalized Extended Family Exchange: A Case from the Philippines. *Journal of Marriage and the Family.* 1993;55(3):570-584.

57. Leinaweaver JB. On moving children: The social implications of Andean child circulation. *American Ethnologist.* 2007;34(1):163-180.

58. Leinaweaver JB. Outsourcing Care: How Peruvian Migrants Meet Transnational Family Obligations. *Lat Am Perspect.* 2010;37(5):67-87.

59. Arnold E. Separation and loss through immigration of African Caribbean women to the UK. *Attach Hum Dev.* Jun 2006;8(2):159-174.

60. Artico CI. Perceptions and memories of Latino adolescents separated in childhood due to piecemeal patterns of immigration, George Mason University;2000.

61. Black AE. *The separation and reunification of recently immigrated Mexican families*, Walden University, 2005.

62. Glasgow G, Gouse-Sheese J. Themes of rejection and abandonment in group work with Caribbean adolescents. *Social Work with Groups.* 1995;17(4):3-27.

63. Hine-St. Hilaire D. When children are left behind: The perceptions of West Indian adolescents separated from their mothers during childhood due to migration, and the effects of this separation on their reunification, New York University;2008.

64. Lemy M-E. *The effect of early separation on parent-child attachment among haitian immigrants families*, Seton Hall University; 2000.

65. Smith A, Lalonde RN, Johnson S. Serial Migration and Its Implications for the Parent-Child Relationship: A Retrospective Analysis of the Experiences of the Children of Caribbean Immigrants. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology.* May 2004;10(2):107-122.

66. Suárez-Orozco C, Todorova I, Louie J. Making up for lost time: the experience of separation and reunification among immigrant families. *Fam Process.* Winter 2002;41(4):625-643.

67. Ko LK, Perreira KM. "It Turned My World Upside Down": Latino Youths' Perspectives on Immigration. *J Adolesc Res.* May 2010;25(3):465-493.

68. Suárez-Orozco C, Bang HJ, Kim HY. I felt like my heart was staying behind: Psychological implications of family separations & reunifications for immigrant youth. *Journal Of Adolescent Research.* 2011;26(2):222-257.

69. Mitrani VB, Santisteban DA, Muir JA. Addressing Immigration-Related Separations in Hispanic Families With a Behavior-Problem Adolescent. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry.* Jul 2004;74(3):219-229.

70. Dreby J. Children and Power in Mexican Transnational Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family.* 2007;69(4):1050-1064.

71. Hondagneu-Sotelo P, Gaudinez G, Lara H, Ortiz BC. "There's a Spirit that Transcends the Border": Faith, Ritual, and Postnational Protest at the U.S.-Mexico Border. *Sociological Perspectives.* 2004;47(2):133-159.

72. Sternberg RM. The plight of transnational Latina mothers: Mothering from a distance. *Field Science Action Reports.* 2010(Special Issue 2). http://factsreports.revues.org/486.

73. Moran-Taylor MJ. When Mothers and Fathers Migrate North: Caretakers, Children, and Child Rearing in Guatemala. *Latin American Perspectives.* 2008;35(4):79-95.

74. Pribilsky J. Nervios and 'modern childhood': Migration and shifting contexts of child life in the Ecuadorian Andes. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research. Special Issue: Capitalizing on concern.* May 2001;8(2):251-273.

75. Duque Paramo MC. *Migración Parental: Niñas, niños, y jovenes cuentan sobre sus experiencias y situación de salud.* Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana; 2010 2010.

76. Schapiro NA, Pinderhughes HL, Kools SM. Phone Cards and Webcams: Latino Immigrant Youth and Transnational Parenting in the 21st Century. *J Adolesc Health.* 2009;44(2):S24.

77. Aguilera-Guzmán RM, de Snyder VN, Romero M, Medina-Mora ME. Paternal absence and international migration: stressors and compensators associated with the mental health of Mexican teenagers of rural origin. *Adolescence.* Winter 2004;39(156):711-723.

78. Liu Z, Li X, Ge X. Left too early: the effects of age at separation from parents on Chinese rural children's symptoms of anxiety and depression. *Am J Public Health.* Nov 2009;99(11):2049-2054.

79. Jia Z, Tian W. Loneliness of left-behind children: a cross-sectional survey in a sample of rural China. *Child Care Health Dev.* Nov 2010;36(6):812-817.

80. Hoang LA, Yeoh BSA. Breadwinning wives and "left-behind" husbands: Men and masculinities in the Vietnamese transnational family. *Gender & Society.* 2011;25(6):717-739.

81. Jia Z, Shi L, Cao Y, Delancey J, Tian W. Health-related quality of life of "left-behind children": a cross-sectional survey in rural China. *Qual Life Res.* Aug 2010;19(6):775-780.

82. Ratha D, Mohapatra S, Silwal A. Migration and remittances factbook 2011: World Bank; 2010: http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/migration-and-remittances.

83. Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Latin American Outlook 2010. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; 2010: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/48/14/44121339.pdf.

84. Amuedo-Dorantes C, Pozo S. Accounting for remittance and migration effects on Children's Schooling. *World Development.* 2010; 38(12):1747-1759.

85. Lahaie C, Hayes JA, Piper TM, Heymann J. Work and family divided across borders: the impact of parental migration on Mexican children in transnational families. *Community, Work & Family.* 2009;12(3):299-312.

86. Abrego L. Economic well-being in Salvadoran transnational families: How gender affects remittance practices. *Journal of Marriage and Family.* 2009;71(4):1070-1085.

87. Pribilsky J. *La chulla vida: Gender, migration, and the family in Andean Ecuador and New York City*. First ed. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press; 2007.

88. Artico CI. *Latino families broken by immigration: The adolescents' perceptions*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing; 2003.

89. Lam AM, Chan TS, Tsoi KW. Meaning of family reunification as interpreted by young Chinese immigrants. *Int J Adolesc Med Health.* Apr-Jun 2005;17(2):105-122.

90. Rousseau C, Hassan G, Measham T, et al. From the family universe to the outside world: family relations, school attitude, and perception of racism in Caribbean and Filipino adolescents. *Health Place.* Sep 2009;15(3):721-730.

91. Hernandez MG. *An exploratory narrative study of the migration patterns, parent-child relationships, and the adaptation of immigrant Central American and Mexican adolescents*, University of Wisconsin, Madison;2009.

92. Suárez-Orozco C, Suárez-Orozco MM, Todorova I. *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; 2008.

93. McGuire S, Georges J. Undocumentedness and liminality as health variables. *Advances in Nursing Science.* 2003;26(3):185-195.

94. Potochnick SR, Perreira KM. Depression and anxiety among first-generation immigrant Latino youth: key correlates and implications for future research. *J Nerv Ment Dis.* Jul 2010;198(7):470-477.

95. Steinberg L, Morris AS. Adolescent development. *Annu Rev Psychol.* 2001;52:83-110.

96. Kotuby JM. The effects of parental separation on the social networks of recent Caribbean immigrants., New School for Social Research;2002.

97. Qin-Hilliard DB. Gendered expectations and gendered experiences: immigrant students' adaptation in schools. *New Directions in Youth Development.* Winter 2003(100):91-109.

98. Schapiro NA. Issues of separation and reunification in immigrant Latina youth. *Nursing Clinics of North America.* Sep 2002;37(3):381-392.

99. Hernandez DJ, Denton NA, Macartney S. Children in immigrant families - the U.S. and 50 states: economic need beyond the official poverty measure. *Research Brief Series.* 2009(Publication 2009-19). http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_04_09_RB_ChildImmigPoverty.pdf. Accessed 5/7/09.

100. National Immigration Law Center. *How are immigrants included in health care reform?* Los Angeles, CA: National Immigration Law Center; 4/19/10 2012.

101. Rumbaut RG. Turning points in the transition to adulthood: Determinants of educational attainment incarceration, and early childbearing among children of immigrants. *Ethnic and Racial Studies. Special Issue: The Second Generation in Early Adulthood.* Nov 2005; 28(6):1041-1086.

102. Rumbaut RG, Komaie G. Immigration and adult transitions. *Future Child.* Spring 2010; 20(1):43-66.

103. Jerome-D'Emilia B, Suplee PD. The ACA and the undocumented. *Am J Nurs.* Apr 2012;112(4):21-27.

104. Steinberg N. *Neither rights nor security: Killings, torture, and disappearances in Mexico's "War on Drugs"*: Human Rights Watch; November 2011 2011.

105. Gutmann MC. *The meanings of macho: Being a man in Mexico City.* 10th Anniversary Edition ed. Berkeley: University of California Press; 1996/2007.

106. Creswell JW. *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Second ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2007.

107. Clarke AE. Situational analyses: Grounded theory mapping after the postmodern turn. *Symbolic Interaction.* 2003;26(4):553-576.

108. Yanow D. *Conducting interpretive policy analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2000.

Table 1 – Studies of Children Separated through Parental Migration
All samples are purposive unless otherwise noted

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Aguilera-Guzman et al., 2004	N = 24 early adolescents, in depth interviews N= 310 early adolescents, rural Mexico	Mixed methods: in depth interviews used to develop administered survey about paternal absence	Youths experienced more economic pressure, emotional vulnerability when father away, and calmer home with less physical violence. Girls more upset about physical discomforts, boys about inequity and taking on traditionally female chores. Stress for boys possibly related to pressures to prepare for future migration
Abrego, 2009	N=130 (80 adolescent and young adult children in El Salvador, 47 parents in US, separated on average 11 years, 3 caregivers)	In-depth semi-structured interviews, extended case method of analysis, focus on impact of remittances	Families classified by access to nutritional, educational and other resources. In contrast to higher-earning fathers, mothers sent larger percentages of their salary with more regularity, and remittances did not decrease over time or with new relationships. More mother-away families were thriving, and more father-away families were barely subsisting.
Avila, 2009	N=10 adult children, ages range 23-45 Subset of a larger study	Mixed methods, in-depth interviews	All migrant fathers left children home with their mother; most migrant mothers were single. Of 10 adult children interviewed, 7 had been separated from a mother, 8 had reunified. Mothers constructed absent father as hero and maintained relationships, caretakers did not do the same for absent mothers. Maternal separation emotionally more difficult.

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Dreby, 2007	N = 141 children & caretakers in Mexico, with parents in the US	Ethnographic methods, interviews, participant observation	Children's needs influence parental migration patterns. Preadolescents: feign indifference on phone, visits; refuse to migrate. Adolescents: exploit ambiguous lines of authority; behavioral and academic difficulties with limited caregiver assistance; prefer migration to US versus university in Mexico. In response, parents expend unplanned money, resources on dangerous trips home.
Jia & Tian, 2010 Jia, Shi, Cao, Delancey & Tian, 2010	N= 605 children 8-14 years, in 2-parent families, 324 left behind (migrant parents), Shandong province	Stratified cluster sampling, cross-sectional survey, measuring loneliness and HRQOL	Loneliness scale showed left behind children 2.5 times more likely to be lonely and 6.5 times more likely to be very lonely than children in nonmigrant families. Loneliness increased with grandparent caretakers, poor communication and relationship with parents. (Jia & Tian, 2010) HRQOL increased with age, SES, level of education, but worse for children of migrants at every stratification.
Liu, Li & Ge, 2009	N= 592, children ages 10-17, in 3 Chinese rural areas whose parents migrated to urban areas for work	Cross-sectional, randomized selection of counties, schools, demographic surveys including age of separation, depression and anxiety scales	CDI and trait anxiety scores highest for children whose parents left before age 3; state anxiety scores highest for children whose parents left before age 7. Scores were higher if mother or both parents had left at an early age than fathers alone. Findings differed by sending region, by SES of student (students with higher SES had less depression, anxiety), and gender of parent who left, with higher symptoms when mothers or both parents departed. Females showed higher levels of depression and trait anxiety than males if both parents had left.

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Parreñas, 2005	N = 228 middle/high school students, survey N= 69 college students, 31 guardians in Philippines, with parents abroad	Mixed methods: Survey, ethnographic methods, interviews, focus groups	Immigration reinforces traditional gender roles; mothers attempt to fill both emotional and economic gaps left by migrant fathers, but fathers do not reciprocate for migrant mothers. Youths resent mothers' absence, even when well cared for by relatives. Findings reinforce critique of gender and globalization, family's role as economic-reproductive institution and arena for shared experiences.
Pottinger, 2005	N = 54 9 to 10 year olds in urban Jamaican school with parents abroad	Case control, children with migratory parents matched by gender & grade with control Tested for academic achievement, self-esteem, family background, problem behavior, exposure to violence. Interviewers blinded to groups	Children of migrated parents showed more anger, loneliness, somatic complaints, fears of abandonment, but were no different from comparison groups on overall well-being, behavior, test scores. Unhappiness with parents' migration directly correlated with depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation. Children in both groups experienced child shifting (more in migration group) and the comparison group experienced more violence and abuse.
Pribilsky, 2001 Pribilsky, 2007	N= 30 adolescents in 4 mountain villages in Southern Ecuador, traditional sending areas to NY and Chicago N= 137 secondary school students with migrant parents	Ethnographic methods, interview and participant observation	With migration of fathers, less emphasis on children helping with agriculture, more on education, including boarding school, learning English and other migration skills. Village tensions between migrating and non-migrating families, and larger houses of transnational families with more private space change socialization patterns. *"Nervios"*, formerly seen only in adult women, now seen in boys, possibly due to attachment disruptions, reaction to cultural changes, and/or pressure to migrate.

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Wen & Lin, 2012	N = 625 (704-79) children 8-18 living in 5 villages in rural Hunan province, with migrant and nonmigrant parents, purposive sampling	Cross-sectional survey	Measured satisfaction with life, positive health behaviors, school engagement. Children from mother-migrant families more disadvantaged (family cohesion and support, school engagement) than children from two-parent migrant families. School engagement same for father-migrant families as nonmigrant families, though less healthy behaviors; little overall satisfaction difference between migrant and nonmigrant parents
Research reports and conference proceedings			
Duque Páramo, 2010 (report)	N= 186 children in Bogotá, ages 6-17, with a migrant parent	In-depth interviews and focus groups	Youth missed their parents, idealized future reunification, and appreciated their parents' sacrifices for the good of the family. Expressed anger at parents who deceived them about migration when departing. Parents used cell phones, computers, chat and webcams for frequent communication with distant children.

Table 2 Studies of Reunified Children
All samples are purposive unless otherwise noted

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Arnold, 2006	N=20, adult Caribbean women in England, reunited with mothers after prolonged separations, some in therapy	Semistructured interviews, content analysis	Women in therapy were less attached to childhood substitute caregivers; those not in therapy remembered happier childhoods; 95% were disappointed in initial and subsequent encounters with their mother, reported difficulty responding to mothers' overtures for physical and emotional affection, and adjusting to younger siblings. Participants felt unable to mourn loss of substitute caretakers. Having shared separation experience with siblings or peers promoted resilience.
Ártico, 2001, 2003	N = 7, Central and South American adolescents, convenience sample, some in therapy	Two in depth interviews, one semi-structured, thematic and sand tray analysis	Parents and youth experienced war and political trauma in home country. Youth resented separation for personal reasons, rather than financial support or fleeing violence. Expressed resentment at parents' long work hours, ambivalence about parental authority. Participants felt pressure to withhold undesirable feelings from parent, to repay parental sacrifice by working hard. Felt sense of loss in the US, and pride in their upbringing. Alcoholism of fathers a major problem.
Black, 2005	N = 22, 10 adults and 12 children in 6 families, authorized Mexican-American families in Texas, recruited through school district	Qualitative interviews of parents and children (ages of children & length of separations not given), narrative analysis	Immigration disrupted family attachment, children found attending school, learning new language stressful. Parental contact with children during separation helped adjustment.

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995	N: Not given. Caribbean adolescents, referred for group work, attending Toronto schools over a 5 year period	Case reports of series of therapy groups	Recurrent group themes: rejection, abandonment, rebuffing parental attempts at affection, reporting harsh parental discipline, degrading home culture as inferior to Canadian culture. Family privacy issues impeded therapists' work with parents. First report in contemporary migration literature about reunification difficulties.
Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008	N= 24 (12 teens, 12 mothers), Caribbean families recruited from NY area churches and community centers	In-depth separate interview of, mother and teen, content analysis	Teen-mother disagreement about preparation for migration, childcare during separation, communication with mother during separation, support of mother by home country caregiver, jealousy of mother about child-caregiver bond. Less involvement by fathers and stepfathers. Differing expectations, abuse during separation, additions to family in US, and regret and blame related to separation all increased difficulties of reunification.
Hernandez, 2009	N=26 Mexican, Honduran, Nicaraguan high school students (14-20 years) residing in US between 3 months and 7 years,	Qualitative interviews (2 each), narrative analysis	Study included unaccompanied minors, parachute migration, and family reunification. Most but not all desired migration. Many reported satisfaction with the separation arrangements and caretaking by a grandparent. Readjustment to living with parents was the most difficult for adolescents.
Ko & Perreira, 2010	N= 20 Latino immigrant youth 12-19, randomly selected from stratified cluster sample	Qualitative interviews	Youth experienced family disruption, stressful migration journeys, anticipated reunification but found arrival and reunification disorienting. Only 45% were happier in US, but recognized greater opportunities. Examples given of resilience of youth, also barriers related to undocumented status.

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Kotuby, 2003	N= 74. English-speaking Caribbean immigrants ages 17-21, separated from parents ≥ 1 year and in US 6 months+, recruited from alternate HS literacy program, NY	Semi-structured interview, surveys, multiple regression analysis	Separation variables, including parental contact and satisfaction with caretaking during separation, predicted social network variables, such as network size and multiplexity (multifunctional relationships) and interconnectedness between family and non-family networks. Multiplexity predicted lower symptom levels, but only for adolescents separated from a father.
Lam, Chan & Tsoi, 2005	N =45 Chinese immigrant students in Hong Kong, selected on basis of high, medium, low survey adjustment scores	Semi-structured interviews, narrative analysis	Participants experienced serial migration of family members to Hong Kong, with fathers leaving first. Adolescents sometimes reluctant to leave China, experienced a "honeymoon" on arrival. Living conditions were worse, reestablishing relationship with father was difficult and they missed previous caretakers. The main differences between well and poorly adjusted youth were in the quality of family life, and amount of gratitude for parents' choices.
Lashley, 2000	N = 4 Caribbean adolescents in Canada	Case reports, interviews with parents, children, notes from court appearances	Youths were ambivalent about immigration, unprepared for racism or cultural and academic differences in Canada, identified more with Afro-Caribbean youth subculture. Parents expressed conflicts about discipline, lack of privacy, lack of extended family support, ambivalence about social services and court system.

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Lemy, 2000	N =119 Haitian immigrant youth ages 11-16, recruited through NY area churches, schools, community centers	Cross-sectional survey, using some previously validated mental health and attachment scales, comparing separated and non-separated groups	Separated adolescents had greater internalizing but not externalizing scores on behavioral checklist, no significant differences on attachment scores. Girls who had been separated were more alienated from their fathers, separated boys had more anxiety regarding future separations.
Mitrani, Santisteban & Muir, 2004	N= 21 Latino reunified immigrant teens referred for substance abuse treatment, (22% of total referrals) average separation from parents 3 years.	Case reports, clinical intervention strategies	Sibling bonds were strengthened during separations, sometimes preventing resumption of parental bond. While parental separation did not increase risk for substance abuse, when it did occur, separation had to be addressed before successful substance abuse treatment.
Potochnik & Perreira, 2010	N = 281 first generation Latino immigrant youth ages 12-19 in N. Carolina, probability sample, secondary data of Latino Adolescent Migration Health & Adaptation (LAMHA) study	Survey, cross-sectional, logistic regression, primarily used previously validated scales for this population	Youth experiencing increased migration stressors, and/or undocumented status, scored higher on depression and anxiety scales. Longer time in US, support from family and teachers predicted lower scores. 75% of sample had been separated from a parent; separation not independently significant in model, but may indirectly affect levels of perceived family support, which was significant and negatively related to levels of anxiety and depression.

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Rousseau, et al., 2009	N=254 , 118 Caribbean and 136 Filipino 1st, 2d generation adolescents 12-19 in Canada and 1 parent. Cluster sampling of 11 high schools, 49% refusal rate	Mixed Methods: survey including previously validate and adapted scales, 6 focus groups (parents, adolescents, community leaders)	More Filipino adolescents had been separated from their parents than Caribbean adolescents. Separation was not significantly related to family cohesion or conflict; was dropped from the regression analysis. Filipino adolescents scored higher on internalizing measures. Caribbean adolescents scored higher on perceptions of racism and family conflict, but also on collective self-esteem related to social group. Unable to analyze differences between refusing and enrolled families.
Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004	N = 48 Caribbean and African young adults recruited at a family reunification conference, separated a mean of 9.5 years, most reunified with their mothers	Retrospective study, asked to answer questionnaires based on perceptions of self and caretaker during separation, 1 year after reunification and currently	Participants generally felt greater attachments to and conformity with expectations of childhood caregivers than to parents. Longer length of separation correlated with more difficult parental relationships, though visits during separation were helpful. About half of the sample felt strongly bonded to parents, but cohesion was lower with step-parents and new siblings. Self-esteem was lowest at the time of reunification, which was harder for young men.
Suárez-Orozco Todorova & Louie 2002

Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova , 2008 | N = 385, immigrant children entering a US school between ages 9 and 14, recruited from 51 schools in in Boston and SF Bay areas, from Dominican, Haitian, Chinese, Mexican, Central American families | Part of 5-year Longitudinal Immigrant School Adaptation (LISA) study

Mixed methods: quantitative surveys, grades and test scores, ethnographic methods | 79% of children separated from fathers, 55% from mothers during immigration; Chinese children were least likely, Central American, Dominican and Haitian children most likely to be separated, with longest separations from Central American mothers (>5 yrs). Separated children reported ambivalence about reunification, and more depressive symptoms early in the study. 2/3 of all participants showed academic decline over time |

Author	Sample	Study Design	Summary of Findings
Suárez-Orozco, Bang & Kim, 2011	Subset of LISA sample N= 282 (all of LISA sample for whom anxiety, depression data available at year 5)	Analyzed surveys from years 1 and 5 and semi-structured interviews in year 2 by length of separation from one or both parents	Youths who had undergone no or short separations (<2 years) showed the least depressive and anxious symptoms at 1 year; those who had undergone the longest separations (>4 years) showed the highest symptoms at one year. Decrease in symptoms reported for all groups at year 5. Qualitative descriptions of reunification process show initial distress from both parents and children. Researchers report this a difficult topic in interviews.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to delineate and explain the methodology of the dissertation research project. I will briefly discuss grounded theory (GT) and then describe the specific research design for this study, "Growing up in the transnational family: Latino adolescents adjusting to late immigration and family reunification." I will discuss the setting, sample, ethical issues and permissions, recruitment and interview strategies, and analytic processes. I will also address my own position in the research and the efforts I have made to ensure rigor.

Design

Qualitative approaches to research are accepted as effective means of generating insight and rich description and developing theory about emerging phenomena (Creswell, 2007). Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative research method in which theory is inductively and deductively generated from systematic data collection and analysis, allowing the incorporation of both multiple perspectives and larger domains of social interaction (Clarke, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). GT approaches have been used successfully in qualitative research projects involving Latino adolescents (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; de la Cuesta, 2001; Sanchez, Reyes, & Singh, 2006; Shade, Kools, Pinderhughes, & S. Weiss, 2012; J. Weiss, Jampol, Lievano, Smith, & Wurster, 2008), using individual and group interviews as well as participant observation.

GT methods allow the researcher to examine the difficulties of exploring family dynamics, for example how the feelings and experiences of newly immigrated adolescents are constructed and identified within the family, with some feelings more "allowable" than others (Charmaz, 2009, p. 142). This ability to explore parent-teen

interactions from the adolescent's inside perspective and to examine the assumptions

related to managing difficult feelings (Hochschild, 1979) related to change, loss and

reconnection allow the researcher and participants to develop creative analyses of

emerging family structures and to approach these interactions with sensitivity.

Constructivist GT (Charmaz, 2006) starts from the assumption that both the views and

perspectives of research participants and those of the researcher, including their theories,

are interpretations of a reality that is itself socially constructed (McCarthy, 1996; Strauss,

1959/1997). Constructivist GT methods also allow the researcher to examine the

viewpoints, historical and social circumstances of both participants and researcher, which

can lead to fresh and creative theoretical analysis (Charmaz, 2009). Thus, this study used

constructivist GT and benefitted from the sustained engagement that lent greater potential

for examining emotionally laden phenomena.

Pilot Study

From October 2007 to March 2008, I conducted a pilot study, consisting of

participant observation and 7 interviews of 5 Latino immigrant adolescents living in a

Western US metropolitan area with large concentrations of Latino immigrants, who had

been separated from a parent for more than four years during the course of immigration.

During this pilot study, I found that immigrant Latino adolescents wanted to talk about

general adaptation to life in the US their experiences of anti-immigrant prejudice,

benefits and problems of English learner classes, traumas of immigration enforcement

and barriers to educational and occupational advancement for undocumented immigrants,

but were more hesitant in discussing their particular experiences with family

reunification. Other scholars have remarked on the difficulty of studying an issue with so

much emotional and ideological overlay (Isaksen, Devi, & Hochschild, 2008), including

the impact of globalization, the culture- and gender-specific ideal family constellations,

and the ideal roles of family members within those constellations.

In order to understand how children and youth adapt to long-distance family lives,

it is important to understand both the cultural ideal and the lived reality (Falicov, 1996).

Hochschild and Machung (2003/1989) and Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) used ethnographic

research to explore the interrelationship of cultural ideals and reality in changing

relationships between men and women, and ethnographic research can be used to explore

the effect of these changing relationships on the parenting of children in transnational

families. Just as Hochschild and Machung explored the management of emotions within

the household of working parents, the management of emotions can be explored within

childrearing arrangements developed by migrant mothers and their families. Instead of

seeing the reluctance to talk about the emotional toll of transnational family life on

children as an obstacle to research, exploring this reluctance and areas of silence in the

family narratives about immigration and transnational families became a part of my

research.

Sample and Rationale

The sample in this research was theoretically driven (Charmaz, 2006), and was

modified depending on initial findings and preliminary analysis. The sample consisted of

14 focus group participants and 20 adolescents who were interviewed once or twice,

including the two adolescents from the pilot study who fit the inclusion criteria and

whose interviews provided rich data about family reunification. Inclusion criteria for the

study included immigration at age 9 or later from Mexico or Central America, after

having been separated from one or both parents for at least four years because of the parent's migration to the US. The length of separation was chosen based on my clinical experience and research literature indicating that separations of four years or more were common (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008) and that longer separations might be associated with more difficult reunifications (Smith, Lalonde, & Johnson, 2004). This sample included the country of origin (Mexico) of the largest single group of immigrants in the United States (Passel, 2011). Limiting the sample to Latino immigrants allowed me to gather data from participants in their native language, and to focus on the particular issues of the largest group of immigrants in the US.

Permissions, Setting and Recruitment of Participants

The research proposal was approved by the Committee on Human Research at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) on July 25, 2010, with annual renewals in 2011 and 2012, and also by the Boards at the community research sites. The research for this project was originally conducted in conjunction with two community-based organizations, an after school program and a nonprofit health center, located in a Western US metropolitan area with a high concentration of Latino immigrants. During the second year of data collection, sites were expanded to a nonprofit health center with school-based and school-linked services in a nearby County.

The UCSF Institutional Review Board (IRB) preferred and approved a combined verbal consent/assent form for parents and youth, in order to protect this vulnerable immigrant population. All Spanish language materials were professionally translated and reviewed by staff at the community organizations, with final approval by the IRB. I discussed the consent/assent material in English or Spanish as the youth preferred, sent

home Spanish language copies of the consent/assent form for parents to read, and spoke to parents of minor participants by phone before the interview began. As recommended by the IRB, youth chose and subsequently were identified by pseudonyms during the interview, transcription and analysis.

The experience of recruiting participants for the pilot project in 2007-2008 reinforces current literature on enrolling participants from immigrant communities: the most effective recruitment starts with referral from trusted gatekeepers in those communities (Sheikh et al., 2009). In order to gain the trust of potential participants and key referring gatekeeper contacts or liaisons in the community agencies, I volunteered requested health-related services, such as health education classes for adolescents and parents and expert consultation in a community health center. I have worked as a clinician in one of the nonprofit health centers, and was already familiar with gatekeepers at several of this organization's school-based sites who served as project liaisons.

Focus groups have been shown to be a valuable method for refining instruments and eliciting information from culturally diverse groups (Farquhar, Parker, Schulz, & Israel, 2006; Halcomb, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Phillips, & Davidson, 2007; Willgerodt, 2003). I pilot tested publicity flyers and the interview guide in focus groups with diverse peer educators at two of the sites, that I facilitated along with a bilingual/bicultural staff member at each site. Incentives for interviews and focus groups consisted of $25 gift cards to local stores. The two focus groups were conducted in English, and open-ended interviews were conducted in Spanish or English, as participants preferred, taped with participants' permission, and then transcribed and translated into English, so that all transcripts of Spanish language interviews were bilingual.

Bilingual posters publicizing the study were distributed at all research sites, including a dedicated project email address and a dedicated project cell phone number. However most youth were in fact recruited by trusted staff, or liaisons at the sites, or through snowball sampling from participants. Two interviews of one adolescent from the pilot study were included in the analysis, as the young person matched the inclusion criteria for this study and lived in one of the study counties. This adolescent was the only participant to call the project cell phone after seeing a flyer.

Project liaisons spoke with youth who might fit study criteria, and then contacted me to meet interested youth and their friends. This method of recruitment, through gatekeepers and peers, did not allow us to gauge how many youth that were approached might have declined to participate. Of all the potential participants I spoke with, all but one agreed to participate. Two more initially agreed, but did not return for scheduled appointments. Participants included 14 youth from one county and 6 from a second county. There were no adolescents recruited from my own clinical site.

Interviews began in the Fall of 2010 and continued through the spring of 2011, resumed again in the Fall of 2011 in the first county and were extended to school-linked sites in a second county in February of 2012. While staff members at freestanding nonprofit clinics were open to having adolescents interviewed on site, space and logistics of clinic schedules were obstacles to recruitment, and only one teen was interviewed at a freestanding clinic. One of the staff members from the after school program, who had himself been separated from his mother during his youth, was instrumental in recruiting participants during the first year of the study, particularly young men he met through support groups he conducted in several area high schools. However, in June 2011, State

budget cuts eliminated the program, and he was switched to a different job within his organization. Staff turnover at other sites also slowed the pace of recruitment.

Data Collection Methods

  Interview methodology. I conducted all of the interviews at the after school program offices, school-linked sites and neighborhood cafés; two interviews were conducted together with a staff member of the after school program who recruited many of the youth. While this arrangement provided me with new ways of approaching youth and helpful question prompts, the joint interviews themselves were more problematic. In one instance, I interviewed two participants together with the staff member at a café close to their school. The ambient noise interfered with understanding the flow of the interview in real time and made transcription of the tape difficult. Although the two youths interviewed are friends, they have very different life circumstances, and one of the youths talked quite a bit more than the other. I subsequently interviewed each youth alone. In the other case, a second interview of a young man who had expressed some ambivalence about doing the interview, the staff member persisted in questioning the participant on emotional issues when I would have changed the line of questioning or ended the interview.

  Youth were interviewed once or twice – partly depending on the content of the interviews and partly depending on youth interest and availability for a second interview. As I am bilingual, interviews were conducted in Spanish or English as youth preferred. Of the 20 youth interviewed, 2 preferred to be interviewed in English, one was interviewed in a combination of Spanish and English, and the rest were interviewed primarily in Spanish.

Interview questions. Interview questions were open-ended, with an interview guide that I developed in consultation with the dissertation committee (See Appendix A). Questions were refined from the pilot study and directions for inquiry were added. Specific changes in the interview guide from pilot study to dissertation study included a shift from a problem-focused view of the adolescent participant's experience to a strength-based approach (Duncan et al., 2007; Ginsburg & Carlson, 2011), encouraging participants to talk about positive aspects of family life, as well as prompts to talk about spending leisure time in their home country and the US, and family gatherings and celebrations. For example:

> 1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are the strengths/good things about you that have helped you adjust to life in San Francisco? What would your friends say about you? Your family?

> 12. Tell me what it was like to start living with your mother (parents) again?
>   a. What was the easiest thing? The hardest thing?
>   b. How much was it like what you expected?
>   c. How much was it different from what you expected?
>   d. What has helped you and your family most in adjusting to being together again?

Participants were asked about family life in a variety of neutral ways that encouraged more detailed narratives, such as describing the first moment of reunification, the first day they spent together, a typical weekend day, and examples of any changes, positive or negative, in the relationships.

In GT, data analysis begins with the earliest data collection, allowing for flexibility and the use of methods of data collection most appropriate to the setting (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005). Early open coding, described in greater detail below, allowed me, in consultation with my dissertation chair, to focus on emerging concepts that merited further scrutiny and additional questions. The amount and severity of trauma

that participants had experienced in their home countries, en route to the US, and in the US was an unexpected finding, as well as the presence and importance of their relationships with peer-age relatives such as siblings, cousins and younger aunts and uncles, in both their home country and the US.

The free-ranging and nonlinear manner in which some interviews unfolded called for a question guide that allowed the researcher to view all potential interview topics on one double-sided sheet of paper, rather than a multi-page list, and an interview "map" was developed with some additional question prompts (See Appendix B).

Interview challenges: language. I am not a native speaker of Spanish, although I have worked comfortably with Spanish-speaking patients for many years and had passed a translation test at a former place of employment. In the less structured format of the research interview, I had some difficulty in composing complex follow-up questions at first while following the flow of the interview in Spanish. After reviewing some of the tapes and meeting with my advisor, I decided to respond in English (for example after a youth had disclosed something particularly traumatic or when composing a delicate follow-up question) and then to translate that response/question back into Spanish if needed. This was quite effective in improving the flow and content of follow-up questions, and served to change the interview dynamic, as I sought help from participants in phrasing a thought in Spanish. All of the youth who were interviewed in Spanish are either in English learner classes or in a newcomer high school taught entirely as English immersion, so most youths had some English capability and occasionally expressed thoughts in English. The following fragment is an example of my use of both languages

together in the second interview of a young man who had also used English phrases earlier in the interview (Official translation in bold):

NAOMI: mm-hmm. A veces cuando una familia, como vive con un crisis como eso, con la muerte del niño, bebe: brings everybody closer, todos se ajuntan mejor, o a veces no. And, do you think, what do you think is true for your family? You guys are closer now, or not, since the baby died?

NAOMI: mm-hmm. Sometimes a family, when it lives with a crisis like that, with the death of a child, baby: brings everybody closer, everyone gets together more, or sometimes not. And, do you think, what do you think is true for your family? You guys are closer now, or not, since the baby died?

JESUS: Si. Nomás un poco, no, más juntos.

JESUS: Yeah. Just a little, no, more together.

NAOMI: ¿Más juntos?

NAOMI: More together?

JESUS: Yeah.

JESUS: Yeah.

(pause)

NAOMI: ¿Pueden, ustedes pueden hablar juntos sobre..platicar sobre, the baby?

NAOMI: Are you able to, are you guys able to talk together about.. talk (chat) about, the baby?

JESUS: Si.

JESUS: Yeah.

Follow-up challenges and second interviews. I set up appointments at both high

schools to return transcripts to the youths and schedule second interviews. As a number

of the youths in the study were undocumented immigrants or lived in mixed status

families, and in keeping with the IRB agreements through UCSF, I did not keep

demographic or contact information on teens that could be used to identify them –

pseudonyms were used in the research, and we did not keep the youth's email or phone

numbers, using staff members at each site to contact them instead. While this did in fact

protect the participants even in the unlikely eventuality that my records might be

subpoenaed by immigration authorities, this level of anonymity impeded attempts to

follow up with participants for second interviews or to review research findings. At least

four of the participants in one county were no longer at their school during the second

interview year, and in one case, even a few months after the first interview. This limited

ability to follow up with youth is seen as a limitation in the research, and it is possible

that newer technologies, such as Google phone, might enable participants and researchers

to be in closer direct communication without compromising anonymity in future projects.

Of the 20 youths in the study, 6 had full second interviews, and 2 more participants had

brief second interviews.

Data Collection: Participant Observation and Field Notes

I also gathered data through participant observation in meetings with school,

clinic and community organization staff. I wrote or voice recorded field notes after each

focus group meeting, interview, and participant observation and wrote frequent memos as

part of data gathering and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Strauss & Corbin,

1990). While I had IRB permission to record any discussions with mothers of the

adolescent participants in the course of meeting about permission to interview, these conversations were generally brief, occurred over cell phones with less than optimal connections, and were not digitally recorded. Any relevant conversations were documented in field notes.

Reflexivity

Every researcher brings experiences and assumptions to the research that can sensitize the researcher to subtleties expressed by participants during interviews, but can also lead the researcher astray. Charmaz (2006) defines reflexivity as " the researcher's scrutiny of his/her research experience, decisions, and interpretations in ways that bring the researcher into the process and allow the reader to assess how and to what extent the researcher's interests, positions, and assumptions influenced inquiry" (p. 188). Other grounded theorists, including Clarke (2005) and Daly (1997) have stressed the importance of the transparency of the researcher's position, experience and standpoint in the research, while ensuring that the research reflects the voices and experiences of the participants.

I had two introductions as a child to the fragility of families in the face of political and personal trauma. The first occurred when I learned at eight years that my warm and loving father's elegant manners and formal, slightly accented English came from Germany, which he and his family fled at different times and to different countries because of their religion and political views. The second came with a motor vehicle accident on a bright, sunny spring day a month after I turned 17, that seriously injured everyone in my family and abruptly shattered my mother's and father's abilities to parent my younger sister and me.

The first experience led to lifelong concerns for social justice and immigrant rights and an expectation that I would learn to speak several languages well. Both experiences led to a career in nursing and a job at San Francisco General Hospital, working with Spanish-speaking immigrant and refugee children, and eventually to this dissertation.

While my relatives experienced family disruption and lack of documentation, they were immigrants from very different countries of origin and geopolitical arenas than the immigrant adolescents in my study. I experienced profound and permanent changes in my relationship with my parents after accidental trauma, and believe that these changes sensitized me as a clinician and a researcher to the disruptions experienced by separated and reunifying families. And yet it was crucial for the integrity of the research that I was present and listening to the participants during interviews and data analysis and not to the shadows of my own past. Finally, I am an experienced adolescent nurse practitioner and regularly interview adolescent patients about their lives in the course of their clinical care. However those clinical interviews are more structured and gather different information, and it took conscious preparation to distinguish between the role of the researcher and the role of the nurse clinician.

I kept a reflexivity journal throughout the research process. Field notes and memos about transcription and coding also contained reflections on interactions with adolescent participants, decisions made about lines of inquiry and theoretical sampling. As analysis and data collection proceeded simultaneously, I used journals and memoing to scrutinize assumptions about youth and their experiences that might have come from my immigrant background, my middle class upbringing or my own experiences with

trauma during adolescence. I met frequently with my Dissertation Advisor, with community research liaisons, and with a small group of doctoral student colleagues who were also engaged in GT research, to ensure that emerging concepts and theorizing were grounded in the data.

Analysis

I analyzed text from transcribed interviews, field notes, and memos section-by-section, and coded them using Atlas ti version 6.2, a qualitative software program, under the supervision of my Dissertation Advisor. Spanish language interviews were coded in sections that included both the original Spanish and the English translation. The first phase of analysis involved open or initial coding and these codes were developed without regard for their level of importance. When data were expanded to a critical mass of these initial codes, they were further developed through the techniques of constant comparative analysis, more focused coding, and categorization. This focused categorization of codes was achieved with decisions made about their relative salience, allowing the researcher to generate theory throughout the analytic process as concepts and relationships emerged from data (Charmaz, 2006; Kools, McCarthy, Durham, & Robrecht, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). At the broadest level of data expansion there were 183 codes, including numerous in vivo codes, with code names taken directly from participant interview quotations.

Preliminary analysis was discussed with participants in later interviews and with members of the community-based organizations for feedback and refinement of emerging concepts. Formal meetings to thank community groups and report preliminary findings were set up mid-way through the project and also at the end of formal data collection. I

took notes during discussions with community outreach workers, counselors and health care providers who shared their own experiences of working with youth engaged in family reunification, and field notes were written or recorded after each meeting. These interactions and notes were used to inform interpretation and analysis.

In contrast with most of the participants in the pilot study, many participants in the dissertation study did engage in detailed narrations and discussions about the emotional intricacies of family life, both positive and painful. In addition, all participants discussed the multiple contexts of their lives, including the economic hardships that had impelled their parents to migrate, gang and cartel violence in both their home countries and their new homes in the US, challenges and limitations of their own and their family's immigration status, and successes and challenges of the school systems in both countries. There are several potential reasons for these differences.

In addition to a more neutral focus, asking about strengths and positive events as well as difficulties, the interview prompts for this study encouraged participants to give examples of events, and also asked for their input as experts about gender differences, issues of importance to Latino immigrant youth, and how they thought that nurses could help families who were adjusting to reunification. The interviews also became longer and richer over the duration of the study. This may have been partly be due to my increasing skill in asking follow-up questions over time and also in the more focused questioning in later interviews that is an expected outcome of the GT method of simultaneous data collection and analysis. There were also different study liaisons in year two of data collection, and it is possible that the youths who were recruited as study

participants in year two were more talkative and articulate than the participants in year one.

In moving from open coding to higher order of analyses, I used several complementary strategies in the constructivist GT paradigm, including dimensional analysis (DA) (Kools et al., 1996; Schatzman, 1991), situational mapping (Clarke, 2003, 2005), and theoretical sorting of memos (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss, 1987). While traditional GT attempts to discover the basic social process underlying the phenomenon of interest (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999), DA addresses the question, "What *all* is involved here?" (Schatzman, 1991, p.310). DA allows the researcher to explore all of the "meanings of interactions" in a complex social situation (Kools et al., p. 316) by identifying multiple interlinked dimensions of a complex phenomenon under study, drawing them into a clear narrative around a central, organizing perspective (McGuire & Martin, 2007). The research questions for the dissertation focused more on the individual adolescent's interpretation and interaction with his family and community contexts, and I decided in consultation with my Dissertation Chair to use dimensional analysis to further theorize about the research situations (Kools et al.; Schatzman).

Throughout analysis, theoretical memos were written to track developing conceptualizations. Some early conceptual memos discussed the primacy of the immigration stories in the interviews, varying reasons for youth immigration such as fleeing gangs and drug cartels, the journey across the border, the impact of crises on parent-youth relationships, and relationships with peer-aged relatives. I developed DA of loneliness, family reintegration, gender and "telling my story."

In the explanatory matrix, the researcher selects from among the salient dimensions, the one dimension, or perspective, that provides the most coherent explanation of the entire phenomenon under investigation (Kools et al., 1996; Schatzman, 1991). Using this overarching perspective, the explanatory matrix is configured to include dimensions of context, conditions, processes and consequences. "Telling my story" emerged as a salient dimension, but after being auditioned for the explanatory perspective, it was found to be a sub-dimension of "making meaning." While the importance of being able to communicate their life stories to parents, teachers, health care providers and the larger community was an important dimension of the adolescent's adaptation to family separation and reunification and overall adaptation, it did not explain everything that was involved in the phenomenon of migration to the US in late childhood in the context of transnational family life. A member of my doctoral student GT analysis group who was also an immigrant reviewed the "making meaning" explanatory matrix, and suggested that the narrative of "making a better life" was being "shoved down the throats" of the participants. While I had not even had a code for "a better life," a phrase search using the object crawler function of Atlas ti revealed several quotes containing this phrase (see Chapter 6) and the codes "Reasons for emigration, parent" and "Reasons for migration, teen" were each linked to over 20 quotations, most of which addressed the quest for a better life for the family.

"Making a journey to a better life" was auditioned for the overall explanatory matrix. Liaisons and consultants at the research sites liked the concept of a journey to a better life, but felt that the verb "making" did not translate well into Spanish, and I wanted a concept that had resonance in both languages. While most theorizing about GT

includes verbs, usually gerunds (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978), I was having trouble with verbs and one of my consultants felt that *"nuestra jornada,"* or "our journey" was preferable to any verb I suggested. An essay about coding, by Star (2007), gave an excellent justification for the need to find the essential action: "Actions traverse the skin. They do not originate in individuals, but rather as a result of relations, the 'between-ness' of the world" (p. 90). I went back into research interviews, codes, and wrote memos "asking questions of the data" (Lempert, 2007, p. 245). Here is an example from a memo:

> As a parent you are passing on love and also skills to your children and finding opportunities for them (better schools, more educational opportunities, safety, an opportunity at a living wage). It is not an equal partnership – the parent has more understanding (developmentally and through location) of the options and possibilities for the child and the parent makes the decision. From the child's point of view, they have no choice, they have usually not been given an option of where to live, they have no control over the time or manner of reunification. So how is the child ACTING in this relationship with the distant parent and how is everything else (politics, desert, border) in this mix of relationships? The parent believes in a better life for the child, and the success of this partnership is how supported the parent is by extended family, how that belief is communicated and nurtured in the child, and how well the belief in a better life can be realized when the child comes to the US, reunites, goes to school, avoids gangs or not, learns English or not, etc.

The final organizing perspective I selected, after auditioning it as well with my community consultants, is "Believing in a better life" (See Chapter 6).

Rigor

To ensure analytic rigor, I followed the framework for evaluating qualitative research elaborated by Whittemore, Chase and Mandle (2001). In this framework, primary criteria for validity involve credibility, authenticity and integrity. I have reported findings using rich description and with enough detail to allow the reader to judge credibility, and have strengthened authenticity by liberal use of quotations from participants. I have made sure to incorporate multiple perspectives where research participants had different opinions or experiences, as one of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability to incorporate multiple voices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

As noted in the Reflexivity section above, I have strived for transparency in my own perspective and participation in both data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Daly, 1997) through a reflexivity journal, memos, and consultation with committee members, doctoral student colleagues, and community consultants. For theoretical verification, I shared initial findings and developing analyses with participants and members of community organizations, in order to ensure that the findings did not just reflect my own perspective.

Secondary criteria for validity involve explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence and sensitivity (Whittemore et al., 2001). Explicitness involves the ability of the reader to audit the analytic processes of the researchers, sometimes called an audit trail of the investigator's methods. I was meticulous in writing or recording field notes after every research interaction, and in writing memos with every

transcription check and for each interview as it was coded. In this chapter, I have explicated in detail the process through which I used initial coding, memos, focused codes and dimensionalizing to deepen the analysis, bringing the research beyond the level of description, to theorize "how individuals and groups make meaning together and interact with each other" (Holloway & Todres, 2003, p. 348).

With the expert feedback of my dissertation committee, I have attempted to use sufficient quotations and rich descriptions of viewpoints and interactions of participants without overwhelming the reader with too much detail (Whittemore et al., 2001). I was creative and persistent in revising interview approaches in order to elicit information on difficult topics. For example, gender differences in educational adaptation of immigrant youth have been noted in the research literature (Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008), but there has been scant information on the impact of gender on family reunification. I was determined to elicit participant perspectives on gender differences in immigration and family experiences. With the exception of one young woman who stated, "I have thought about this a lot!" most participants were not sure how to answer this question in the abstract. Young men were puzzled and seemed offended if I asked them how their life would be different if they were a girl, and I finally hit on the technique of asking participants to imagine having a twin of the opposite gender and imagining how his or her life might be different. This line of questioning allowed participants who had an opposite gender sibling to reflect on the differences in their lives, and for those with only same gender siblings, to theorize about potential differences, providing richer data.

NAOMI: Here. Uh-huh. And, can you imagine; I wanted to understand a little, like the, the effect, of gender. You know, that you're a guy instead of a girl. Can you imagine how it would be, if you were a girl, or if, if you had a twin sister? Like if, would it be different for her?

DAVID: Yeah, I think yeah. Because, my dad says, that what, what you want to do, it's your decision. If you want to study, work. For example, he told me, because I am a man I have to support the family. To teach, I have to work to be able to support. And the women, no, they are going to get married with, their husband and she, they (the men) have to support them. And that's how it has to be done, in the, things go in their place and something like that. But if they wanted to study and get a good job and do something like that, the women could do it also.

NAOMI: Uh-huh. Okay.

DAVID: But, I, I, I had the obligation of, of, of studying to be able to, for, to work. To get a good job to be able to support my family in the future.

NAOMI: Uh-huh. Okay. And is, that responsibility of supporting a family that drives you, a little more..

In summary, two focus groups, interviews and participant observation of 20 young people were the sources of data used for the dimensional analysis of the process of separation and reunification for Latino adolescent immigrants who were living with parents after a separation of at least four years. Coding and mapping strategies were used to derive a final explanatory matrix configuration, allowing a theoretical story to be organized around the central perspective of Believing in a Better Life. From this conceptual configuration of the data, products of analysis included a conceptual model

from which findings were derived. The experiences of the youth in maintaining and re-establishing ties with their parents will be presented chronologically (Chapter 5, "Maintaining Family Ties"). Two papers will be presented on components of this model, "Believing in a Better Life" (Chapter 6) and "Telling My Story: Latino Adolescents Make Meaning of Separation and Reunification" (Chapter 7).

Chapter 5: Maintaining Family Ties

This chapter addresses the first research question of the study: What is the process by which Latino adolescents and their parents maintain and/or re-establish family ties during and after prolonged separation during immigration? This chapter will proceed chronologically through the processes of separation and reunification, in preparation for the conceptual views that will be presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Although qualitative and quantitative methods are not directly comparable, this chapter is analogous to the descriptive statistics that are often given in quantitative studies before moving on to conceptual and statistical modeling.

The youth in our study came from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and lived in a variety of family constellations, before and after immigration. The sample was described in more detail in Chapter 4. All names used in this chapter are pseudonyms that were chosen by the youth. We assigned last initials arbitrarily in cases where two participants chose the same name.

The process of maintaining family ties during immigration-related separation and reunification had eight chronological phases in the lives of youth in the study: 1) reacting to the parent(s) leaving, 2) interacting with caretakers in their home country, 3) interacting with their distant parent(s), 4) deciding to migrate, whether by the youth, the parent, or exigent circumstances, 5) journeying to the US 6) reuniting with their parent(s) and other family members, 7) adapting to life in the US with their parent(s) and other family members, and 8) maintaining transnational family ties. Each of these phases will

be covered in detail, with the range of reactions across youths in the study and illustrative quotations.

1) Reacting to their parent leaving

Some parents left while the study participant was an infant, while other youth ranged from ages 3 to 11 at the time of separation. Damaris "remembers" the event through stories her mother told her:

> DAMARIS: When…I don't remember. Just that what she tells me. That when - when she came over here, I was three years old and my brother was eighteen months old. And she came during hurricane Mitch. And she said that when she came, she left my brother and me sleeping (paused) and she gave us a kiss, like this, here. And she, she, she didn't come because, because she wanted to. Because she said that she came because she wanted to give us a better life, for me and my brother.

Some youths said they had no memory of their mother's departure, even though they were seven or eight at the time. For the majority who do remember the departure, they report maternal departure strategies ranging from deception to elaborate farewells. Coraima recalls:

> CORAIMA: Yeah, it was a January eighth. That she left and it was a day before my sister's birthday, the eldest. And that day, she said that she was going to buy fruit for us, like, apples, and, but it was a lie; she was going to come here and..and..

Interviewer (I): And so, she said that she was going to the market, or something, to buy food, and she never returned?

CORAIMA: She never returned. (chuckles)

I: Wow. What did you guys think?

CORAIMA: My grandmother told us that she left, soon after, and after, she called us by phone. And then she told us that she was here, and she sent us pictures. And so, well, we became happy because we saw her in pictures.

Wilberto reported a similar deception:

WILBERTO: In the morning, then she told me that. She wanted to go work or something like that. Then she give me chocolate, but I was crying because she was trying to leave --- then she gave me chocolate, and I stopped crying, but my sister ---- she was one year older than me ----- she knew that she was going to leave.

David S, whose documented father made frequent trips back and forth from the US, recalls that his father at first told him he was just working in another part of Mexico, in order to earn extra money to support their ranch. David O's mother was in an abusive relationship with his father, and when she finally made the decision to separate, she left Guatemala without telling him and his older siblings:

DAVID O: I didn't, I didn't know anything. She just left. But, because she knew that if she told us, we wouldn't have let her go. But she, she wanted a better future for us. She said nothing to us. So that we wouldn't hold her back.

I: And, and so, you didn't know that she was going to, that she left to the United States?

DAVID O: No, I didn't know. Not until she called about three months after she separated from my father.

Luis, in contrast, stated that his mother was thinking about leaving for a while, and while she had only half a day's warning of her actual departure, his whole extended family came to the house to say goodbye.

Some participants mourned their mother's departure intensely. Coraima stated that she "went for a year, that all I did was cry and I barely ate. Depressed, I was doing badly in my classes." Andrea reported similarly intense emotions:

ANDREA: And so I didn't like it. I would cry. And because they left my brother in one home, and me in another. And so I wanted to be with my - yeah, I wanted to be with my brother. And then, a time passed that we didn't know anything about my mom. And well, one night I was crying, I remember, and I prayed many days, saying to please, for immigration to get her because I didn't want to live with my uncles. And I remember that also, one night I felt that, I slept crying, and crying, and she came and she gave me a hug. And so I reacted and I said "mama!" And she told me that, when in Tijuana, they had found her and had got her. And so, at the, at the same time, I felt responsible, because I knew that I had asked God for something that wasn't right. But at the same time, I felt good because she said she didn't feel comfortable. Because she just left, she hadn't said where. And then after, she told me that she would try to go. She, she was going to try to come, again. But this time she would leave us and my brother, and me and my brother together with my grandfather.

Other youth reported milder reactions, especially if they were comfortable with their caretakers, but still missed their parents. Monica, whose father left before she was born and whose mother left when she was 15 months old, stated that living with her grandmother was "like growing up with my mom."

> MONICA: Even though always, when I, when I began to understand and I was more, started to reason more...I always, I would wonder about how it would have been to be with my parents.

2) Relating with their caretakers in their home country

Like Monica above, many youth in the study reported warm and loving relationships with their primary caretakers, who ranged from grandparents to aunts, stepmothers and older siblings. These youth reported that their grandparents gave them "a lot of love," treated them "as if we were their children," sometimes even "better" than their parents would have treated them.

> JESUS: They treated me super-well, they would take me out, to parties, the parades, to see soldiers. It's a little bit different here because my mom treats me very well, but it's not the same as my grandparents.

David O stated that his older sister was like his second mother, and his aunt "would take care of me a lot", becoming like his third mother.

David S remained in a stable home with his mother, stated that he did not listen to his mother after his father left, and that they argued about school – with his mother wanting him to continue his studies and David S wanting to work. At one point he traveled with his cousin to a different state in Mexico to work for four months without letting his mother know where he was.

Other youth had unstable, cold, neglectful and even actively abusive caretakers. José was 12 when his mother left, and states that at first he was on his own on the streets of a small city. He decided to move to his relatives' home so he would have enough to eat, even if he worked for it, moving between his uncles and his grandfather.

JOSE: Well, first, I moved. And then, I went with my grandparents. After, I was living with my uncles. And so, my grandfather drank a lot… drunk. And one time, he got into a fight with me. One time, he put a shotgun to my stomach. And so, the second time, the same, he was drinking. And so, he put the gun to my head. He told me he was going to kill me. Okay, I didn't say anything. The third time it happened, the third time, a rifle. A rifle, a twenty-two; he did the same, in my chest, and he told me that he was going to kill me, that he never wanted to see me, ever. And so, I, yeah, I was scared and I said to him "okay" I said, "if you're going to kill me, kill me." And then, my uncle said something to him, I said a lot of things to him. And he threw me out of the house, he threw me out. My sisters were still with me there.

He and his sisters then separated and lived with different uncles, and although the home was physically safer, he worked from morning to night and stated he sometimes had to steal food to have enough to eat, even though his cousins were well fed. His reports of emotional rejection from his uncles was echoed by Coraima, who described her grandmother and aunt as angry, and stated there was "*nadie con cariño*" (no one with affection) in her household after her mother's migration.

Alcohol also had a negative impact on the care that Luis and his sister experienced in Guatemala. Luis and his sister asked his grandparents and caretakers to

leave their house, because their drinking was causing "family problems." Luis and his

sister then lived with two different aunts, but found that alcohol use resulted in "the same

problems." When Luis's sister reached 16 or 17, she opened a bank account, their mother

sent remittances directly to her, and they rented a room in the house of another family,

"and we were at peace."

Carla, whose mother had left Honduras when she was one, had lived with her

grandmother until she was a teen, and then did not want to move when her grandmother

bought a house in another town. She and her brother lived with cousins and an uncle, and

in this case it was her own and her cousins' alcohol and drug use that were problems,

> CARLA: …I felt like doing a lot of things, because, alone I, I would say "I am not
>
> with my mom, nor with my dad, I am not with my grandparents, and I miss
>
> them." And sometimes, I would smoke marijuana, I would drink. And take drugs,
>
> and, and alcohol. So that I could feel good. To relax, I would say. With my other
>
> friends. And sometimes, it would be midnight and I would be at my other cousin's
>
> house, drinking.

Several of the participants had fathers who lived near them in their home

countries. Once their parents were separated and their mothers migrated, fathers did not

in any case become primary caretakers and had varying degrees of involvement with their

children. When David O's mother left Guatemala, his father refused to allow her any

direct contact with David and his siblings, nor did he allow her to send remittances. For a

while he maintained the children in their own house, with their paternal grandmother

close by to make sure they had food and other necessities:

DAVID O: My dad sometimes, he took care of me, but not like in a way that one would want. Instead he would go with his girlfriend. Or sometimes he would go on trips, and sometimes he would forget about us.

After David O's grandmother died, his father moved them to a city, where they saw him even less. David O's older sister left school to care for her brothers, re-established contact with their mother in the US and began to receive remittances directly from her. Andrea lived with her paternal grandfather in San Salvador, and her father would visit every few days. While Andrea noted that her father was an alcoholic and did not work steadily enough to support them, she remembered his visits fondly, stating that he would take her to school and advocate for her if there were school problems.

Luis's father had another family, and even though all the children attended the same school, the father only paid attention to Luis briefly after the death of his oldest son.

I: And after the separation of your mom from your dad, because of what happened, what type of contact did you have with your dad?

LUIS: I didn't have any

I: Almost none?

LUIS: ...no. He, (pause) became nothing...basically. Because of, because of the money. He didn't want to give us money. He distanced himself a lot from us. He cared more for his other family...for his other kids, than for me, for me and my sister. And so, I was, I had communication with him like every six, seven months. After six, seven months, he would call me. But it was just to argue or (pause) to make things worse.

LUIS: When my brother died… in a week, basically, a week; he got very close to me. Because, he missed, love, or something. Well, yeah, he only used me for a week.

I: How old was your brother when he died?

LUIS: Twenty-nine years old.

I: But, and he, your brother, from your dad's side but not your mom?

LUIS: Yeah, my dad's side. I had two brothers. But yeah; that is the only thing that my sister didn't like. My dad because he didn't, he didn't help us with anything. And she saw how much I suffered...for him. For having, I don't know, his attention… at least for a day. And since she saw that I cried for him. Sincerely cried for him.

Some youth benefitted from family members advocating for them in the midst of neglectful or abusive situations. David O's father was angry and sometimes violent toward his children when he was drunk. His grandmother would come and tell her son to leave his children alone. Both Luis and David O had older sisters who took on major responsibility for their care, with David O's sister leaving school to do so.

Frequent moves and changes of household in the home country were associated with inconsistent, neglectful or abusive care among youth in the study. José, who had been threatened at gunpoint by his grandfather, described frequent moves above. Carla in Honduras, Catherine in El Salvador and David O in Guatemala all moved several times after their mothers left for the United States.

3) Interacting with their distant parent

In the fictional film Under the Same Moon (Riggen, 2008), a mother calls her son in Mexico every week from the same pay phone in the same neighborhood in California, and he eventually finds her because she has described the location of the pay phone to him so carefully. In the contemporary lives of transnational youth in the study, the corner pay phone has been replaced by cell phones, instant messaging, web chat and even Facebook, as parents and their children use newer technologies to communicate across miles and borders. Some adolescents did report that their initial communications were through letters only, with phones and other technology coming later in the separation.

I: When you were little, what type of contact did you have with your parents?

MONICA: My mom, well, at first, it was difficult before. There were no phones. Monthly, we would get a letter. And, and in the next month…

I: There was no phone in your home, in El Salvador?

MONICA: No, in those times, no. And like, well, if something, like, if I was to be sick: I could send a letter, and it would probably get there so long after, I could already be dead. And, and the response, once again, very slow. And after, they had some communication and we would go far just so we could speak by telephone. Like, because I remember that I was about seven. And then once there was a way to communicate, my mom would call me but like, once a month. I don't know if it's, I don't really know why she didn't do it any more often. But my dad, he never called me.

As they got older, all had telephone contact with their distant parents, primarily by cell phone. Frequency of calls ranged from daily all the way to every one to two weeks. David S's father was able to return to Mexico to visit periodically, and called

almost daily from the US. Damaris's mother was able to visit once, when she returned to El Salvador to arrange her immigration papers:

> DAMARIS: And, since three years old, I lived with him. Then, she went to go get her papers fixed. She went to go see me. And I did not know her because I was too young when she came.

Arnecia, who was living with her father in the US while her mother remained in Mexico, was able to return for some winter holidays and summer vacation. Other study participants reported that their parents' undocumented or uncertain legal status prevented their returning to visit.

Andrea's mother called every three days, but also used other media to communicate:

> ANDREA: We always communicated by chat, e-mail...hotmail, Facebook, a little of everything.
>
> I: Everything.
>
> ANDREA: Yeah. I continued to communicate with, with her.
>
> I: And with pictures and all of that?
>
> ANDREA Yeah. Sometimes on the webcam.
>
> I: And, do you think that it's better for kids that can? Because, I have talked to other young people, and some have a computer and webcam, and others don't. But you think that, that can, like, help with the separation?
>
> ANDREA: Well it helped me, because I felt that at the same time I saw her, even though I couldn't touch her. And, but I did feel like she was with me. And I would listen and I would hear her and I felt better.

Andrea used the connections by webcam to maintain a relationship between her little sister and their mother:

I: Okay, okay. And so, your sister was, like a baby when your mom left.

ANDREA: Yeah. She had, when she left her, she was like, nine months old.

I: Wow. And she had never seen her, your mom, personally?

ANDREA: No, she had never seen her. Only on webcam. She would say, "Oh, my mom, my mom" because of...what we would say about her. But, she never knew her.

The quality of communications with their distant parents also varied for teens. Damaris lived with her grandfather, who was too disabled to work, but who actively cared for her and her brother. She had daily phone contact with her mother,

DAMARIS: Yeah. She would call me every day.

I: Oh, every day? How long did you talk to her for?

DAMARIS: Like an hour.

I: An hour daily. Wow, that's a lot. Of what, what type of things did you talk about?

DAMARIS: She would talk to me about how I felt. How I was doing in school. About what I had for breakfast. What I ate. And what, things about young women. Of what, when I would have my first period. She would explain to me. Since I only lived with my grandfather, he wasn't going to explain to me. And she explained all of that to me.

In contrast, Arnecia, who lived in the US with her father and an aunt, visited her mother every summer in Mexico and chatted with her every Saturday via webcam, still said that she acutely missed her mother's physical presence during her own puberty:

> ARNECIA: I still miss her, like a Mom is a Mom, even my auntie was there, and she was like explaining me about like all these girls things, but like a Mom is only Mom, it's just mine. [interview in English]

David S missed the daily guidance of his father as a teenager, although his father did discuss the choices he had to make about work or school by phone.

Some youth stated that they did not know what to say to their mother when she called:

> WILBERTO: Oh, like --- I didn't speak with her very much. She used to call like three times a week. Yeah, but, I spoke with her about once a week or so because I was never at the house. I was always hanging with my friends
>
> BRIAN M: And well, we would talk about everything, and things like that. But sometimes we didn't have much to talk about, and so, we didn't talk that much.
>
> I: Uh-huh. Yeah. No, it's difficult when you are not together.
>
> BRIAN M: Exactly.

Extended family who were home country caretakers could also influence the adolescents' relationships with distant parents. Several youth reported that their grandparents reminded them frequently of their distant mother's sacrifice in coming to the US, encouraging their wait in their home country and their eventual migration:

> DAMARIS: And when we, my mom said that we had to come, because, she said that we were going to have a better life here...than over there in our country. Our grandfather told us that, that we should not be sad because my mom was bringing

us here to give us a better life. That we would continue to see him. And he wanted

for us to be with our mom.

In contrast, Catherine's paternal grandmother and caretaker tore her mother down,

CATHERINE: Like my family has never liked mom, my family from my dad's

side. They always held her lower, like they say she is a bad woman… They would

tell her that she was trash. And so, for me, it was very difficult to hear them say

that all of the time. And me, because of that, I decided to go to my other

grandmother.

4) Choosing or resisting migration to the US

Some participants, for example Catherine and Juan, had been asking to come to

the US "ever since my mom left." Catherine's requests intensified when she did not get

along with her maternal grandmother, her second caretaker. Four of the youth who

arrived with legal status in the US waited impatiently for their papers to come through.

In contrast, Brian M, who was living with his three younger brothers at his

grandmother's home, did not want to come to the US:

BRIAN M: Well my mom suddenly came, just like that. With us, she told us "I

am at the airport." Uh-huh, she returned for us. "I have come for you." And we,

and I, wow, because we saw our mom. It had been about five years...I think, since

we had not seen her. We had some time. Well, it was fine, but she told us that she

was taking us with her. Well I already had like, my life planned. Do you know

what I mean?.

I: Uh-huh. Yes.

BRIAN M: With my friends. My girlfriend. My family. And so, suddenly, well,

they were taken away from me, and I didn't like it. I didn't want to come.

I: Oh, yeah?

BRIAN M: But, well, they forced me, practically. Because I had to help my little

brothers, who were smaller than me.

Jesús initially thought he was coming for a visit:

JESUS: No, the truth is that I was given a choice to come here to study or just for

a vacation, and since I never imagined that it'd be so pretty here, so I said, "No, I

will go just to visit." Well, upon arrival, I saw the big fountains… the airplanes,

and I said, "I'd rather stay here, it's a very pretty city," but I never imagined that I

would struggle so much --- with some people, it was very difficult.

Other youth were ambivalent about migration, missing their parents in the US, yet not

wanting to leave their home country caretakers. Monica turned down her parents' first

offer to come to the US, even though her older brother left at that time to rejoin them.

Edgar came for the first time at age 6, while his older brother initially refused.

Wilberto, Raul, Lázaro and Brian G all felt impelled to leave because of threats by

gangs or drug cartels. Wilberto, tall, squarely and solidly built, was living with his

grandmother and older sister and attending a private school, when a gang in San Salvador

tried to recruit him:

WILBERTO: yeah. Well, one time I was doing my homework at the cyber, you

know cyber café the computers --- and like five gang bangers came and said that

if I wanted to join the gang and I said, "No, hell, no." Then they were like, "If you

don't join us, we're going to kill you, we are going to cut your head off," and

things like that. The man from the computer center that was with me said, "so not

go out because they may do something to you." Then when I would go home, yes,

I would watch people that would watch like look behind my shoulder [in those

times] that is why they did not follow me. I told my mother that that happened to

me. After that, she sent to my uncle's house for a week, but I felt restless. I went

back to my neighborhood, but I would not go out to the street because I was also,

afraid.

Brian G bought a motorcycle in Guatemala that turned out to have been stolen, and when

he reported the sellers to the police, they started following him to school and threatened

him at gunpoint. Within two weeks, both he and his younger brother had started the trip

to the United States.

BRIAN G: And then after, they [family] went to get my brother because if they

didn't, they could do something to him as revenge. Since they didn't find me, they

could do something to him.

Raul was switched from a public to a private school in El Salvador because of gang

activity in the public school, but even after the switch his family felt that his

neighborhood had become too dangerous, and arranged for his trip. While Lázaro wanted

to rejoin his mother, his impetus to leave El Salvador was also gang activity. En route to

the US, he learned that his half-sister, with whom he had been very close, had been killed

in a drive-by shooting along with her gang-involved boyfriend.

5) Making the journey to the US

For the undocumented youth in the study, the journey, or "coming through the

desert" was an important, and often traumatic, rite of passage. In some cases the

participants did not share these stories with their parents, which may have been a barrier to a closer relationship, as will be discussed in Chapter 7. In other cases, their apprehension at the border put them at risk for deportation and also affected family reunification.

During conversations with the IRB at UCSF, I was discouraged from asking participants about their journey to the US, in order to avoid asking vulnerable participants about potentially illegal activity, although I was given permission to record any information that youth wanted to disclose. Many youths spontaneously told about the journey. In other cases, variations of the following conversation were repeated at the end of the interview:

> I: Are there any questions that I have forgotten to ask --- something important about immigration or your family?
>
> RAUL: No, I think in relation to just the trip.
>
> I: Do you want to talk more about the trip?
>
> RAUL: Yes, it was a little difficult. Because I passed through the desert, and I walked for three days.
>
> I: In the desert?
>
> RAUL: Yes, and it was very difficult and I will never forget about it.

In Raul's case, he was worried about getting lost and his ability to carry his luggage. Carla was also worried about bandits. She had traveled from Honduras to the US-Mexican border with a relative, who made his living guiding immigrants through Central America and Mexico. She rode rafts and the top of a train:

CARLA: And, and when one, like, when one is coming on the train, there is a lot of sun, the sun, it damages your head. You get a headache. One doesn't eat, and without showering for four, five days without eating...without showering, without drinking water. Because if the water runs out, a person has to wait until it rains so that they can drink the water that rains. And so, and also, that when some of the guys come, they fall off the train and it cuts them, cuts everything.

After surviving the train ride, Carla witnessed, but did not personally experience, the challenges of thieves while crossing the US-Mexico border.

CARLA: And many robbers that are with their clothes, all, with many tattoos on their body. They have machetes. And they say to someone, if they see them with clothes, they take them from them "give me, give me your clothes. Give me your money. Give me your money. Give me your, your food. I want your food. If not, I will kill you."

Most youth talked about being taken on their trip across one or more borders by an independent guide paid for by their parents, whom they called either a "*coyote*" or a "*pollero*" (literally, chicken farmer). One young man's experience involved the drug cartel *Los Zetas* (pseudonym withheld for this quote):

P: First we came, they picked us up in a car. And they took us to the border. And then after, they took us by bus to Chiapas. And from Chiapas, we boarded a trailer to Mexico, D.F. And then after, the Zetas picked us up. And then they took us here, but immigration got us. Yeah.

I: The Zetas.

P: Yeah, but they took us, we were already coming here. They just picked us up and then another... group. And, and then after, they crossed us over here but we didn't pass, I think we got lost. They left us while we slept. They abandoned us. And like that.

I: Oh, okay.

P: And so, we turned ourselves over to immigration because they could do no more. And so, my dad fixed papers, sent his fingerprints and all, to bring us here. And now we have to fight a case.

Three participants were picked up by Border Patrol in the desert and sent to juvenile detention centers, from which they were ultimately released to their parents in the US. While in detention they were given phone calls to their parents, which, for Catherine, served to ease the transition to life with her mother. She also suggested a reason why some teens can't talk with their parents about the border crossing:

CATHERINE: Yeah, she, because I would call. I mean, when I was over there, I would call by phone...and I would tell her that, that it was very difficult for me because I had, I wanted to be with her. And nothing had worked out how we hoped. And yeah, I would tell her.

I: Okay. Because, I ask because sometimes when I would talk with other young people they would tell me that, like, traumas that they had suffered in their countries or when they got here they would not speak with their mothers here because they can't talk with them about what happened or they don't want to talk with them. It seems..

CATHERINE: I think…

I: …that it is different with you.

CATHERINE: Yeah, I think that it's different because, because there are some girls that, that are raped, or something like that...during their trip. And well maybe that's what they don't want to talk about. So as to not feel guilty, or something like that. And well, me, thank God nothing happened to me.

For Monica, her detention put her entire extended family of undocumented immigrants under greater scrutiny and at greater risk of deportation:

MONICA: And well, it's really difficult because my family has a problem with immigration because of the first year of the first time that I came. Immigration came. They made a mess. They almost took my entire family. And, and they left them alone, but with the bracelet...in the foot. And almost everyone left, there are only two. And I have a cousin that was told, he was given an order to leave. And he, he doesn't want to go. And he didn't, he didn't go. They are looking for him. They already went to the house twice.

Monica returned to El Salvador, partly because of this increased scrutiny and because she missed her grandmother, and on her second trip to the US, endured a longer and more difficult crossing, but one in which she managed to evade border patrols.

Of the undocumented youth, only Edgar, who came initially when he was younger, described a relatively easy crossing, through "*la línea*" (the line) in Tijuana, an option that was no longer viable for most of the study participants, who came at a more recent time in the evolution of the US-Mexico border controls. Edgar has since returned to Mexico more than once for visits, and is proud of his ability to cross the border on his

own, even under contemporary conditions, though he did not divulge details of these later crossings.

Youth who had immigration clearance and their family members, including Andrea, Damaris, Luis, David S, David O and Arnecia, were able to travel by plane. While Jesús does not have papers, he also arrived by plane for his initial visit, which turned into an extended stay. Andrea insisted on telling about her journey in great detail – from the relatives who came to the airport to say good-bye, to the flight attendants who gave them candy to help calm her younger sister on the journey, to the stop in Atlanta, where her older brother had to negotiate customs and immigration for the three of them with his limited English, and the final leg to San Francisco.

6) Reuniting with their parent(s)

Whether traveling through the desert or by plane, integration into family in the US began with the initial reunion. This was described as a happy event by virtually all study participants.

JUAN: I couldn't even believe that I was with her again.

Andrea stated that they had to remain on the plane in California until her mother signed a paper "saying that she received us."

ANDREA: …And so, like fifteen minutes passed and we didn't see our mom. And we were worried. And the men cleaning the plane, and us there, sitting. And then after, I remember that, came, a lady. That she, a lady. But, she had her hair tinted, and she was with two men. And one was my uncle, and her boyfriend. And us, we just, "my mom" and I, the only thing I did, was started running, and hugging her. My little sister...she followed me. And my brother, also. And all

three of us were running, and hugging her. And we all started crying from

happiness. And after she introduced us to her boyfriend, and to, and my uncle.

After, she went to sign. And well, it was like one, and we were hungry.

Arnecia stated that her father took her out to dinner, told her that instead of her going to

Mexico for Christmas, he was taking her to the airport to meet his "girlfriend," only to be

happily surprised by the sight of her mother and younger siblings arriving from Mexico.

David O saw that his mother had changed.

I: …Was it surprising how your mom looked? Or had you seen pictures?

DAVID O: Yeah, she, she would send us pictures but I was surprised because she

had changed a lot. She was more like (pause) before, she was more humble. But

when I came here, I saw her changed because my dad would not let her be herself.

But when I came here...she was really different. She was happier...more upbeat.

And when we came she was happier because she finally had us. She says that,

before we came...she would always cry for us. Every, every, almost every

day…And that stressed me, to know that. Because really, I didn't know that she

was so sad without us.

Like other participants, David O felt happy and sad at the same time during his initial

reunion, as he had not had time to say good-bye to his friends, and he missed his cousins

and his aunt. He was not able to express his feelings to his mother initially, beyond

hugging her, and was grateful that his older brother and sister were able to "express

themselves."

7) Adapting to life in the US with their parent(s) and other family

Many participants stated that their mother had some trouble adjusting to parenting the teenagers who arrived in the US, instead of the young children they had left.

I: And was it difficult, like, starting to live with her once again?

ANDREA: Well, truthfully, yeah. It was more difficult because she had changed.

I: In what way?

ANDREA: She, like if she, she didn't remember how it was to have kids. Or, children, yeah, but small children. Not big, like us. My brother was eighteen when he came here. Seventeen, excuse me. And he didn't, didn't, hadn't been past fifteen, or anything. So, she hadn't had experience with adolescents. And so, it was strange for her. She didn't know, at first, didn't know how to control us, or treat you. She didn't know whether to treat you as little, or big. But then after, once again, she started being the mother. Yeah.

I: Yeah. And now is she more, is she better with everyone?

ANDREA: Yeah.

I: Yeah?

ANDREA: She knows us all.

I: And how was it to start over, again, to live with her?

CATHERINE: Well, almost, like, it was the same. Only thing that, since I was already grown...and now I wasn't the same girl as before. (laughs) And so she says that I had changed, or sometimes she gets mad at me and says that I've changed. And sometimes…That's hard, but it's the same. And so, it doesn't bother me much.

Catherine said that they quarreled over her going out with her girlfriends, and over texting, both arguments that are also typical of parents and teens who have not separated. In a second interview she stated that she and her mother had both begun to text her younger sister at home and that the arguments had stopped.

Brian M had walked through the desert with his mother and three younger brothers, and was very happy to see his father again. It was more difficult to get used to his parents' discipline, his neighbors who spoke Chinese instead of Spanish, and the lack of internet or cable, after his loving but lax grandmother's technologically equipped home in Mexico City.

> BRIAN M: As if my life had been changed, because, I tell you that in being with my grandmother...we had a whole different life. We got here and we had to do all this. I don't know. Make your bed. Things that in Mexico, well, usually, no … yes I did them, but not every day...and all that. And here, well, I have routine to do everything I need to do. It was different because well, my parents, well, they put things on our shoulders. Like, structure, like, how, to do this, and that. Well, it's okay because I have to do it. Things that I didn't understand with my grandmother. Because she gave us a lot of freedom.

Some youth still feel uncomfortable living with their parents. Lázaro, who had been in the US almost three years at the time of his interview stated:

> LÁZARO: When I got here when I started living with her. I felt as, desperate, uncomfortable with her, I'd see her as a stranger because I didn't know her. Since

I was separated from her for such a long time. Yeah, I felt desperate. And well, we don't really get along in the relationship with her.

I: And are things the same, or better, now?

LÁZARO: We're so-so.

Monica rejoined both of her parents, and found that it was easier to resume a relationship with her mother than with her father. She described her father as being disengaged from both her and her older brother, who has been in the US for 9 years, only relating emotionally to his youngest and US-born son.

MONICA: Because with my mom, it has been very easy to get comfortable with her...with the way she is. Though the trust is not the same, but, like, like it's easier to get close to her and talk to her about what is going on with me. And my dad, I can't confide in him. Not even, like, it's like he is not interested in me, or in my brother. He only cares about my little brother. It's because, I don't know if, if it's because he wasn't with us, or what. But, well, my brother and I hurt that he looks at us as if we are nothing.

Brian M, in contrast, feels very close to his father:

BRIAN M: Because my dad, instead of being my dad, he is my friend at the same time. My dad is like, he's very, very good. Like, I get along really well with him. My dad was like my right hand when I got here. I didn't know what to do and my dad would tell me "no, well you have to do this." He helped me a lot when I came. When he would help me, I started to get to know him. My mom also...but my dad more. Maybe, I don't know, maybe that is what helped me.

Participants who were dissatisfied with their relationship with parents after reunification were asked what kind of a relationship they would want to have with their parent(s). For some, answers revolved around communication. While Luis felt that he and his mother were "bonding," he said that he did not want to burden her with his problematic relationship with his father in El Salvador.

> I: More or less? When you have problem, with whom, (pause) like, who can you go to?
>
> LUIS: Sometimes, with my mom.
>
> I: With your mom. And can you talk with your mom?
>
> LUIS: Yeah. About anything, but I don't like to talk with her about the problems that, that I had with my dad.
>
> I: You don't want, you don't want to talk with her about that.
>
> LUIS: No, because she feels bad. She recalls times that, that we had. And so I don't like to talk about that with her.

Juan also said that he did not want "to make his mother cry." But if he could have the relationship he wanted,

> JUAN: I would, I would like to tell her that, well, that…that lately in these days, sometimes, I have been on drugs. Tell her that I love her. That I never want to lose them.. And, that if I, thanks for giving me life.
>
> I: Mm-hmm. And you don't think, you don't think you can say those things to your mom?
>
> JUAN: I don't know. Maybe I would cry… and afterwards. I would, I get embarrassed.

He also thought that it was too late for him and his mother to change their relationship, as he was grown.

JUAN: Mmm, maybe, maybe it could change.

I: Yeah?

JUAN: Yeah, but, but I think that it would now be, I think, too late.

I: What's too late?

JUAN: Too late. Because now, now the things, I could be a man now. And now I don't need to tell them things. At least, problems with family I could tell them. But then, problems that are mine and only mine, well, for her...

I: You wouldn't talk to her?.

JUAN: No.

I: No? Okay. Okay, even though, with many others, like, young guys, like, almost men, or, already men...that, that they continue to talk with, with their mom.

JUAN: Yes.

I: But..

JUAN: Well yeah it's because, because of the same thing with their mom, that they are pampered...because of their mom..

I: Oh, okay.

JUAN: ..that the moms baby them. But I have never had support from a mom. Never has she, never has she hugged me. I have never hugged her. A kiss, or anything, no.

I: Even when you were little?

JUAN: No.

I: No, never?

JUAN: Maybe. No, that I remember, no.

Monica had written off her relationship with her father, but wished that her mother could be more of a friend to her, similar to David O's description of his relationship with his father. She used as an example of her dissatisfaction her mother's lack of reaction to Monica's surviving her second grueling journey through the desert, including successful evasion of Border Patrol agents.

I: And can you talk about, you talk with your, with your mother about that? About what, what you experienced…

MONICA: Yeah, but it's like, I sometimes tell her but it's like it's not admirable. I tell her "ay, you should have seen. All of this. This happened when I came." No.

I: She doesn't admire your courage?

MONICA: As if she doesn't admire what happened to me. Maybe she went through worse, maybe. But it's like she doesn't feel like "(gasp) oh my god." So like, she does think it's admirable that I had the courage to come, to say, I will go. But when I tell her about everything that I went through it's like nothing. She doesn't show much interest.

I: There wasn't, she didn't believe you, or there was just no reaction?

MONICA: No. Like if there was no reaction of "wow, you withstood all of that?"

I: Uh-huh. You expected a little more.

MONICA: As if it's something common

I: Yeah. Yeah yeah, yeah. I understand. And that, that is like, the lack of reaction is maybe, it's, do you think that gets in the way of your relationship with her?

MONICA: Mmm…

I: You know what I'm saying? That she didn't..

MONICA: Well..

I: ..like, react the way that you wanted her to.

MONICA: ..well, maybe when, sometimes one tells like, something that makes one happy. And I tell it to someone. And it's like that person responds as "okay…oh, well." And that's it. As if they don't share your happiness. It's really nice to tell...something that makes you happy. And that wow, that it…is admired, and all of that. And when you tell it and you get "Oh, yeah? And that's it. If there is no emotion like your own, it's like it makes you feel like "wow." Well, it seems that for other people it may not be as good. And for some it could be. Well, I always like to, like if it's something that someone accomplishes or something you did good. To share it with them and they don't feel how you feel about it.

I: Hmm. Yeah, that's sad.

Resentments could also be a barrier to developing a closer parent-teen relationship. Carla and Arnecia expressed anger at their mothers for the separation, even though Carla's family was starving before her mother left Honduras, and Arnecia's mother stayed in Mexico to care for an ailing grandmother.

CARLA: But then after, after a few days, we started to not get along. Because she, well, she would scold me. She would tell me like, something I would tell her "I am not going to school." And she tells me "you have to go to school." And I would say, if she came here. Something got into my head. And I would say that if she came here, it's because she did not love me. It's why she left me and my

120

brother stranded. And so, it was that she did not love me. And when she would say anything to me, I would tell her "ay, you, don't scold me. Because you came here. You left me stranded in Honduras. So let me do what I want."

ARNECIA: My mom use to, to I used to make her feel guilty. I say like, "It's your fault. It's your fault for that thing happen, Mom for four years, it's for you that in this way, it's you for that, for that I skip class. It's your fault, it's your fault this." I used to blame everything for her. And, she used to be like, "How it's my fault, my?" "Because you was not here when I need you the most." But I was just being dramatic. "But why you need me the most? You didn't have me but you had your Dad." "It's not the same" and she went "Why do you need me the most?" and um, through when sometimes I used to I wanted to go out I wanted to talk about something and it was about girls, you wasn't here." and my Mom like – she used to cry. And I used to cry too. I used to make her feel guilty. And it was that only, it was the only way, the only, the only reason that I did that I just, to like, to hurt her, like, to hurt her feelings and to try and oh blame her and excuse my actions. It was just like an excuse for my actions that I was doing.

Other youth denied any resentments:

I: Yeah. Yeah. Okay, so, some kids, some young people have told me that when they got here, it seems that they have a lot of, for example, hostility against their, their mother, or resentment..

LUIS: For coming here?

I: Yeah. And, I want to know if …

LUIS: Me, no.

I: No? No.

LUIS: Me, with that, I thank my mom a lot. Because she risked her life for us.
She came here so that we could have a better future. So that we didn't need
anything.

Andrea saw her mother as a heroine, who had the courage to do "what my father
could not do." Still, she acknowledged that her older brother felt more distant from her
mother than she did. Brian M saw that his younger brother, currently in middle school,
was having a harder time adjusting to their new life than he was.

The impact of step-parents and new family configurations. Most of the youth
were migrating into a somewhat different family structure than they had experienced
before their separations from their parents. Even for participants whose parents were still
married, there might be a new sibling, as in Monica's case. Wilberto did not get along
with his alcoholic stepfather, nor with his younger, US-born brother. Carla's US-born
sister was jealous and at times refused to believe that Carla could be her sister, since she
was born in Honduras. Andrea and Damaris did not like their step-fathers at first, but
gradually saw that they treated their respective mothers well and grew to appreciate them.

However, in some cases, relationships with step-parents were positive. Catherine
had a painful reunion with her own father in the US, who rejected her, disparaged her on
Facebook as gang-involved, and claimed she was not really his daughter and that he had
given her his name "out of pity." She saw her step-father as a good man who cared about
her as well as her mother, "and well, with him I feel that, that I have a real father." Both
Jesús and Edgar initially referred to their step-fathers as their fathers. While Edgar stated

that they have a good relationship, he acknowledged that his step-father is very harsh towards his 12-year-old sister. Damaris stated that she also had a good relationship with her younger half-brother, born in the US, who helps her with her English homework.

Impact of siblings, cousins and extended family. Many participants were communicating with siblings and cousins through Facebook or other social networks before their arrival here, and saw these pre-migration contacts as helpful. Even though Monica's brother has been in the US for 9 years and speaks "perfect English," their experiences and relationship with their father are similar enough that they have a bond and she sees him as a source of support.

Arnecia lived with her father and his younger sister while her mother was in Mexico, and while she complained about her mother 's absence, she is now very close to her aunt. Carla's stormy relationship with her mother after her arrival has been tempered somewhat by the presence in the household of an aunt who is closer to her in age:

> CARLA: And an aunt also. And my aunt would also tell me, she would tell me "it's that you don't understand anything" she tells me "you, you treat your mom badly." "If your mom, she came here" she says "because she, she wanted to help us."

The presence of extended family for support, for socializing and holiday celebrations was also important to study participants, even if they were not satisfied with their relationships with their parents. Monica described the process of throwing a family party in loving detail, even appreciating that her taciturn father loved to play music and dance. "It's really fun being with family." David S lived with an aunt and uncle when his father was on a return trip to Mexico. He was yawning during his second interview, and

confessed he had been at a family party until late the night before, celebrating his cousin's first birthday.

8) Maintaining transnational family ties

Some participants seemed to be more successful than others at maintaining active relationships in both the US and their home countries. Catherine texts her younger sister in El Salvador every day. Luis has daily contact with his older sister in Guatemala via Facebook, and talks to her on the phone at least weekly – he still sees her as a major source of support. While Damaris gradually has come to see her mother as her primary confidante, she still tells her grandfather in El Salvador "everything" and cried during the interview when she talked about her first Christmas without him. The following excerpt exemplifies the strong emotional ties to their home country that transnational youth feel, even as their parents in their new home are doing their best to reach out to them:

> I: And you told me that at first it was very difficult with your mother. Can you describe, like, the difficulties that you had together, here?
>
> DAMARIS: Like…not that difficult, because, how do I explain this to you? No, not me, maybe, I did not know how, what would bother her. Or what did not. But, she treated, she treats us the same as my other brother that was born here. She had another kid, her.
>
> I: Okay.
>
> DAMARIS: She treats us the same. When she buys something for one...she buys for the other. Like that; she treats us the same. But, we felt, like, strange. Strange, because we weren't with her. And always, at night, we would be there; when my

brother, because I am very sentimental. And, I would always think of when my, when we would be there at night, with my grandfather. And, and when my brother would look at me… He would start to cry also. And then, when, when my mom would look at us the same like that, she would tell us not to feel bad. And that we would once again see my dad [referring to her grandfather].

Monica missed her grandmother in El Salvador so intensely that she returned, only to find that the relationship had altered. Her grandmother's health was frailer on her return, and Monica had been influenced more than she realized by even her brief stay in the US. She found herself to be uncomfortable in both locations. Juan voluntarily returned to Mexico after bringing a knife to his middle school in the US, only to ask to come back a few years later. In addition to her vacations in Mexico, Arnecia also returned to Mexico during one school year so she could be with her mother, only to find that she missed her friends and father in the US.

Some youth, in contrast, were losing ties in their home country. Jesús was losing his Spanish language skills, even as his English progressed very slowly, to the point where he was asking the interviewer the Spanish for words like step-father, turkey, and funeral. He was also losing some of his transnational family support, as his grandfather died after his migration to the US, and family members were becoming increasingly protective of his physically frail grandmother, so that he was not supposed to tell her immediately about the premature birth and death of his baby sister, an event that he as well as his mother found to be tragic. Most youth felt that they were losing significant relationships with home country friends, even as they maintained social network connections.

Discussion

There was great variability in the warmth and security that youth received from their home country caretakers, as well as a large variability in the frequency and quality of communication with their distant parents. Both of these conditions affected the participants' reactions to separation and those with poorer long-distance communication expressed more difficulties with reunification after arrival. Every youth who came overland wanted to talk about their trip across the border, and in some cases had trouble sharing this information with their parent, as in Monica's discussion above. The fact that every youth brought his or her migration story into an interview about family reunification indicates the importance of communicating this formative and often-hidden experience. In this chapter, the chronology and phases of the adolescents' experiences with separation and reunification are illustrated, and specific strategies they use to re-establish family connections will be discussed in Chapter 6. The importance of "telling my story" is further discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Believing in a Better Life: Latino Adolescents Adapting to Late Immigration and Family Reunification

Prepared for submission to *Qualitative Health Research*

Abstract

This article presents the findings of a grounded theory (GT) study of Latino immigrant adolescents who are reunifying with parents in the US after migration-related separations. We interviewed adolescents in community, school-linked and health care settings who had rejoined parents after separations of four years or more. We present a conceptual model, Believing in a Better Life, including strategies that adolescents use to re-connect with their parents and highlighting factors that can promote or hinder positive adaptation despite the multiple adversities of transnational families. Studies of the real time subjective experiences of adolescents such as this one can illuminate the place of family reunification within the entire ecological context of the adolescent's life, and point the way to both future research and health interventions that can improve the lives of immigrant adolescents and families.

In 2009, approximately 6% of all adolescents ages 12 to 17 in the United States (US) were first generation immigrants, born outside of the US and arriving during childhood (Passel, 2011). About 40% of these immigrant youth are unauthorized, and the majority is from Mexico and other parts of Latin America (Passel). Immigrant youth have often suffered adverse premigration experiences, including poverty, violence and family separation, and may be at risk for adverse health and mental health outcomes (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). A large proportion of youth who migrate in late childhood or adolescence are members of transnational families, whose social, emotional and economic ties span borders and continents (Falicov, 2005; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007) and who may be reuniting with a parent from whom they have been separated for a number of years (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). While there is a rich body of literature about the impact of separations (Dreby, 2007, 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2001, 2005; Schmalzbauer, 2004) and reunifications (Arnold, 2006; Artico, 2003; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Smith, Lalonde, & Johnson, 2004), they have been studied more thoroughly from the parent's point of view (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011).

The purpose of this article is to present the findings of a grounded theory (GT) study of Latino immigrant adolescents who are reunifying with parents in the US after migration-related separations. We will present a conceptual model, Believing in a Better Life, highlighting factors that can promote or hinder family reunification and overall adaptation despite the multiple adversities of transnational families. Studies of the subjective experiences of adolescents in real time such as this one can illuminate the

place of family reunification within the entire ecological context of the adolescent's life, and point the way to both future research and health interventions that can improve the lives of adolescents and families.

Background

Migrant Youth and Transnational Families

The proportion of children who are immigrants to the US rises with age, from 1.5% of children under 6 years of age up to 5.9% of adolescents from 12 to 17 years of age (Passel, 2011), accounting for individuals who migrate in late childhood. These youth are often called the 1.5 generation (Rumbaut, 2004), with the implication that they have different experiences from immigrants who arrived as either very young children or adults. At least 20,000 unaccompanied minors may be crossing the border from Mexico every year (International Organization for Migration, 2009), an acknowledged and undercounted part of the immigrant stream to the US (Haddal, 2007; Martinez, 2009). Most apprehended youth agree to return to Mexico without formal detention and processing, and therefore little is known about them (Haddal, 2007). The majority of detained minors are from Central America, and limited data indicate that most are male and migrating to find work and reunite with parents (Wier, 2009).

Migrating mothers may now be as prevalent as migrating fathers (Cerrutti & Massey, 2001), and may stay in the host country longer than male compatriots (Isaksen, Devi, & Hochschild, 2008), with lengthy separations from their children. Long-distance parenting arrangements with paid or family caretakers for children left in the home country are characteristic of transnational families (Falicov, 2005; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). In one study, up to 85 % of children migrating to the US from Mexico and 96% of

children from Central America had been separated from one or both parents, typically for periods of four years or more, while parents worked in the US and their children were left with relatives in their home country (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002).

There are rich descriptions of the impact of family separation on children and adolescents (Ártico, 2003; Dreby, 2007; Parreñas, 2005; Pribilsky, 2001). Qualitative studies have shown that children were ambivalent about parental decisions to migrate, with some youths appreciating the sacrifice of their parents (Ártico; Lam et al., 2005) and others, sometimes in the same study, feeling abandoned (Ártico; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Lashley, 2000; Parreñas, 2005). Direct quantitative measures of child functioning during separation in the Western Hemisphere (Aguilera-Guzman et al., 2004; Pottinger, 2005) have been hampered by small sample size, scarcity of appropriate validated measures, and lack of well-defined comparison groups. Large scale cross-sectional survey studies of left-behind children in China found that children whose mothers had left generally showed poorer emotional health and school performance than either children whose fathers had migrated or children where both parents had migrated (Liu, Li, & Ge, 2009), and that children whose parents had migrated showed greater loneliness than non-migrant peers (Jia & Tian, 2010).

There is a growing body of literature describing the problems that occur during immigration-related family reunification from the adolescent's point of view (Ártico, 2003; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Lashley, 2000) and potential long-term effects (Arnold, 2006; Smith et al., 2004). There are studies documenting greater pre-migration stress (Aguilera-Guzmán, de Snyder, Romero, &

Medina-Mora, 2004; Pribilsky, 2001) and poorer post-migration adaptation in boys

relative to girls (Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al.,

2002). Although a recent large-scale survey of adolescent immigrants found that rates of

anxiety and depression did not significantly vary by either gender or past family

separation, involvement in the decision to migrate, migration trauma, undocumented

status and school and family support significantly affected mental health status

(Potochnick & Perreira, 2010), indicating the complexity of transnational family life and

the importance of multiple domains in the adaptation of immigrant youth to life in the

US. However, the literature remains problem-focused, does not explore factors

contributing to successful family reunifications, and does not tease out the impact of

gender on family reunification.

Resilience and Youth Development

Family interdependence and parental support may promote adolescent strengths (Ong,

Phinney, & Dennis, 2006), while family disruption and separation have been shown to

adversely affect mental health outcomes in children and parents, both in Mexico and the

United States (Aguilera-Guzmán et al., 2004; Borges et al., 2009; Rivera et al., 2008). In

addition to family relationships, contemporary literature on adolescent development

underscores the importance of schools, peers and community contexts, in promoting or

impeding positive outcomes (Schwartz, Pantin, Coatsworth, & Szapocznik, 2007). This

focus on positive development is congruent with resilience literature (Cauce, Cruz,

Corona, & Conger, 2011; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten & Obradovic, 2006)

and with positive youth development approaches to adolescent health promotion (Bowers

et al., 2011; Ginsburg & Carlson, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2007).

Qualitative methodology incorporating a strength-based approach to interviewing (Frankowski, Leader, & Duncan, 2009; Ginsburg & Carlson, 2011) can incorporate adolescent viewpoints on successful as well as problematic family reunification and allow for the impact of changing political and technological influences on this experience. Our research addressed the process by which Latino adolescents and their parents maintained and/or re-established family ties during and after prolonged separation during immigration, and strengths and protective factors that helped adolescents to reunify with their families successfully. We explored the ways that adolescents made meaning of their prolonged separations and reunification, as well as their definitions of successful reunification. We addressed gender differences in order to tease out the impact of gender on separation and reunification, specifically the gender of the parent migrating, the gender of the home country caretaker and the adolescent's gender. Finally, we looked at the affect that family separation and reunification might have on the adolescent's adaptation to peers, school and community in the US. We aimed to contribute to knowledge development in this field that can inform family and immigration policy, as well as providing insights to health professionals working with reunifying families.

Research Design

We used a grounded theory (GT) design, in order to more fully elucidate the perspectives of the adolescent immigrants and allow for the incorporation of the contexts and conditions of their lives (Clarke, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). GT methods allowed the researchers to examine the difficulties of exploring family dynamics, for example how the feelings and experiences of newly immigrated adolescents were constructed and identified within the family, with some feelings more "allowable" than others (Charmaz,

2009, p. 142). The simultaneous data collection and analysis of GT enabled us to add

questions in later interviews to explore emerging lines of inquiry and to remain sensitive

to nuances of expression and feeling, as researchers and participants developed creative

analyses of emerging family structures.

Setting, Research Team and Approach

The settings for the research were clinics, school-linked health programs and a

community center serving adolescents in a multicounty metropolitan area in the Western

US. The neighborhoods in which these services are located have large concentrations of

immigrants from Mexico and Central America. The first author is a White Spanish-

speaking nurse practitioner and doctoral student from an immigrant family whose clinical

practice has involved Latino adolescents for over 20 years. The second author is a child

and adolescent psychiatric nurse scientist who has done clinical and/or research work

with adolescents for over 30 years and was the dissertation advisor for the first author and

primary mentor on research methodology. The third author is a public health policy

expert and scientist whose research focuses on child and adolescent health policy and

women's health, with a special focus on Latina health. The fourth author is a psychologist

and nurse scientist whose program of research emphasizes the impact of parent-child

relationships and family environment on child and adolescent mental health. Project

liaisons and consultants at the research sites included a community outreach worker,

therapists and a nurse, all of whom are bilingual bicultural immigrants from Latin

America.

We approached the research in two phases. First, focus groups were used to test

publicity fliers for the research and refine the interview guide (Farquhar, Parker, Schulz,

& Israel, 2006; Halcomb, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Phillips, & Davidson, 2007) We conducted two focus groups consisting of 8 diverse adolescent peer health educators at two of the research sites, facilitated by the first author and a bilingual/bicultural staff member at each site and using focus group methodology from Krueger and Casey (2000).

Second, we recruited participants from community-based organizations, clinics and school-linked services in two counties, interviewing a total of 20 adolescents. While we distributed flyers widely, participants were recruited primarily through staff who were trusted liaisons in the community-based organizations and through snowball sampling. This recruitment approach has proven successful in other research with immigrant populations (Sheikh et al., 2009).

Ethical Issues and Permissions

The research was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) on July 25, 2010, with renewals in 2011 and 2012, and also by the Boards at each research setting. The UCSF IRB preferred and approved a combined verbal consent/assent form for parents and youth, in order to protect this vulnerable immigrant population. The first author reviewed the consent/assent material in English or Spanish, as the participant preferred, sent home Spanish language copies of the consent/assent form for parents to review and spoke to parents of minor participants by phone before the interview began. As recommended by the IRB, youth chose and were subsequently identified by pseudonyms during the interview, transcription and analysis. Most participants contacted the first author through the staff they knew at the research sites.

In order to protect immigrant participants who may have engaged in unlawful behavior, the UCSF IRB requested that the questions about immigrant status and mode of entry to the US be removed from the question guide. However, the IRB and the Board of each community organization agreed that this information could be collected from youth who spontaneously disclosed these stories as long as their anonymity was protected.

As an experienced clinician, the first author informed participants of the limits of confidentiality in the State in which the research was located, specifically that the author would have to report disclosures of child maltreatment or let a parent know about suicidality, if the participant was a minor. For participants who disclosed or displayed emotional distress during the interview, the first author ascertained that the participant was either getting counseling services already or made a counseling referral within the youth's school or clinic setting. There were no adverse or emergent situations that occurred during the research interviews.

Participants

We conducted 27 individual interviews of 20 participants, 12 young men and 8 young women, ranging from 16 to 19 years of age. Participants had been in the US from 6 months to 10 years. Seven participants came from Mexico and 13 from various countries in Central America, including El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. All participants were attending or had recently graduated from four different high schools at the time of the interviews, the majority at two high schools with large newcomer immigrant populations.

In GT, sampling is theoretically driven (Charmaz, 2006), and the first author consulted with staff on site to publicize the study to potential participants from different

countries and diverse family constellations. Virtually all participants at one site migrated to rejoin a single mother. We expanded to an additional study site and were able to interview several participants who were rejoining both parents. Participants lived in families with diverse legal status, from fully documented to mixed status families to entirely undocumented families. A few participants moved out of the area or left school and the relative anonymity of the study precluded follow up interviews with them.

The method of recruitment, through liaisons and peers, did not allow us to gauge how many youth that were approached might have declined to participate. Of all the potential participants who spoke with first author, all but one agreed to participate. Two more initially agreed, but did not return for scheduled appointments.

Interview Procedure and Initial Data Analysis

The first author had conducted a small pilot project two years before this study focusing on maternal separation and the re-establishment of family ties after reunification, and lessons from that project were applied to the research design. The research questions were modified to include any kind of parental separation, and to address strengths and protective factors. We also shifted the interview guide from a problem-focused approach to a strength-based approach (Ginsburg & Carlson, 2011), encouraging participants to talk about positive aspects of family life, as well as prompts to talk about spending leisure time in their home country and the US, family gatherings and celebrations. Participants were asked about family life in a variety of neutral ways to encourage more detailed narratives, such as describing the first moment of reunification, the first day they spent, a typical weekend day, and examples of any changes, positive or negative, in the relationships.

The first author conducted audiotaped open-ended interviews in the language of choice of the participant. Interviews took 30 to 90 minutes and interview themes included memories of the parental separation, specifics and quality of home country caretakers, frequency and quality of contact with distant parents, participant involvement in the decision to migrate, events related to the moment of reunification, adaptation to new schools, peers and neighborhoods, and the process of re-engagement with parents and other relatives. In most cases, interviews were conducted in Spanish, or a mix of Spanish and English, with two participants requesting English language interviews. Each participant was given a $25 gift card to a local store for each interview. The first author wrote or recorded oral field notes after every interview and encounter with the research sites, even if an interview did not occur, in order to provide richer descriptions of each site and of researcher-staff and researcher-youth interaction.

Interviews were transcribed and translated by a young adult immigrant from Central America who was familiar with adolescent Mexican and Central American slang in both Spanish and English. All Spanish language interview transcripts were produced in both Spanish and English, and the first author checked each transcript against the audiotapes for accuracy, resolving questions by consulting with the translator and with participants. Audiotapes were erased after the transcriptions were checked. Participants who returned for second interviews were given a copy of their transcript to keep and given an opportunity to review the transcript before the second interview began.

In GT, analysis proceeds simultaneously with data collection (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and interview questions were revised by the first and second authors as data emerged from earlier interviews that merited further scrutiny.

For example, we did not account for the amount of trauma that participants had experienced in their home countries and en route to the US, and thus, asked more focused questions about this. In addition, question prompts were added to tease out the presence and importance of peer-age relatives such as siblings, cousins and younger aunts and uncles, both in their home countries and in the US.

Data Analysis

The first author analyzed text from transcribed interviews, field notes, and memos section-by-section, and coded them using Atlas ti version 6.2, a qualitative software program, under the supervision of her Dissertation Advisor. Spanish language interviews were coded in sections that included both the original Spanish and the English translation. The first phase of analysis involved open or initial coding and these codes were developed without regard for their level of importance. When data were expanded to a critical mass of these initial codes, they were refined through the techniques of constant comparative analysis, more focused coding, and categorization. This focused categorization of codes was achieved with decisions made about their relative salience, allowing the researcher to generate theory throughout the analytic process as concepts and relationships emerged from data (Charmaz, 2006; Kools, McCarthy, Durham, & Robrecht, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

In moving from open coding to higher order of analyses, the first author used several complementary strategies in the constructivist GT paradigm, including dimensional analysis (Kools et al., 1996; Schatzman, 1991), situational mapping (Clarke, 2003, 2005) and theoretical sorting of memos (Charmaz, 2006). While traditional GT attempts to discover the basic social process underlying the phenomenon of interest

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999), dimensional analysis addresses the question, "What *all* is involved here?" (Schatzman, 1991, p.310). We used dimensional analysis to fully examine the depth and breadth of adolescent separation and reunification experiences. Salient dimensions were thoroughly described according to their properties, and later steps in the analysis involved assigning values to various dimensions, comparing them, making decisions about which dimensions were most important and which might be less relevant (Bowers, 2009).

Throughout analysis, theoretical memos were written to track developing conceptualizations. Some early conceptual memos discussed the primacy of the immigration stories in the interviews, varying reasons for youth immigration such as fleeing gangs and drug cartels, the journey across the border, the impact of crises on parent-youth relationships, and relationships with peer-aged relatives. Dimensional analyses were developed of loneliness, family reintegration, gender and "telling my story."

While the explanatory matrix is one of the analytic tools in traditional GT (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), in dimensional analysis, the explanatory matrix is the "centerpiece" for the methodological analysis (Schatzman, 1991, p. 109) [See Table 1]. For each dimension, contexts, conditions, processes and consequences were described. In the explanatory matrix, the researcher selects the one dimension, or explanatory perspective, that provides the most coherent explanation of the entire phenomenon under investigation (Kools et al., 1996; Schatzman, 1991). "Telling my story" emerged as a salient dimension, but after being auditioned for the explanatory perspective, it was found to be a sub-dimension of "making meaning," a strategy related to reunification.

"Making a journey to a better life" was auditioned for the overall explanatory matrix, but this concept did not translate well into Spanish, nor did it resonate with site-based research liaisons and consultants. After further memoing and "asking questions of the data" (Lempert, 2007, p. 245), "Believing in a better life" was selected as the organizing perspective with the greatest explanatory power for the phenomena of adolescent adaptation to family separation and reunification, and other salient dimensions were evaluated for fit as context, conditions, process or consequence.

Rigor

Theoretical and methodological rigor were verified using several strategies. We maintained prolonged engagement with people in the research settings, immersion in the interview data, frequent checking of preliminary analyses with staff and consultants at the research site and with participants in during later interviews. We followed the rigorous and systematic procedures of dimensional analysis. We meticulously documented field notes, memos, code lists and merging of codes so that the process of analysis could be audited. We searched for negative examples, multiplicity of experiences and subtle nuances of description when selecting interview quotes to illustrate analytic concepts. The first author kept a reflexivity journal, shared potential biases from her own family's immigrant experiences with the research team, and presented research findings at staff meetings at the research sites, soliciting reactions and critiques. These strategies promoted authenticity and credibility of study findings (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

Findings

From the overall explanatory matrix, we generated a conceptual model based on "Believing in a better life" as the key process for the adolescent involved in navigating the separation and reunification experience [See Figure 1]. "Believing in a better life" is defined as believing in migration as the best available strategy to improve living conditions for the family and provide increased opportunities for the future, even at the cost of family separations. Believing in a better life was the driving force that impelled parents to migrate. Although children did not generally have a say in parental migration, their adaptation after experiencing separations, difficult migrations and reunification in the US depended on their also coming to believe that parental migration offered them the best possible future as adolescents and young adults.

In this section, we will describe the context in which parents leave their children in search of a better life, the conditions which nurture or discourage Believing in a Better Life for children who are left behind, processes and strategies used by adolescents in rejoining and reengaging with their parents and their new context in the US, and the consequences ranging along a continuum from optimal to less optimal adaptation.

Context of Parental Separation

The initial decisions of parents to migrate and leave their children behind were made in the context of economic, political and personal factors described by participants.

Economic. One 18 year old who rejoined her mother after a separation of 16 years described a conversation with her grandmother about the poverty in their home country:

> Participant (P): No, she would say to me, "Your mom went over there, because she wanted to help you." She always spoke nice of her. "You don't need to hate

your mother. Because your mother left because we had nothing" she says. "We had absolutely nothing. And so she left, to give us a better life" she says. "Mainly, to give you a better life. Because she worked a lot here … and she made nothing. A little bit of money," she says. "And that was not enough for anything," she says.

Political. The political context described by most participants was characterized by restrictions in US immigration policy. While a few parents had visas, most made arduous overland trips across heavily patrolled borders without documentation, which some of them called, "coming like an immigrant." One young man remembered his mother's attempts to leave.

P: She was always trying to get her visa but it never came. Then one day at night she was crying because she paid a lot and she didn't get the papers for the visa to come. Her father told her to go like an immigrant…but she didn't want. She came like in an airplane. I don't know how she did it.

Personal. Although married couples both migrated in a few families, the migrating parent was a single mother for most participants. In several instances, the father remained in the home country, often with a new family and with minimal caretaking responsibility for the children. A few mothers left violent or controlling relationships with their children's fathers, as explained by one young man, "he would come home drunk and without reason, he would hit my mom. And sometimes in front of us." The migrating parent asked other relatives to take care of the children – most often grandparents, occasionally aunts, and rarely the father.

Interviewer (I): And after the separation of your mom from your dad, because of what happened, what type of contact did you have with your dad?

P: I didn't have any.

I: Almost none?

P: No. He, (pause) became nothing. Basically. Because of, because of the money. He didn't want to give us money.

Conditions Impacting Parent Child Separation and Reunification

In dimensional analysis, conditions are aspects of the situation that shape the actions of participants. Conditions that shape immigrant youth experiences of separation and reunification include the nature of parental leaving, the quality of family relationships, differing conditions across home and host countries, gender role expectations and dynamics, and individual youth experiences. These conditions and their subdimensions will be reviewed below:

Nature of parental leaving. The actions that parents took in leaving, arranging caretakers, and sending remittances to their distant children contributed to the manner in which youth experienced separation and reunification.

Level of preparation. When parents left for a better life, they used a variety of strategies for initiating the separation, sometimes preparing the child in advance. "She took some time to make the decision to come," one young man said, but when the time came, "they told her in the afternoon and she left at night." Others were deceived:

P: And that day, she said that she was going to buy fruit for us, like, apples, and, but it was a lie; she was going to come here and,

143

I: And so, she said that she was going to the market, or something, to buy food, and she never returned?

P: Never returned. (chuckles)

The young woman above expressed confusion and sadness at her mother leaving without saying goodbye. However, a young man whose mother left an abusive relationship with his father without saying goodbye had a somewhat different perspective: "I didn't, I didn't know anything. She just left. But because she knew that if she told us, we wouldn't have let her go."

Sending remittances. For many participants, regular remittances from the migrant parent(s) and sometimes additional relatives paid for amenities such as computers or private school. In some families, multiple adult relatives in the US sent money back to support the caretaker and children.

Family characteristics and quality of home country caretakers. For two participants with married parents, the father migrated first, and their mother was their home country caretaker. In all other instances, the migrating parent or parents asked other relatives to take care of the children – most often grandparents, occasionally aunts, and rarely the father. Households where the children remained after parents left ranged from warm, loving and stable environments to cold, neglectful or in some cases abusive situations. Several youths who were left with grandparents reported feeling comfortable, "treated even better than our parents treated us." Other participants reported caregiver fatigue over time – grandparents who became ill and sometimes died, aunts who moved away, fathers who promised to look after them and did not. These adolescents reported more housing and relational instability in their home countries.

Relationships with fathers. Unless their biological parents were still married, participants generally reported sporadic and inconsistent contact with their fathers before and after migration and denied receiving any financial support from them, whether they were in the home country or the US. In the most positive instance, one teen, who was living with her paternal grandparents in her home country, reported that her father came several times a week to take her to school and helped her with school problems.

Transnational family solidarity: sharing or disputing belief in a better life. The child's belief that the separation would make a better life possible and that he or she had to contribute to the venture was reported most consistently when remittances from distant parents improved living conditions and when the home country caretakers supported the parent's decision, as in the case of this grandfather:

I: When you were over there. Because, for example, some, some adults could say "Oh, I don't know why your mom left", or, but, he supported your mother?

P: Yeah. Because he would tell us that we had to, in school, over there … we had to get good grades. Because my mom was helping us a lot. And that my mom was working hard to feed us. And that we had to, we had to give her good grades because she hadn't, she hadn't left us because she wanted to.

In contrast, one young woman lived with her father's parents while her mother worked in the US: "Because like my family has never liked my mom. My family from my dad's side. They always held her, like, lower. Like they say she is a bad woman and like that."

Long-distance parenting: Maintaining or straining connections.
Communication with distant parents helped sustain belief in a better life. The majority of participants described communication with their mothers, even when their father also

migrated. The frequency of phone calls ranged from daily one hour phone calls to brief

communications every few weeks. One young woman, who lived with her grandfather,

stated, that her mother called her daily:

> I: … Of what, what type of things did you talk about?
>
> P: She would talk to me about how I felt. How I was doing in school. About what
>
> I had for breakfast. What I ate. And what, things about young women. Of what,
>
> when I would have my first monthly cycle. She would explain to me. Since I only
>
> lived with my grandfather, he wasn't going to explain to me.

A number of youth who lived in urban areas had computers and internet access in their

home, and were able to use webcams and chat with distant parents. One teen found that

using social networking, chats and the webcam with her mother helped bridge the

distance: "Well it helped me, because I felt that at the same time I saw her, even though I

couldn't touch her. And, but I did feel like she was with me."

Active long-distance parenting helped strengthen a partnership between separated

children and their parents. For example, one mother started sending remittances directly

to her oldest teenaged daughter and helping her to manage the money when extended

family members were not giving her children enough attention. In contrast, a young man

told his mother in the US that he was threatened at gunpoint by his drunken grandfather,

but "when she talked with my grandfather, he told her that it wasn't true. That I was a

liar."

For some participants, the belief in the meaning of this separation wore thin. One

teen tired of calling her mother. "So what? She is in United States and we are here,

dumped. She abandoned us here."

Differing conditions across home and host countries. Youth described home conditions that were in stark contrast to conditions in the host country. Some youths lived in comfortable homes in quiet neighborhoods in the home countries, only to arrive to cramped housing and dangerous streets. Many remarked that holiday celebrations were more fun in their home countries, and that neighborhood life in general was more fun. "Like in one's country they are really friendly. Someone in the street says, 'Hey, how are you?'… And here, someone, nothing, not even farewell or bye."

Two young men from rural areas in Mexico reported impoverished caretaking situations in which they had to work in the fields with extended family, either before or instead of going to school. Neither went to school beyond the fifth grade before migrating as adolescents and being placed in ninth grade in the US. One young woman from Honduras who received steady remittances from her mother reported leaving school after her grandmother moved to another city and she started to live with peer-aged cousins. She was reluctant to attend school once she arrived in the US. All other participants reported steady public or private school attendance in their home country, with caretaker support. One youth reported being moved from a public to a private school in his home country in order to protect him from gang recruitment.

Most participants felt that their schools in the US were more advanced than their home country schools, with teachers and school counselors more available. However, one young woman reported dangerous conditions in her US school, which impacted her attendance:

P: It's because there are too many problems there. It's, like, three weeks ago, they wanted to beat us up. And, I don't know why; simply they said that they didn't

147

want us there. They are Latinas. And, well, I don't know, there are about three fights there every day, at least.

Gender role expectations and dynamics. Differences in the ways that young men and young women experienced separation and reunification emerged early in research interviews, and these differences involved the gender of the caretaker and migrating parent, home country risks that impelled migration, and gendered role expectations around family involvement in their home country and the US.

Caretaker. Young women with male caretakers missed their absent mother's presence to help explain the physical and emotional changes of puberty. For some, their mothers' frequent phone conversations were sufficient, while others wanted a more spontaneous presence: "I wanted to talk about something and it was about girls, you wasn't here." Young men with female caretakers missed having a male role model in providing structure, discipline and guidance in becoming an adult. These differences were not symmetrical, as most participants of either gender migrated to rejoin a mother. One young man rebelled against his mother's authority after his father left for the US:

I: And, do you think that things would be different if your father had stayed in Mexico. Was it because of the absence, or no?

P: I think so.

I: Yeah. In what way?

P: My father would have taught me better. Because, my mom taught me well also. But, since she is a woman, she didn't know, didn't know what I felt. For example, things about gangs, or something.

Migrating parent. Two young men who witnessed their father abusing their mother admired their mother's courage in migrating to the US. However, young women were more likely than young men to view their migrating mothers as taking the place of both parents.

> P: She has always been my mom, like my hero. I think that I have respected her a lot because she has done what my dad didn't even have the courage to do, to come here. So, I think that she is, is like my father and my mother, at the same time. And she's very valuable to me.

Gangs. While participants of both genders identified gangs, in both home and host countries, as a major issue facing immigrant youth, young men had more virulently negative things to say about gangs and gang recruitment, calling gangs "a plague." Participants generally described gangs as being harder for young men to avoid, and gangs were the primary reason for migration for several young men in the study, as described below in Processes/Strategies.

Gendered expression of emotions. Teens were asked about gender differences in general, and how gender differences played out in their own family. Some participants denied that there was a difference. Others, both young men and women, stated that women were more sensitive than men, and had more feelings.

> I: Even though, like sometimes it is said that women are more sensitive. And that women will say "I miss my family in my country" or something like that. And in contrast, the guys said "well, let's just keep moving forward, and let's continue forwards." But I think that it's the same for both, because, both genders have to get used to, to, a new, a different life.

What was not the same for both was the expectation of being able to talk about emotional issues. Young men frequently expressed the thought that they should not burden their mothers with their own problems after reunification, and occasionally stated that they were too old to reconnect with their mothers in this way. Young women universally described attempts to engage their mothers in discussions about their experiences and feelings.

Individual experiences.

Some youth reported safe and loving home country environments, with friends and extended family close by, and relatively smooth migration experiences. However, many individual youth reported adverse and traumatic conditions prior to and across the trajectory of the separation/reunification experience.

Adverse and traumatic childhood experiences. One young man described harsh family living conditions, such as deprivation of food when other family members ate, and threats of extreme violence, as when his grandfather "put a gun to my head. He told me he was going to kill me." Another young man who had been in the US for three years stated casually, after the interview had ended and the tape recorder was off, that he had just started counseling after school, because of an event that had happened in his home country. He went on to say that his paternal half-sister, whose boyfriend was in a gang, was killed in a drive-by shooting, that he found out about this while he was en route to the US, and that he had not talked to anyone about this since his arrival, including his mother. A third young man stated that his younger sister was raped in the US, and a young woman related that a cousin in her home country was raped and

murdered shortly after she herself had migrated here. Traumatic migration events are described below (see Crossing the border).

Migration status. The majority of the participants in the study and their parents were undocumented, and their status colored every aspect of the separation and reunification experiences. Parents were unable to visit them at home, their journey across the border was dangerous and difficult, and they feared their own or their parents' deportation once they arrived.

Crossing the border. Virtually every participant crossed the border without parents – those with documents in a plane, alone or with siblings, and most over land, riding on top of trains, crossing rivers on rafts and walking across with guides paid by their parents. These trips were variously described as difficult, ugly, harrowing, and life-changing experiences. Participants reported running from border patrols, witnessing robberies by bandits, getting lost or abandoned by drug-using guides and facing a hot, exhausting crossing through the desert. Several of the Central American participants were apprehended and placed in immigration detention, and eventually released to their families in the US. Although this detention, in the long run, brought more attention to their families and increased their own risks of future deportation, in the short run detention provided a rescue from the dangers of the desert and afforded them daily phone calls with their parents. One teen compared her first crossing to her grueling second trip, "the last time that I came, I didn't suffer. Because I crossed the border and they got me. And then from there I was detained for a month. And from there to here, I came by airplane." Participants expressed pride in having survived the trip, "I didn't know that it

would be so difficult to cross," and stated that they felt changed forever. "I will never forget about it."

For those without papers, the uncertainty of future deportation inevitably colored their attempts to reconnect with their families and to develop a career as a young adult.

> I: Because I don't want to be here. My mom has been here seventeen years and she doesn't plan on leaving. And I don't tell her but I don't plan to stay. I think that maybe if I was given an opportunity to have some kind of paper that, that says I could be in this country, maybe I could be here and I could travel to my country. But if I can save something so that I could live on with for some time, then I will leave. Because I can't be here with the fear that I could be deported at any moment.

Other undocumented teens were more optimistic, but also qualified every statement about future plans with statements like "if I will be able."

Processes and Strategies

Processes and strategies were the actions that youth took in reaction to the separation from parents in their home country, and then the journey, reunification and adaptation to life in the US. These strategies reflected the changing levels of their acceptance or rejection of their parent's migration to make a better life. Some youth in their home country sought out alternate caretakers, cared for younger siblings and actively engaged with their distant parents. They also took action to delay or accelerate their migration to the US. Once in the US, they used a variety of strategies to reunite with their parents and to adapt to new schools and peers. These actions are detailed below.

Doing or resisting their part for a better life. While the participants did not have any say in their parent leaving, they talked about actively maintaining the relationship with their distant parent, negotiating to change home country caregivers, and occasionally rebelling against their expected behaviors.

Engaging with parents across borders. One young woman used web chats to help construct and maintain the relationship between her mother and her younger sister:

I: And so, your sister was, like a baby when your mom left.

P: Yeah. She was, when she left her, she was like, nine months old.

I: Wow. And she had never seen her, your mom, personally?

P: No, had never seen her. Only on webcam. She would say, "Oh, my mom, my mom" because of what we would say about her.

Another young man stated that his sister took action after his father stopped taking care of them. "My sister called my mom and she told her how we were, how things were. And she began to take care of us again. Because my dad would not let my mom take care of us."

Negotiating alternate caretakers. Older sisters in several families took on parenting; amidst the default of other family caretakers, they found housing, opened bank accounts to receive remittances from their mother, and re-established more direct communications and a clearer partnership across the distances. One young man stated that his older sister left school in order to care for her two younger brothers. Other participants arranged to move from one grandmother's home to another, or from grandparents to aunts and uncles.

Rebelling against expectations. Young men were more likely than young women to have worked in their home country, starting in early adolescence, and even if they went to school. One young man, whose father had migrated to the US, left school and his mother in Mexico without warning and went with a cousin to work for four months in another state, saving money for his trip north. A young woman in Honduras did not work, but refused to go to school after her grandmother moved away, staying with cousins, drinking and using drugs.

Choosing or refusing to migrate. In most cases participants were anxious to rejoin parents. For a few participants, the wait was for immigration documents from the US and permission to leave their home country. More often, they were waiting for their parents to save money to pay for a guide to take them across the border. One young man, who came up for a visit, was so enchanted with the city where his mother lived, he decided to stay. Another early adolescent reluctantly left his friends and a girlfriend, "well, they practically forced me," as he had to help his mother bring his three younger brothers across the border. One teen refused to leave the first time her parents sent for her as she felt too attached to her grandmother, and did not agree to migrate until mid-adolescence. Other participants told of siblings who have refused to come and are still in their home country. Four of the participants in the study had returned to their home country for some period of time, either because they missed home country caretakers or because of trouble adapting to life in the US.

Four of the young men stated that they left, suddenly, for the US because of a direct threat from a gang or drug cartel at home. For two, this was the only reason that they migrated, and for the others the threats accelerated reunification plans. One young

154

man stated that he was threatened after notifying the police about stolen property: "And they even followed me when I was going to school. And then one time I was coming out of a car wash. They pointed a gun at me." Another young man was threatened after he resisted attempts to recruit him to a gang, and a third was harassed at school.

In a few instances, the distant parent hurried to arrange the trip as caretaking situations fell apart, or the teen's own behavior became worrisome.

P: I was intoxicated. They had to take me to the emergency room to the hospital.

I: And, you took pills to kill yourself, or?

P: Yeah, pills, for, like, to relax. To sleep. I took too many. And then, something went inside of my body. I couldn't breathe right. And they had to take me to the emergency at the hospital. And after, my mom talked to me and told me, "I am going to bring you over here."

Reuniting with Parents and Adapting to Life in the US

Descriptions of joy on the initial reunion with parents were common, though a few participants were so overcome with the loss of family and friends in their home country that they were unable to speak:

I: I couldn't express my sadness. So like, I was stuck like, but yeah, I just said "mom how are you?" And I started to cry for a little bit, but I was hugging her. But then my brother and sister… so like, they were able to express themselves. Because they were older, they already, they understood. But I was still like, I didn't know what to do. I was sad, but happy.

After the initial celebrations, involving food, meeting extended family and buying new clothes, came adjustment to daily life and the challenges of reconnecting emotionally with parents, new step-parents, and siblings.

I: And you told me that at first it was very difficult with your mother. Can you describe, like, the difficulties that you had together, here?

P: Like…not that difficult, because, how do I explain this to you? No, not me, maybe, I did not know how, what would bother her. Or what did not. But, she treated, she treats us the same as my other brother that was born here. She had another kid. She treats us the same. When she buys something for one, she buys for the other. Like that; she treats us the same. But, we felt, like, strange. Strange, because we weren't with her. And always, at night, we would be there; when my brother, because I am very sentimental. And, I would always think of when my, when we would be there at night, with my grandfather. And, and when my brother would look at me, he would start to cry also. And then, when, when my mom would look at us the same like that, she would tell us not to feel bad.

While in the US, youth engaged in four main strategies to engage with family, schools, and peers: *poco a poco* (little by little), holding a grudge, reconnecting through crises, and renegotiating relationships.

Poco a poco (little by little). In this strategy, adolescents and families allowed time, the connections of doing chores, and being in the same place to allow trust and connections to build. In this way, relationships were built little by little.

P: But no, there wasn't something like, there was nothing that helped me to connect better with her. I didn't go through many things, I simply was just with her.

Understanding her a little better. Sometimes I would talk to her. But when I would talk she wouldn't understand me and I would just be there. So, there was like, a little bit.

I: So, little by little, but there wasn't an event, that was dramatic, or something.

P: No. Simply, little by little.

Reconnecting through crises. Two youths described crises involving their mothers' serious health problems, and others described crises precipitated by their behavior. One young man whose mother had a traumatic pregnancy loss stated:

P: And I lost many classes, well, here from school. Because I would go see my mom. And I felt that she was going to die on me and … I need to worry more about my mom than about school. And I spent that time with her. I got Fs in all my classes.

Another young man who described severe mistreatment by family in his home country and emotional rejection by his mother made multiple suicide attempts, in this instance by overdosing on his antidepressants.

I: And who found out about it?

P: I told, I told that to my mom.

I: You told your mom?

P: I told her that I had done that. And so she called the police. It had been two days. Nothing had happened. Not telling anyone. I was there. And then the police arrived. They took me to the hospital.

A young man, who was not involved with a gang, violated school dress code rules related to gang colors. His step-father, who had immigrated to the US as an adolescent, was called in to a conference, and the participant described the subsequent mentoring he received from his step-father about avoiding trouble in their section of the city.

Isolating and holding a grudge. Length of separation and also the order in which children migrated to the US led to resentments in some cases. Actions taken by those teens who held a grudge included isolating themselves from family members, refusing to go to school, refusing to accept parental authority and using drugs and alcohol. One young man resented being the last in his family to migrate and had difficulty reconnecting with his mother. Another noted that his brother, who had refused to migrate at first, now blames his mother, "Talking about 'oh, you left me when I was little.'" A young woman who rejoined her mother after a prolonged separation, said:

And even, I would tell her "it would be better had I stayed in Honduras. I shouldn't have come here. Because here, I only go to school and I don't want to go to school, I don't want to go to school. And here, you just scold me" I tell her. "If I had known, I wouldn't have come."

Gender differences were most notable in this strategy, as young men tended to stay isolated, with "no one by my side," while young women persisted in trying to connect with their parents, even if these attempts were not successful. Some young men did engage actively with school and sports, even if they remained aloof from their family.

Renegotiating relationships. The fourth strategy was a reformulation of the parent-child relationship on a more equal footing. Participants said that they wanted their parents to be their friend, or that they were happy that their parent was their friend. This young man, who at first came reluctantly, was now optimistic about his future in the US:

> P: Because my dad, instead of being my dad, he is my friend at the same time. My dad is like, he's very, very good. Like, I get along really well with him. My dad was like my right hand when I got here. I didn't know what to do and my dad would tell me, "no, well you have to do this." He helped me a lot when I came. When he would help me, I started to get to know him. My mom also, but my dad more. Maybe, I don't know, maybe that is what helped me.

Young women were more likely to say that they had regular chores and to see their work inside the home as valuable to the family, and as a way to reconnect with their mothers once they arrived in the US.

> P: I am big and I can cook. I can take care of her alone. I have always taken care of my sister. With my sister, it's a lot of work, it's a lot for me. And so I help her, and my mom can be at ease. The weekends, well I help her with cleaning, and well, she doesn't have a lot of work. Yeah. I think that that's helping her, at home more than anything.

Consequences

The conditions and strategies described above led to a range of successful and less successful adaptations to life in the US. In asking them how their life was going now participants answered along a spectrum ranging from sad, isolated, and disappointed to connected and optimistic. The extremes of this range of consequences are depicted in the

Explanatory Matrix (Table 1). Most youth described outcomes in the domains of family re-engagement, and adaptation to school and peer relationships that were a mix of optimal and suboptimal elements, such as successful peer engagement and superficial family connections, or strong family relationships and difficulties with school.

Re-engagement with family. Youths in the study described a range of re-engagement outcomes with family members for themselves and their immigrant siblings. For example, one young woman worked hard and successfully to re-establish a close relationship for herself, and between her mother and younger sister. But she noted that the older brother who migrated with her, while working and attending a local community college, held himself apart from the family. The strategies of actively reconstructing parent-teen relationships, as well as letting time take its course, led to positive results in some families, with trust and easy communication. In others, particularly in situations where youth used strategies of isolation, they remarked that their relationship had gotten to the point of superficial daily conversation and stayed there.

While several young men re-established good relationships with their mothers, others felt that they were too old, "I could be a man now," and looked down on other young men who confided in their mothers as being babied and too attached. Several young men stated that they spent their time out of school alone in their rooms, and did not socialize with their family. The male participants who reunited with fathers expressed satisfaction with the guidance their fathers gave them. However, one young woman noted that her father only had time for his youngest son, born in the US, while both she and her older brother felt estranged from him.

Even in instances where teens were disappointed in their emotional connection to their parents, they related with satisfaction extended family celebrations:

P: Because when we have parties we always stay up late. And then after the music stops because we have a certain time when we can't have music. And we always just talk. And then it gets to be real late. Yeah. But it's really fun being with family.

Other youths used family gatherings as a way to connect with cousins and younger aunts and uncles, whom they might consult with problems instead of their parents. But some teens stated that their parents worked "seven days a week" and declined attending the few gatherings there were.

Some youth described an ability to hold onto emotional connections in their home country at the same time that they reconnected with their parent in the US, as with this young woman whose grandfather is still in El Salvador:

I: And when you have problems, now, do you go to your mom, or do you go to your grandfather? Do you call your grandfather, or, with whom do you consult?

P: With my mom.

I: With your mom?

P: Because it's the person that I have closer. But I always tell. Everything that happens to me, I always tell my grandfather.

School. Getting a good education was a big part of believing in a better life. Almost all participants reported that their parents wanted them to go to school through high school and beyond, and that family members supported them economically, "they work for me," so that they could remain in school. However, with the exception of a few younger US-

born siblings and older cousins, participants did not receive homework or other educational support from their families. Even a teen with an involved step-father who was a US citizen remarked that he was already further along in school than his step-father had gone.

Once they arrived in the US, the big hurdle that late immigrants had to jump was learning English, and participants had acquired vastly different levels of skill and confidence in using English, despite similar ages of immigration and attendance at the same school. Two teens, who had arrived during the later elementary school years, requested interviews in English and were taking mainstream high school classes. The other participants were all in the process of learning English, at very different speeds, and teens who were the most pessimistic about school also endorsed the most difficulties in learning English.

Most youths, regardless of immigration status, described educational and career aspirations that would require some college, including marine biologist, computer technician, artist, psychologist, and lawyer. A few participants, who had not been in school beyond 6th grade in their home countries, stated that they were only in school to learn enough English to acquire a job.

> P: Well, I'll just complete this school year, and then I will find a job because I'd like to help my mother. I don't want my mother to work, she has been taking care of me for a long time and I'm grown.

One participant stated she was failing classes as she felt unsafe to go to school and a few others felt that the journey to school from their neighborhood was perilous, but their school was safe. A few teens who were ambivalent about school attendance

remarked that they did not do their homework, and one participant who had suffered

long-term abuse and neglect in his home country stated he had difficulty concentrating.

School was also a potential source of practical and emotional support, as most

young women and several young men stated that they were connecting with teachers and

after school programs for educational help, and accessing counseling support in school-

linked health services. One young man who was isolated at home named a security guard

at his school as the person he talked to about his problems.

Peer engagement: Making new friends and keeping the old. Making new friends

was limited, for some youth, by lack of trust. Several young men who had fled gang or

cartel threats were afraid that they might inadvertently reveal this information to peers

with involved family. Others noted that it was hard to develop the same trust in new

friends that they had developed over time with friends and extended family in their home

country. A young woman who arrived in the US at age 10 stated that she was closer to

immigrant friends whether or not they were Latino than to Latinos who were US-born, as

she felt that her values and work ethic were more similar to immigrants from other

countries. Virtually every adolescent connected almost daily to friends, cousins and

siblings in their home country by social media, even if they themselves did not own a

computer or cell phone. However, they generally reported exchange of superficial content

in these contacts. While several teens expressed religious faith as important during their

transition, only one specifically talked about the support she received from her

congregation: "All of the young people, we are friends there. Because, we all are, like,

we're Latino, and, and many, our stories are similar."

A few teens reported significant support from friends in the US. One teen reported that her friends were encouraging her to stay away from drugs. Another stated his friend offered him a place to stay and company when his father returned on a trip to Mexico. A young woman who was detained at the border by immigration and whose status here is uncertain stated that her friends in both her home country and in the US have been a major source of comfort, telling her "that they don't want me to go, and that I am a great friend for them. And that if that, if it happens that I leave, they will miss me. But to have faith in God that, that I will stay." One young man stated specifically that it made him happy to help other people with their problems.

However, most young men in the study stated that they played sports or video games with friends, but did not talk to them about their problems. A few confided in girlfriends. Many, however, stated that there was no one with whom they talked about their feelings.

I: What does that --- when you feel alone, what does that mean? (pause) When you feel alone, does it mean that you can't talk to anyone? In what sense, do you feel alone?

P: That there is no one by my side, that I can't speak to them about my feelings and that I feel lonely and bad and things like that --- my problems.

Discussion

Believing in a better life (Table 1) was the driving force behind parental migration to the US and helped youth participants make meaning out of separation, migration to the US and reunification with their parents. In our sample, the quality of home country support, consistent messages from home country caregivers and parents,

and regular, meaningful communication with distant parents were more salient than the length or age of separation in sustaining belief in a better life, which facilitated successful family reunification. Use of cell phones and computer technology helped support, but did not ensure significant communication and active long-distance parenting. Youth used four strategies for reconnecting with their parents: letting time take it's course (*poco a poco*), experiencing individual and family crises to become closer, remaining isolated, and renegotiating a more equal parent-child relationship. Isolation was the most problematic strategy, and there were successes and failures with the others.

Youth who were more flexible in holding contradictory emotions, such as happiness at reconnecting a parent and sadness at leaving friends and family behind, were more likely to express optimism about the future. These youth also expressed more satisfaction with family relationships. Youth who learned English more quickly were also optimistic about their future, and we were unable to determine in our interviews if there was a relationship between learning English rapidly and family engagement, or if these were simultaneous but unrelated processes.

Gender shaped participants' responses to separation and strategies for reconnection and adaptation in profound and complex ways. Young women described more active roles in maintaining communication with distant mothers, sometimes seeking out their mother when other family members had blocked communication, and helping to broker relationships between their mother and younger siblings. A few young men gratefully endorsed their older sisters' efforts to improve these connections and their own care. Young women were also more likely to persist in re-engaging with their mother after a rocky start to reunification. Young men were more likely to allow time to take its

course, and some did report more comfort and ease at home without specifically sharing migration stories or other personal issues, and all of the participants who described family settings with emotional isolation and only superficial communication were young men.

Only five of our participants, and only three young men, were reunifying with fathers. In other cases, fathers were either absent or played negative roles in their children's lives. Very few of the young men without an active father could name a significant male role model who could help them navigate reconnections to family, school and peers. Several young men said that they were their own "guide" and others specifically said that their mothers could not help them "become a man." Some also said that they did not want to "burden" their mothers with their emotional problems, and this was in strong contrast to the young women in our study, who all either had or strived for a close emotional connection with their mothers.

Trauma, both at home and en route to the US, was more pervasive in our population than we had expected. Young men described harsher and more abusive treatment than young women, and all of the four participants who described fleeing gang violence as their primary reason to migrate were young men. This is a significant finding, as two of the young men would not have wanted to come to the US if it were not for these threats, and two others were not sure what their parents' plans might have been. Young men also described more difficulties than young women in avoiding gang involvement and challenges in the US.

From the earliest coding and analytical memos, it was clear that youth were interpreting family reunification in the context of other important domains in their lives, their connections to schools and peers. The "better life" that first parents and then youth

believed in involved trading off years of physical closeness for the hoped for benefits of attentive childrearing and better schools in their home country and eventually higher education and better jobs in the US. The "what *all* is involved here" perspective of dimensional analysis allowed us to explore the larger context in which youth were interacting with their reunified families,

Data gleaned from our research interviews and field notes reveal a picture of family separation and reunification that is congruent with earlier research. Previous researchers have vividly discussed the pain of separation (Ártico, 2003; Parreñas, 2005), the ability of children who have been left behind to influence the transnational family dynamic (Dreby, 2007) and difficulties with reunification (Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2011), as well as improvements over time (Ártico, 2003; Smith et al., 2004; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). The most recent qualitative literature has begun to explore the impact of traumatic border crossings on adolescents who are reunifying with parents (Ko & Perreira, 2010), and the number of detained youths from Central America who are fleeing gang violence in their home countries (Jones & Podkul, 2012).

In addition, we have elucidated new findings for reunifying immigrant youth from transnational families. We have explored the impact of gender on family reunification to a greater extent than earlier literature, as well as the benefits and limits of newer technologies in improving cross-border family communications, and the greater than expected prevalence of trauma and unstable home country caretaking before arrival in the US. We have highlighted the emergence of fleeing gang or cartel violence as a prime motivator for family reunification in some youths.

In earlier research, Ártico (2003) noted that relationships of reunified youth with their parents improved once youth themselves began to work or parent. We have observed strategies youth are using in real time to renegotiate and improve these relationships, and have been particularly intrigued by the desire of some participants to see their parents as friends. One of our liaisons remarked that the normative multigenerational homes in Latin America may have provided youth with examples of their own parents, aunts and uncles developing similar friend-like relationships with grandparents over time.

Cell phones, smart phones, tablets and computers are becoming more accessible around the world, and the published literature on their impact on transnational families is just starting to catch up. Lan (2006) reported on the effectiveness of cell phones and texting in enabling daily parenting interactions from Filipino migrant workers in Taiwan to their children back home. Bacigalupe & Lambe (2011) published case studies suggesting the effectiveness of incorporating real-time transnational communication via computers and cell phones during family therapy. We have added to the literature by reporting adolescent perspectives on the uses as well as limitations of technology and of social networking in connection with distant relatives and peers.

The participants in our study crossed the border at a time of increasing deportations, greater scrutiny and militarization of the border, as well as harsher anti-immigrant laws and a polarized discourse in the media (Massey & Pren, 2012). A fuller discussion of immigration policy is beyond the scope of this article, and will be touched on in the Implications section below. What is important for their adaptation to family and community life in the US and for our model is that they have been transformed by this

168

journey in profound ways that they may not be communicating to the parents with whom they are reunifying, to their teachers or to health care providers. Every youth in this study had something to say about his or her journey to the US, either spontaneously or when asked if there was anything else we had not asked that was important.

Limitations

With our small purposive sample, we make no claims of a representative study. However, other literature suggests that a higher proportion of young men are apprehended crossing the border (Jones & Podkul, 2012; Wier, 2009), and our sample may be reflecting this difference. We considered ourselves fortunate to have interviewed more young men than young women in our study, as young men in general are less likely to use health care services than young women (Marcell, Klein, Fischer, Allan, & Kokotailo, 2002), and therefore are underrepresented in adolescent health research (Marcell & Ellen, 2012).

While we aimed for adolescents between 14 and 22, we achieved a smaller range of teens between 16 and 19. The few teens we knew of who declined interviews were 14 or 15, and it may be that the format of a lengthy one-to-one interview lends itself to older teens. There are other formats being used in qualitative research, such as photo-voice (Bibeau et al., 2012) and visual ethnographic methods (Salazar, 2012) that might engage younger adolescents more effectively. We also did not reach adolescents who were not in school, as community staff members at school-linked services were most effective at recruiting participants. The literature reports that many older adolescents who migrate to the US never enter the educational system (Martinez, 2009). Since we were interviewing participants between 2010 and 2012, a time of higher unemployment in the region, it is

possible that we were capturing some of these youth, as they complained of being unable to find jobs during their interviews.

Finally, while we obtained rich data about the context in which youth were reunifying with their families, we were unable to state whether successful family reunification was causally related to successful school and community adaptation.

Implications

Continuing optimism and belief in a better life are personal characteristics that can help immigrant 1.5 generation youth to achieve academic success, peer connections and family integration. Maintaining belief in a better life is more sustainable for youth with educational support, community resources, and family stability. While the percentage of late immigrants who are reunifying with parents is unknown, the few studies that have asked about family separation have indicated that a majority of Latino immigrants who arrive in late childhood and adolescence are in this group (Potochnik & Perreira, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002).

Health professionals and educators working with adolescents in schools are ideally situated to support immigrant youth in these multiple domains. Health care providers in more traditional settings may be seeing immigrant youth just for immunizations, reproductive or emergency care, as most of them will not be covered under the Affordable Care Act (National Immigration Law Center, 2012). However, these youth in general, and especially young men, could benefit from outreach and care that is tailored to their needs as emerging, and often traumatized, young adults. Routine histories in primary care, school-based and mental health settings could include questions about prior caretakers, family separations, and current transnational connections. Community

organizations working on youth development could focus on mentorship, language support for those who are not learning English quickly enough, and skill development for youth with large gaps in their education.

Young people who are fleeing gang and cartel violence may benefit from legal assistance in applying for asylum. They are arriving at a particularly polarized time in US immigration policy, with record numbers of deportations at the same time that some 1.5 generation youth can apply for a temporary stay (Passel & Lopez, 2012). Despite the many adversities and challenges in their lives, immigrant youth who are reunifying with parents display a resilience, optimism and energy that can carry them to a healthy and productive adulthood.

References

Aguilera-Guzmán, R. M., de Snyder, V. N., Romero, M., & Medina-Mora, M. E. (2004). Paternal absence and international migration: Stressors and compensators associated with the mental health of Mexican teenagers of rural origin. *Adolescence, 39*, 711-723.

Arnold, E. (2006). Separation and loss through immigration of african caribbean women to the uk. *Attachment & Human Development, 8*, 159-174.

Ártico, C. I. (2003). *Latino families broken by immigration: The adolescents' perceptions*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

Bacigalupe, G., & Lambe, S. (2011). Virtualizing intimacy: Information communication technologies and transnational families in therapy. *Family Process, 50*, 12-26. doi: 10.1111/j.1545-5300.2010.01343.x

Bibeau, W. S., Saksvig, B. I., Gittelsohn, J., Williams, S., Jones, L., & Young, D. R. (2012). Perceptions of the food marketing environment among African American teen girls and adults. *Appetite, 58*, 396-399. doi: 10.1016/j.appet.2011.11.004

Borges, G., Breslau, J., Su, M., Miller, M., Medina-Mora, M. E., & Aguilar-Gaxiola, S. (2009). Immigration and suicidal behavior among Mexicans and Mexican Americans. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*, 728-733. doi: AJPH.2008.135160 [pii] 10.2105/AJPH.2008.135160 [doi]

Bowers, B. (2009). Leonard Schatzman and dimensional analysis. In J. M. Morse, P. N. Stern, J. M. Corbin, K. C. Charmaz, B. Bowers & A. E. Clarke (Eds.), *Developing grounded theory: The second generation* (pp. 86-106). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Bowers, E. P., von Eye, A., Lerner, J. V., Arbeit, M. R., Weiner, M. B., Chase, P., & Agans, J. P. (2011). The role of ecological assets in positive and problematic developmental trajectories. *Journal of Adolescence, 34*, 1151-1165. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.07.007

Cauce, A. M., Cruz, R., Corona, M., & Conger, R. (2011). The face of the future: Risk and resilience in minority youth. In G. Carlo (Ed.), Health disparities in youth and families. *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation (Vol. 57):* Springer Science + Business Media. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4419-7092-3_2

Cerrutti, M., & Massey, D.S. (2001). On the auspices of female migration from Mexico to the United States. *International Migration Review, 372*, 187-201.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2009). Shifting the grounds: Constructivist grounded theory methods. In J. M. Morse, P. N. Stern, J. Corbin, B. Bowers, K. Charmaz & A. E. Clarke (Eds.), *Developing grounded theory: The second generation* (pp. 127-154). Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Clarke, A. E. (2003). Situational analyses: Grounded theory mapping after the postmodern turn. *Symbolic Interaction, 26*(4), 553-576.

Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dreby, J. (2007). Children and power in mexican transnational families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69*, 1050-1064.

Dreby, J. (2010). *Divided by borders: Mexican migrants and their children*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Falicov, C. J. (2005). Emotional transnationalism and family identities. *Family Process, 44*, 399-406.

Farquhar, S. A., Parker, E. A., Schulz, A. J., & Israel, B. A. (2006). Application of qualitative methods in program planning for health promotion interventions. *Health Promotion Practice, 7*, 234-242.

Frankowski, B. L., Leader, I. C., & Duncan, P. M. (2009). Strength-based interviewing. *Adolescent Medicine State of the Art Reviews, 20*, 22-40, vii-viii.

Ginsburg, K. R., & Carlson, E. C. (2011). Resilience in action: An evidence-informed, theoretically driven approach to building strengths in an office-based setting. *Adolescent Medicine State of the Art Reviews, 22*, 458-481, xi.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967/1999). *The discovery of grounded theory:*
Strategies for qualitative research. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction.

Glasgow, G., & Gouse-Sheese, J. (1995). Themes of rejection and abandonment in group work with caribbean adolescents. *Social Work with Groups, 17*(4), 3-27.

Haddal, C. C. (2007). Unaccompanied alien children: Policies and issues *CRS Report for Congress*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

Halcomb, E. J., Gholizadeh, L., DiGiacomo, M., Phillips, J., & Davidson, P. M. (2007). Literature review: Considerations in undertaking focus group research with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 16*, 1000-1011.

Hine-St. Hilaire, D. (2008). *When children are left behind: The perceptions of West Indian adolescents separated from their mothers during childhood due to migration, and the effects of this separation on their reunification* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest (UMI Microform 3287893)

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., & Avila, E. (1997). "I'm here, but I'm there": The meanings of latina transnational motherhood. *Gender & Society, 11*, 548-571.

International Organization for Migration. (2009). New center for unaccompanied minors opens on mexico's southern border. *International Organization for Migration Press Briefing notes*. Retrieved from International Organization for Migration website: http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/media/press-briefing-notes/pbnAM/cache/offonce/lang/en?entryId=25843

Isaksen, L. W., Devi, S. U., & Hochschild, A. R. (2008). Global care crisis: A problem of

    capital, care chain, or commons? *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*, 405-425.

    doi: 10.1177/0002764208323513

Jia, Z., & Tian, W. (2010). Loneliness of left-behind children: A cross-sectional survey in

    a sample of rural china. *Child Care Health & Development, 36*, 812-817. doi:

    10.1111/j.1365-2214.2010.01110.x

Jones, J., & Podkul, J. (2012). *Forced from home: The lost boys and girls of Central*

    America (pp. 43). New York: Women's Refugee Commission.

Ko, L. K., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). "It turned my world upside down": Latino youths'

    perspectives on immigration. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 25*, 465-493. doi:

    10.1177/0743558410361372

Kools, S. McCarthy, M., Durham, R., & Robrecht, L. (1996). Dimensional analysis:

    Broadening the conception of grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research, 6*,

    312-330. doi: 10.1177/104973239600600302

Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied*

    research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lan, P.-C. (2006). *Global cinderellas: Migrant domestics and newly rich employers in*

    taiwan. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lashley, M. (2000). The unrecognized social stressors of migration and reunification in

    Caribbean families. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 37*, 203-217.

Lempert, L. B. (2007). Asking questions of the data: Memo writing in the grounded

    theory tradition. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of*

    grounded theory (pp. 245-264). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Levitt, P., & Jaworsky, B. N. (2007). Transnational migration studies: Past developments and future trends. *Annual Review of Sociology, 33*, 129-156. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131816

Liu, Z., Li, X., & Ge, X. (2009). Left too early: The effects of age at separation from parents on Chinese rural children's symptoms of anxiety and depression. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*, 2049-2054. doi: AJPH.2008.150474 [pii] 10.2105/AJPH.2008.150474 [doi]

Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development, 71*, 543-562.

Marcell, A. V., & Ellen, J. M. (2012). Core sexual/reproductive health care to deliver to male adolescents: Perceptions of clinicians focused on male health. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 51*, 38-44. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.10.013

Marcell, A. V., Klein, J. D., Fischer, I., Allan, M. J., & Kokotailo, P. K. (2002). Male adolescent use of health care services: Where are the boys? *Journal of Adolescent Health, 30*, 35-43.

Martinez, I. (2009). What's age gotta do with it? Understanding the age-identities and school-going practices of Mexican immigrant youth in New York City. [080 s; 143 Reports: Research]. *High School Journal, 92*(4), 34-48.

Massey, D. S., & Pren, K. A. (2012). Unintended consequences of US immigration policy: Explaining the post-1965 surge from Latin America. *Population Development Review, 38*, 1-29.

Masten, A. S., & Obradovic, J. (2006). Competence and resilience in development. *Annals of the N Y Academy of Science, 1094*, 13-27. doi: 1094/1/13 [pii] 10.1196/annals.1376.003

Mazzucato, V., & Schans, D. (2011). Transnational families and the well-being of children: Conceptual and methodological challenges. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 73*, 704-712. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00840.x

National Immigration Law Center. (2012). How are immigrants included in health care reform? *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*. Los Angeles, CA: National Immigration Law Center.

Ong, A. D., Phinney, J. S., & Dennis, J. (2006). Competence under challenge: Exploring the protective influence of parental support and ethnic identity in latino college students. *Journal of Adolescence, 29*, 961-979.

Parreñas, R. S. (2001). *Servants of globalization: Women, migration, and domestic work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Parreñas, R. S. (2005). *Children of global migration: Transnational families and gendered woes*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Passel, J. S. (2011). Demography of immigrant youth: Past, present, and future. *Future of the Child, 21*(1), 19-41.

Passel, J. S., & Lopez, M. H. (2012). Up to 1.7 million unauthorized immigrant youth may benefit from new deportation rules. Washington, DC.: Pew HIspanic Center.

Perreira, K. M., & Ornelas, I. J. (2011). The physical and psychological well-being of immigrant children. *Future of the Child, 21*(1), 195-218.

Potochnick, S. R., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). Depression and anxiety among first-generation immigrant Latino youth: Key correlates and implications for future research. *Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease, 198*, 470-477. doi: 10.1097/NMD.0b013e3181e4ce24 [doi] 00005053-201007000-00002 [pii]

Pribilsky, J. (2001). Nervios and 'modern childhood': Migration and shifting contexts of child life in the Ecuadorian Andes. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research. Special Issue: Capitalizing on concern, 8*, 251-273.

Rivera, F. I., Guarnaccia, P. J., Mulvaney-Day, N., Lin, J. Y., Torres, M., & Alegria, M. (2008). Family cohesion and its relationship to psychological distress among Latino groups. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science, 30*, 357-378. doi: 10.1177/0739986308318713 [doi]

Rumbaut, R. G. (2004). Ages, life stages, and generational cohorts: Decomposing the immigrant first and second generations in the united states. *International Migration Review, 38*, 1160-1205.

Salazar, M. L. (2008). *Bodies in place, bodies in motion: Images of immigrant youth negotiating food, location and identity* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest (UMI Number: 3344713).

Schatzman, L. (1991). Dimensional analysis: Notes on an alternative approach to the grounding of theory in qualitative research. In D. R. Maines (Ed.), *Social organization and social process: Essays in honor of Anselm Strauss* (pp. 303-314). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Schmalzbauer, L. (2004). Searching for wages and mothering from afar: The case of

    Honduran transnational families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66*, 1317-

    1331.

Schwartz, S. J., Pantin, H., Coatsworth, J. D., & Szapocznik, J. (2007). Addressing the

    challenges and opportunities for today's youth: Toward an integrative model and

    its implications for research and intervention. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 28*,

    117-144. doi: 10.1007/s10935-007-0084-x

Sheikh, A., Halani, L., Bhopal, R., Netuveli, G., Partridge, M. R., Car, J., . . . Levy, M.

    (2009). Facilitating the recruitment of minority ethnic people into research:

    Qualitative case study of South Asians and asthma. *PLoS Medicine, 6*(10),

    e1000148. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1000148 [doi]

Smith, A., Lalonde, R. N., & Johnson, S. (2004). Serial migration and its implications for

    the parent-child relationship: A retrospective analysis of the experiences of the

    children of caribbean immigrants. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority*

    Psychology, 10, 107-122.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology, an overview. In N.

    Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285).

    Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and*

    procedures for developing grounded theory (Second ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:

    SAGE Publications.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Bang, H. J., & Kim, H. Y. (2011). I felt like my heart was staying

    behind: Psychological implications of family separations & reunifications for

immigrant youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 26*, 222-257. doi: 10.1177/0743558410376830

Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M. M., & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in american society*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Todorova, I., & Louie, J. (2002). Making up for lost time: The experience of separation and reunification among immigrant families. *Family Process, 41*, 625-643.

Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 11*, 522-537.
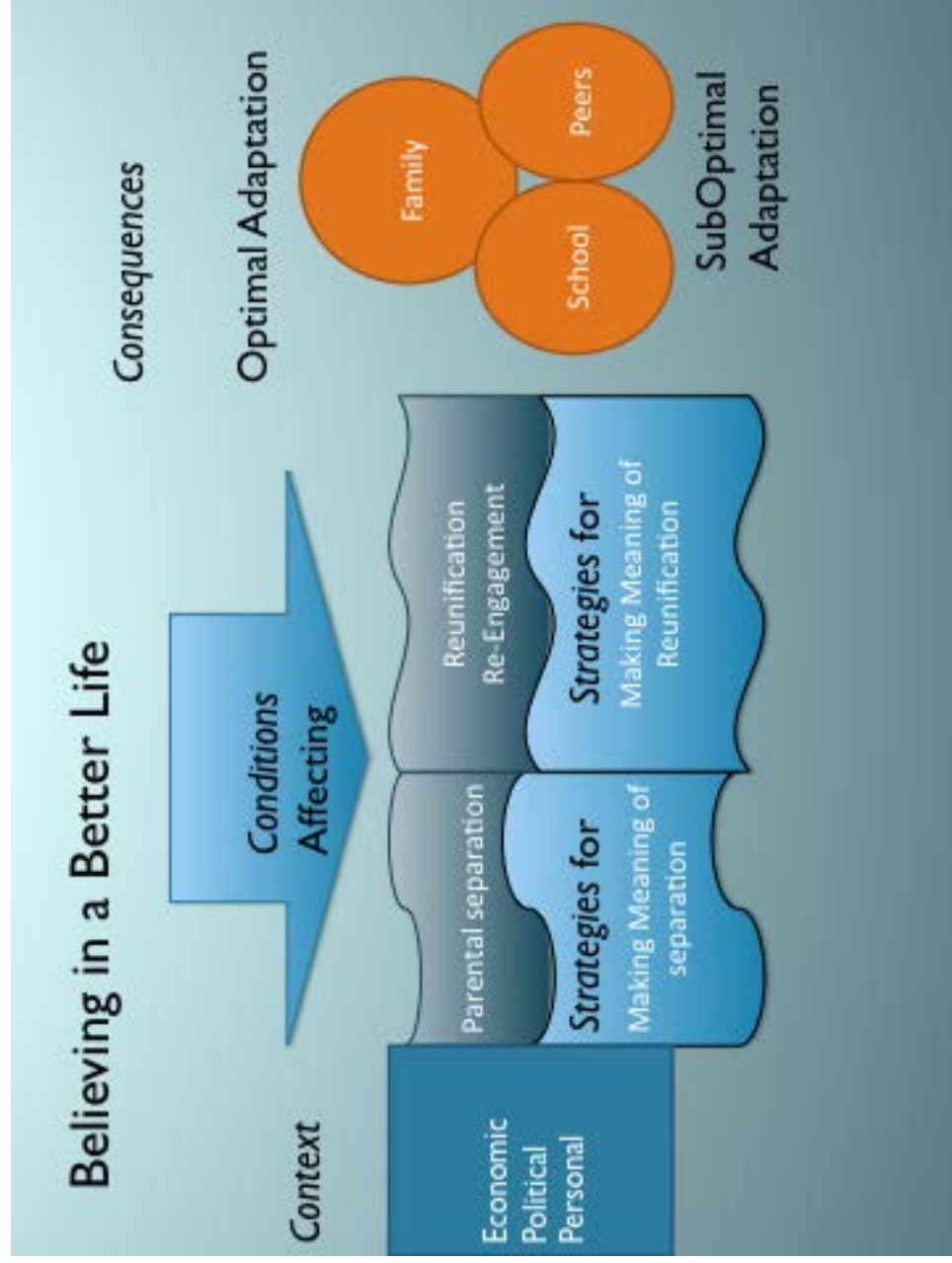
Wier, B. (2009). Child migration: The detention and repatriation of unaccompanied Central American children from Mexico. Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services - US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Table 6.1: Explanatory Matrix for Believing in a Better Life

Context	Conditions	Processes/Strategies	Consequences (a continuum)
Economic - Poverty Political – Immigration policy Personal • *Marital status of parents* • *Intimate partner violence* • *Family support*	Nature of parental leaving • *Level of preparation* • *Sending remittances* Quality of family relationships • *Caretaker relationships* • *Relationship with father* • *Transnational family solidarity* • *Parenting from afar* Differing conditions across home and host countries Gender role expectations and dynamics • *Caretaker* • *Migrating parent* • *Youth* • *Gang involvement/threats* • *Gendered expression of emotion* Individual experiences • *Adverse & traumatic childhood experiences* • *Migration status* • *Crossing the border*	Doing or resisting their part for a better life • *Engaging with parents across borders* • *Negotiating alternate caretakers* • *Rebelling against expectations* Choosing or refusing migration Reuniting with parents and adapting to life in US: 1. *Poco a poco* 2. *Reconnecting through crises* 3. *Isolating or holding a grudge* 4. *Renegotiating relationships*	Optimal re-engagement: Family, School, Peers Being optimistic Rich family network Optimal emotional ties – both home country & US Learning English quickly Having career goals Obtaining secure immigration status "Telling my story" to others Making and keeping friends Suboptimal re-engagement: Family, School, Peers Being anxious/pessimistic Emotional ties – Either home or US Impoverished family connections/network Learning English with difficulty Unsure of career goals Insecure immigration status Isolation: "Not telling my story to others" Lack of trust in others

Believing in a Better Life – Figure 1

Believing in a Better Life

Context

Consequences

Optimal Adaptation

Family

Peers

School

SubOptimal Adaptation

Conditions Affecting

Economic
Political
Personal

Parental separation

Strategies for
Making Meaning of separation

Reunification
Re-Engagement

Strategies for
Making Meaning of Reunification

Chapter 7: "Telling My Story:" Latino Youth Make Meaning of Separation and Reunification

Prepared for submission to *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*

Abstract

Introduction

This study explored the process of family separation and reunification for Latino immigrant adolescents who had been separated from a parent for at least 4 years during immigration, in the context of transnational economic and family ties and changing gender roles.

Method

This grounded theory study used focus groups, participant observation and interviews with 20 adolescents who were reunifying with their parents, to explore the reunification process from the adolescent's perspective. Dimensional analysis was used to develop an explanatory conceptual framework.

Results

"Believing in a Better Life" helped youth navigate adverse and protective conditions shaping separation and reunification. Adolescents who were able to hold and express conflicting feelings about their transnational emotional ties reported most success at re-establishing family connections. Gender roles and expectations impacted their skill at renegotiating family and peer connections. Participants had limited access to health care outside of school-based settings, and saw telling their migration story as essential to their health.

Discussion

There is a benefit to eliciting migration stories and transnational family connections when providing health care to adolescent immigrants.

First generation immigrants, born outside of the United States (US) and arriving during childhood, make up approximately 6% of all adolescents aged 12 to 17 (Passel, 2011). About 40% of these immigrant youth are unauthorized, and most come from Mexico and other parts of Latin America (Passel, 2011). Economic changes in the past twenty years, including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), have resulted in widening economic disparities in Mexico and Central America and increased migration north (McGuire & Martin, 2007). A large proportion of youth who migrate in late childhood or adolescence may be reuniting with parents from whom they have been separated for a number of years, after being left with relatives in their home country while parents worked in the US (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). These youth are parts of transnational families, whose social, emotional and economic ties span borders and continents (Falicov, 2005; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Although there is a rich and growing body of literature about the impact of separations (Dreby, 2006, 2007; Parreñas, 2005; Schmalzbauer, 2004) and reunifications (Arnold, 2006; Artico, 2003; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Smith, Lalonde, & Johnson, 2004) on children and families, the phenomenon has been studied more from the parent's point of view (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011).

While the traditional view of serial or stepwise migration is that of a father coming alone to work while the mother stays in the home country, women have historically migrated both internally and internationally in order to improve the lives of their families (Isaksen, Devi, & Hochschild, 2008). Currently, mothers may migrate as commonly as fathers, and may stay in the host country longer than male compatriots (Cerrutti & Massey, 2001; Isaksen et al., 2008), while paid or family members in their home country care for their children (Falicov, 2005; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). The impact of these gendered shifts in migrations have been studied from the perspectives of adults, rather than children (Dreby, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Pribilsky, 2001; Schmalzbauer).

Some research documents greater pre-migration stress in Latin America (Aguilera-Guzmán, de Snyder, Romero, & Medina-Mora, 2004; Pribilsky, 2001) and poorer post-migration adaptation in the US in boys relative to girls (Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). A recent large-scale survey of Latino adolescent immigrants found that rates of anxiety and depression did not significantly vary by either gender or past family separation (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). However, involvement in the decision to migrate, migration trauma, undocumented status and school and family support significantly affected mental health status, indicating the complexity of the stresses and supports in the lives of immigrant youth. The purpose of this study was to explore the process of family separation and reunification for Latino immigrant adolescents who have been separated from a parent for at least 4 years during immigration, in the context of transnational economic and family ties and changing gender roles. The ultimate aim of the study was to provide nurses and

other health care providers with a greater understanding of these processes, in order to improve health outcomes for late immigrant youth.

Methods

Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative research method in which theory is inductively and deductively generated from systematic data collection and analysis, allowing the incorporation of multiple perspectives and larger domains of social interaction (Clarke, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). A GT design was chosen to explore parent-teen interactions in reunifying families from the adolescent's inside perspective, and to examine how their feelings and experiences are constructed and identified within the family.

GT approaches have been used successfully in qualitative research projects involving Latino adolescents (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; de la Cuesta, 2001; Sanchez, Reyes, & Singh, 2006; Shade, Kools, Pinderhughes, & S. Weiss, 2012; J. Weiss, Jampol, Lievano, Smith, & Wurster, 2008), using individual and group interviews as well as participant observation. Constructivist GT methods were used in order to facilitate the examination of the viewpoints, historical and social circumstances of both participants and the researcher, leading to fresh and creative theoretical analysis (Charmaz, 2009).

Sample/Recruitment/Permissions

Recruitment flyers and the interview guide were pilot tested in two focus groups of 14 diverse adolescent peer educators in two of the research sites (Farquhar, Parker, Schulz, & Israel, 2006; Halcomb, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Phillips, & Davidson, 2007). In the second phase of the research, a purposive sample of 20 adolescents was recruited

from community centers, clinics and school-linked health services in a large metropolitan area in the Western United States (US) with high concentrations of immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Participants were recruited by bilingual bicultural staff liaisons at each site and through snowball sampling (Sheikh et al., 2009).

The research was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and by the Boards at each research setting. A verbal consent/assent form for parents and youth was used, instead of written permission, in order to protect this vulnerable immigrant population. The primary researcher discussed the consent/assent material with each participant in English or Spanish, depending on participant preference, sent home Spanish language copies of the consent/assent form for parents to review and spoke to parents of minor participants by phone before the interviews began. Youth chose pseudonyms, which were used to identify them during the interview, transcription and analysis.

The primary researcher is a Spanish-speaking pediatric nurse practitioner with over 30 years' experience working with immigrant children and families. The researcher informed participants of the limits of confidentiality and the duty to report disclosures of suicidality and child maltreatment for participants younger than 18 years of age. If a participant disclosed or displayed emotional distress during the interview, the researcher determined that he or she was either getting counseling services already or made a referral within the youth's school or clinic setting for counseling. No adverse or emergent situations occurred during the research.

Data Collection

Data were collected through individual interviews lasting from 30 to 90 minutes and participant observation at the research sites while attending meetings, and before and after interviews.

Twenty-seven individual interviews were conducted of 20 participants, 12 young men and 8 young women, ranging from 16 to 19 years of age. Participants had been in the US from 6 months to 10 years. Seven participants came from Mexico and 13 from various countries in Central America, including El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. All participants were attending or had recently graduated from high school at the time of the interviews, the majority at two high schools with large newcomer immigrant populations. Interviews were conducted at the research sites or at nearby coffee shops in the language of choice of the participant, usually in Spanish or a combination of Spanish and English. Participants received a $25 gift card to a local store in appreciation for their time. Interviews were tape recorded, and then transcribed and translated into English by a native speaker of Spanish. Field notes were written after each encounter with the research sites, in order to document participant observation.

In GT, sampling is purposeful and driven by the research questions (Charmaz, 2006), and the primary researcher consulted with staff on site to publicize the study to potential participants from different countries and currently living in single-parent, two-parent and blended families. Participants lived in families with diverse legal status, from fully documented to mixed status families to entirely undocumented families. A few participants moved out of the area or left school and the anonymity protections put in place for the study precluded follow up interviews with them.

Data Analysis

In GT, data analysis proceeds simultaneously with data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open codes were developed from the interviews without regards to theoretical importance, with the aid of Atlas ti 6.2 software. These initial codes were refined through constant comparative analysis, focused and categorized. In moving from open coding to higher order of analyses, dimensional analysis (DA) was used (Kools, McCarthy, Durham, & Robrecht, 1996; Schatzman, 1991), to fully examine the depth and breadth of adolescent separation and reunification experiences.

While traditional GT attempts to discover the basic underlying social process in a given phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999), DA addresses all of the relationships and interactions in the phenomenon, assigning dimensions to each one (Schatzman, 1991). These dimensions are then evaluated for levels of relevance and importance in explaining the phenomenon, and one dimension is selected as the organizing perspective, with the greatest explanatory power for the research situation (Bowers, 2009). "Believing in a better life" was selected as the organizing perspective for the experiences of separation and reunification, and other salient dimensions were evaluated for fit as context, conditions, process or consequences (Schapiro, Kools, Brindis and Weiss, unpublished manuscript). In DA, the *context* is the situation in which dimensions of the phenomenon are embedded, the *conditions* shape, encourage or impede actions or interactions, *processes* are actions that are shaped by conditions, and *consequences* are outcomes of processes (Kools, 1999; Schatzman, 1991).

Rigor

Theoretical and methodological rigor were verified using several strategies. The primary researcher was involved with the research settings over a two-year period

189

(Charmaz, 2009) and frequently reviewed the interview data, writing memos, checking early analyses with site staff, consultants and participants. Field notes, memos, code lists and merging of codes were assiduously documented so that the process of analysis could be audited. The primary researcher met with the research team and doctoral student peers to ensure that the procedures of DA were systematically followed. The primary researcher kept a reflexivity journal, shared potential biases from her own family's immigrant background with the research team, and presented findings at staff meetings at the research sites in order to elicit reactions and critiques. These strategies promoted authenticity and credibility of study findings (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

<div align="center">Findings</div>

The conceptual model is more fully described in Schapiro et al. (unpublished manuscript), and will be elaborated briefly here. "Believing in a better life" is defined as believing that migration and temporary family separation are the best available strategies to ameliorate home country family living conditions and provide increased opportunities for one's children. Believing in a better life impelled parents to migrate and send money home, and the long-term success of their venture depended on extended family and their own children coming to believe that migration and family reunification in the US was the route to the best possible future for themselves as adolescents and young adults.

This article will focus on a key strategy adolescents used in attempt to reconnect with family upon reunification: Telling my story about separation and immigration experiences. This strategy reflected the ability of parents, caretakers and youth to tell and hear each other's stories as they worked to sustain this belief, and the impact that authentic communication, or the lack of it, had on conditions, strategies and outcomes as

youth arrived in the US and adapted to their lives at home, school and among their peers. The context in which parents separated from their children is described below, and then conditions which facilitated or impeded "Telling my Story," the open communication style most aligned with successfully renegotiating parent-child relationships in the US.

Context of separation

The context in which parents migrated without their children included the extreme poverty of their lives, immigration policies and the militarized border between their home countries and the US, and personal family issues such as divorce, widowhood and intimate partner violence. Although a few fathers of participants had legal status in the US and were able to travel back and forth, most of the parents, at least initially, came across the border without papers and did not feel they could bring their young children with them. Some youth had witnessed their fathers' physical and emotional violence against their mothers, who then migrated to escape the situation. Of the 20 participants in the study, only 5 reunified with mothers and fathers in the US, and all others rejoined a single mother who had migrated.

Conditions which facilitated or impeded "Telling my story"

Caretaker characteristics. Actions that parents and caretakers and community members took, as well as internal youth characteristics were the conditions that shaped immigrant youth experiences of separation and reunification. These included the nature of parental leaving, differing conditions across home and host countries, the quality of family relationships, gender role expectations and dynamics, and individual youth experiences.

Neither the age of the child at the time of parental migration, nor the quality or absence of advance preparation of the child by the parent, impacted long-distance parent-child communication as much as the material and emotional conditions in which the child lived during their separation. A few youth lived in impoverished rural settings, with limited phone and no computer access. However, parents in most cases arranged to send remittances back to the caretaking relative, which paid for amenities such as computers, private schools and sometimes comfortable homes in safe neighborhoods.

Participants experienced caretaking environments that varied from stable and loving to cold and inconsistent, and occasionally neglectful or abusive. Most lived with grandparents, some with aunts or uncles, and a few were fortunate to have older sisters who stepped in to mediate or take over inadequate care by other relatives. All participants reported that their distant parents called and sent pictures, and some used computers and social media to communicate. These long-distance communications were most effective when the home country relatives reinforced the importance of the parents' contribution: " Your mother did not leave because she wanted to. She left so you could have a better life." In a few cases, fathers who remained at home prevented communication from the absent mother, even when their own parenting was sporadic, and some caretakers referred to the mother as a "bad woman."

In the US, many mothers had remarried, and participants encountered varying reception from step-fathers and new siblings. Mothers often worked long hours, as they provided for a US family and continued to send remittances home; they were less available than some of the retired grandparents who were full time home country caretakers.

Gender roles and expectations. Participants of both genders remarked that young women who immigrated were "more sensitive" and had more of a need and an expectation to talk about their feelings than young men. Young women reported actively maintaining relationships with distant mothers, connecting and advocating for younger siblings, and were more likely to see their mother as a heroine for migrating: "She is like a mother and a father to me." One young woman living with her grandfather reported daily hour-long phone calls from her mother, who talked to her about puberty and prepared her for her first menstrual period. Another with similar long-distance access complained about her mother's absence during the time she wanted to "talk about girl things."

Young men were more likely to acknowledge that they did not know what to say on phone calls with distant parents. Youth with fathers in the US reported that they missed the discipline and guidance their father had provided, although they appreciated any affection they received from women who cared for them. Several young men remarked that they were "too old" or otherwise reluctant to burden their mothers with their problems after reunification.

Immigration status. For youth who entered the US without authorization, the overland trips across the border and "through the desert" were grueling and life-changing experiences, from the hot and hostile physical environment to the risks of being robbed and assaulted and finally the fear of having their reunification blocked by immigration authorities. Once they arrived in the US, some were reluctant to burden family with their story, and others felt that family members did not want to hear what they had to say. One young woman surmised that "maybe worse had happened" to her own mother. Four

youths in the study fled to the US after threats from gangs or drug cartels and feared that

they might inadvertently tell this story to peers in the US with some connection to these

organizations. Finally, they reported that health care providers were not asking them

about these experiences.

Processes and strategies

In migrating to the US, participants left relationships with caretakers, siblings,

cousins and friends in their home countries, and reunited with family members in strange

houses and neighborhoods, attending new schools in a different language. Their

interpretation and reactions to the conditions described above, as well as their own

personality characteristics influenced their strategies for reconnecting (Schapiro et al.,

unpublished manuscript). This section is focused on the extent to which youth shared or

withheld their personal stories with family, and the reception they received. The ability to

tell their separation and immigration stories ranged from having open communication in

which parents were receptive and gave opportunities to talk about experiences to

disappointment, resentment and isolation with little space made by parents for this

important process.

Telling my story: open communication and renegotiating relationships. The importance

of being able to share stories of their home country and migration experiences began to

emerge during participant-researcher interactions. One young woman who tearfully

recounted emotional rejection by her father in the US thanked the researcher profusely at

the end of the interview for allowing her to tell this story. When asked about her health

care experiences in the US, another adolescent stated: "Like, for example, you are asking

me if they have asked me how my life was in El Salvador. They have not asked me that question." She added that health care providers should ask.

Participants also relayed the importance and difficulties of talking through conflicted or negative feelings with parents who were relative strangers to them. Some youth did not choose to migrate, or arrived with resentments from their experience of separation or the order in which they migrated. One young man, who was "practically forced" to migrate in order to help his younger brothers across the border, stated that at first, "we couldn't even look at each other, because we didn't know each other." However, a year after migration he described his relationships with his parents as "really good!" and stated that his father was "instead of being my dad, he is my friend at the same time." His father gave him guidance on how to act in this new country and was consulting with him about his younger brother, who was having behavioral problems.

Even though she still told her grandfather in her home country "everything," a young woman consulted her mother about daily problems, "because my mom is close." She recounted that she and her brother cried every night when they first arrived because they missed their grandfather. Accepting these feelings, her mother asked if they resented her for leaving. "And we told her that we didn't, because she had always thought of us. And for that, we are thankful."

A young woman who did hold long-standing resentments described herself as having been "dumped" by her mother, even though her grandmother had told her that they had "nothing" before her mother migrated. She at first refused to go to school or accept her mother's authority once she arrived. Nevertheless, she engaged in lengthy arguments with her mother and her aunt, and eventually came to see her mother's side:

Interviewer (I): And your relationship with your mother? How is it at this time?

Participant (P): Now, well we get along good. But there was a time that, [pause] that there was just fighting, me with her. I did not accept her. I could say "Because

I: What made

P: I hated her." And I would say.

I: What made the difference, you think? Did something happen? Or how, how did the relationship change?

P: Because, it changed because she spoke to me a lot. She would tell me "daughter, look" and so I began to understand. And I said, "she is right. She is right. She came here to give me a better life, and for my whole family also" I said.

Barriers to telling my story: isolation and stagnant relationships

Echoing the youth described above, one young woman also stated that she wished that her mother would be her friend, but contrasted her mother's brusque responses with her grandmother at home:

But it's like with my mom, I don't feel the same trust of, not even with asking her for permission because, aside from asking her for permission, it's always like it's a bother. And, and, or to tell her about what happens with me, it's like sometimes, it's the opposite, and instead of feeling better, it's like it's worse.

The young men in the study who felt connected to their parents were rejoining fathers, meeting an engaged stepfather or had experienced active caretaking by older sisters during their separation. Others described feeling lonely and isolated, that they were "their own guides," and that "there was nobody by my side." One youth was the

youngest in his family, and the last to migrate. Although he had been well cared for by an affectionate stepmother, he attributed his reaction on rejoining his mother to his resentments about being left:

> P: When I got here when I started living with her. I felt as, desperate, uncomfortable with her, I'd see her as a stranger because I didn't know her. Since I was separated from her for such a long time. Yeah, I felt desperate. And well, we don't really get along well in the relationship with her.
>
> I: And are things the same, or better, now?
>
> P: We're so-so.

A young man who had migrated, returned to Mexico and come back again showed some ambivalence about his lack of communication with his mother, stating at first that he was "too old" to reconnect with his mother, then stating that he wished he could tell her that he was using drugs and that he loved her.

Consequences of 'telling my story' on family reunification outcomes

The conditions (caretaker characteristics, gender roles and expectations, immigration status) and strategies described above (variations in telling my story) led to a range of successful and less successful adaptations to family life in the US. When questioned about how their life was going now, youth gave answers that covered a spectrum from sad, isolated, and disappointed to connected, and optimistic. Unfortunately, some youths, primarily young men, reported that they had only a superficial relationship with their parent: "Hi, how are you. Nothing more." Some participants relied on cousins and younger aunts and uncles in the US for social and

practical support. Others enjoyed extended family gatherings, even if they remained estranged from their own parents.

Telling my story in health care

Participants were asked how clinics and particularly nurses and nurse practitioners could help immigrant youth adjust to their new lives. A few youths stated that immigrants might worry about their health, should get checkups and should have an opportunity to talk about drugs.

Other youth agreed that no one in their clinic had asked them "their story." One young man added, "What I would say is to talk, look, look for a person with whom to talk to. And to release like, the pain, the sadness that dwells inside. To feel better and not do things that may be disastrous in the future."

Discussion

Adolescents and their parents, whatever their circumstances, commonly experience difficulties and breakdowns in communication. Immigrant youth face challenges in adapting to schools, peers, communities and a new language, even if they have not been separated from their families (Beck, Corack & Tienda, 2012). What is different for immigrant youth who have experienced family separation and reunification is that the developmental adjustments of parent-teen relationships that generally occur over years have been compressed into a short time after reunification, and occur simultaneously with immersion in school and a new language. The beliefs in a better life that sustained teenagers through their years of separation and their difficult journey northward were accompanied by an idealized version of who their parent was and what the post-reunification family would be like (Yeoh, Wang & Lam, 2005), and this ideal

was not always consonant with reality. The communication strategies described above were especially important in facilitating or hindering a bridge between ideal and real, between belief in a better life and making that belief a reality in the US.

In our sample, quality of home country support and connections with distant parents were more salient than length of separation in facilitating open communication after reunification. The increasing use of cell phones and computer technology helped support, but did not ensure, meaningful parent-child communication and active long-distance parenting. Adverse and traumatic experiences at home and en route to the US were more widespread among youth in the study than had been expected. Young men in particular reported more direct threats of violence from gangs in their home country and the US, although young women were not immune from these problems.

Youth who were able to talk about traumatic experiences and express conflicting emotions to their home country caregivers and parents in the US reported the most success at re-establishing family connections. Extended family members, including cousins and older siblings, were also used as confidantes and advocates. Young women also reported more expectations and strategies for becoming emotionally close to their parents on reunification than young men, although these expectations were not always met. While some adolescents of both genders were well-connected to family and peers, the participants who described themselves as lonely and isolated were all young men. For most participants, young women and young men, fathers and father figures were not part of their lives.

Youth in the study had limited access to and experience in the US with health care, with the exception of school-based health and counseling services. Although the

researchers were concerned that the participants would not want to talk about the difficulties of their lives and their migration status, these topics were addressed in virtually every interview. Participants thanked the researcher for giving them the opportunity to "tell my story" and stated that, with the exception of some school services, this was a missing and essential part of their health care.

The study results are congruent with other research about the difficulties and also improvements over time for some families who reunify (Ártico, 2003; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). The research adds to the scant literature about the impact on youth of migrating alone (Hernandez, 2009; Wier, 2009) and crossing a militarized border without documents (Jones & Podkul, 2012; Ko & Perreira, 2010). It is the first qualitative study to report in depth on the gendered responses of youth to family reunification, specifically the emotional isolation described by some young men who are reunifying. As a study undertaken from a nursing perspective, the findings have direct implications for nurse practitioners working with immigrant youth and families.

<div align="center">Limitations and Implications</div>

As a small purposive sample in a limited geographic area, the study makes no claims to being representative. All of the youth were in or recently graduated from high school, and it is likely that some adolescent immigrants to the US never enter the school system (Martinez, 2009). The researchers were able to interview more young men than young women, and this allowed more theorizing about the effects of gender in a population that is underserved in health care (Marcell, Ford, Pleck, & Sonenstein, 2007). While the study aimed to interview youth between 14 and 22 years of age, all participants

were between the ages of 16 and 19, and it is possible that the lengthy interview format was not as well suited to younger participants.

The themes of telling one's story and living with ambivalence and ambiguous emotions are consistent with other approaches to trauma (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010) and also with Ambiguous Loss Theory (Boss, 1999, 2006), which addresses mourning and resolution in cases where individuals are physically present but psychologically absent, or physically absent and psychologically present. Some family therapists working with immigrants have used this approach (Falicov, 2005), encouraging parents and children to acknowledge the deep emotional ties in both home country and the US, and recent research with children and adolescents has endorsed this theoretical framework (Bocknek, Sanderson & Preston, 2009; Luster et al., 2009). Further research is indicated to determine the applicability of Ambiguous Loss Theory to children and adolescents.

Nurse practitioners working in public health settings, primary care clinics and school based health centers may encounter immigrant youth who are reunifying with family members. Recent immigrants may have endured traumatic events, and also may have been raised in loving and stable homes with distant caregivers to whom they are still emotionally attached. Research results indicate that sensitive inquiry into their stories may increase the quality of their care, their satisfaction with health services and improve adaptation. Culturally sensitive care can help these energetic and hopeful youth realize their beliefs in a better live and a healthy and productive adulthood.

References

Aguilera-Guzmán, R. M., de Snyder, V. N., Romero, M., & Medina-Mora, M. E. (2004).

Paternal absence and international migration: Stressors and compensators

associated with the mental health of Mexican teenagers of rural origin. *Adolescence, 39*, 711-723.

Arnold, E. (2006). Separation and loss through immigration of African Caribbean women to the UK. *Attachment & Human Development, 8*, 159-174.

Ártico, C. I. (2003). *Latino families broken by immigration: The adolescents' perceptions*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

Bacallao, M. L., & Smokowski, P. R. (2007). The costs of getting ahead: Mexican family system changes after immigration. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies, 56*, 52-66. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3729.2007.00439.x

Beck, A., Corak, M., & Tienda, M. (2012). Age at immigration and the adult attainments of child migrants to the United States. *The Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science, 643*, 134-159. doi: 10.1177/0002716212442665

Blaustein, Margaret E., & Kinniburgh, Kristine M. (2010). *Treating traumatic stress in children and adolescents: How to foster resilience through attachment, self-regulation, and competency*. New York, NY, US: Guilford Press, New York, NY.

Bocknek, Erika London, Sanderson, Jessica, & Britner, Preston A. (2009). Ambiguous loss and posttraumatic stress in school-age children of prisoners. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 18*(3), 323-333. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3729.2003.00195.x.2003-05798-00110.1111/j.1741-3729.2003.00195.x http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-008-9233-y

Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Boss, P. (2006). *Loss, trauma, and resilience: Therapeutic work with ambiguous loss*. New York, NY: W W Norton & Co. (2006) xxi, 251 pp.

Bowers, B. (2009). Leonard Schatzman and dimensional analysis. In J. M. Morse, P. N. Stern, J. M. Corbin, K. C. Charmaz, B. Bowers & A. E. Clarke (Eds.), *Developing grounded theory: The second generation* (pp. 86-106). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Cerrutti, M., & Massey, D.S. (2001). On the auspices of female migration from Mexico to the united states. *International Migration Review, 372*, 187-201.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2009). Shifting the grounds: Constructivist grounded theory methods. In J. M. Morse, P. N. Stern, J. Corbin, B. Bowers, K. Charmaz & A. E. Clarke (Eds.), *Developing grounded theory: The second generation* (pp. 127-154). Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Clarke, A. E. (2003). Situational analyses: Grounded theory mapping after the postmodern turn. *Symbolic Interaction, 26*(4), 553-576.

de la Cuesta, C. (2001). Taking love seriously: The context of adolescent pregnancy in Colombia. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 12*, 180-192.

Dreby, J. (2006). Honor and virtue: Mexican parenting in the transnational context. *Gender & Society, 20*, 32-59.

Dreby, J. (2007). Children and power in Mexican transnational families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69*, 1050-1064.

Falicov, C. J. (2005). Emotional transnationalism and family identities. *Family Process, 44*, 399-406.

Farquhar, S. A., Parker, E. A., Schulz, A. J., & Israel, B. A. (2006). Application of qualitative methods in program planning for health promotion interventions. *Health Promotion Practice, 7*, 234-242.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967/1999). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction.

Glasgow, G., & Gouse-Sheese, J. (1995). Themes of rejection and abandonment in group work with caribbean adolescents. *Social Work with Groups, 17*(4), 3-27.

Halcomb, E. J., Gholizadeh, L., DiGiacomo, M., Phillips, J., & Davidson, P. M. (2007). Literature review: Considerations in undertaking focus group research with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 16*, 1000-1011.

Hernandez, M. G. (2009). *An exploratory narrative study of the migration patterns, parent-child relationships, and the adaptation of immigrant Central American and Mexican adolescents* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest (UMI Microform 3367306).

Hine-St. Hilaire, D. (2008). *When children are left behind: The perceptions of West Indian adolescents separated from their mothers during childhood due to migration, and the effects of this separation on their reunification* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest (UMI Microform 3287893).

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1994). *Gendered transitions: Mexican experiences of immigration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Isaksen, L. W., Devi, S. U., & Hochschild, A. R. (2008). Global care crisis: A problem of capital, care chain, or commons? *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*, 405-425. doi: 10.1177/0002764208323513

Jones, J., & Podkul, J. (2012). Forced from home: The lost boys and girls of Central America (pp. 43). New York: Women's Refugee Commission.

Ko, L. K., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). "It turned my world upside down": Latino youths' perspectives on immigration. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 25*, 465-493. doi: 10.1177/0743558410361372

Kools, S. (1999). Self-protection in adolescents in foster care. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 12*, 139-152.

Kools, S., McCarthy, M., Durham, R., & Robrecht, L. (1996). Dimensional analysis: Broadening the conception of grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research, 6*, 312-330. doi: 10.1177/104973239600600302

Levitt, P., & Jaworsky, B. N. (2007). Transnational migration studies: Past developments and future trends. *Annual Review of Sociology, 33*, 129-156. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131816

Luster, T., Qin, D., Bates, L., Johnson, D., & Rana, M. (2009). The lost boys of Sudan: Coping with ambiguous loss and separation from parents. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 79*(2), 203-211. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00037.x http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0015559

Marcell, A. V., Ford, C. A., Pleck, J. H., & Sonenstein, F. L. (2007). Masculine beliefs, parental communication, and male adolescents' health care use. *Pediatrics, 119*, e966-975.

Martinez, I. (2009). What's age gotta do with it? Understanding the age-identities and school-going practices of Mexican immigrant youth in New York City. [080 s; 143 Reports: Research]. *High School Journal, 92*(4), 34-48.

Mazzucato, V., & Schans, D. (2011). Transnational families and the well-being of children: Conceptual and methodological challenges. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 73*, 704-712. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00840.x

Parreñas, R. S. (2005). *Children of global migration: Transnational families and gendered woes*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Passel, J. S. (2011). Demography of immigrant youth: Past, present, and future. *Future of the Child, 21*(1), 19-41.

Potochnick, S. R., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). Depression and anxiety among first-generation immigrant Latino youth: Key correlates and implications for future research. *Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease, 198*, 470-477. doi: 10.1097/NMD.0b013e3181e4ce24 [doi] 00005053-201007000-00002 [pii]

Pribilsky, J. (2001). Nervios and 'modern childhood': Migration and shifting contexts of child life in the Ecuadorian Andes. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research. Special Issue: Capitalizing on concern, 8*, 251-273.

Qin-Hilliard, D. B. (2003). Gendered expectations and gendered experiences: Immigrant students' adaptation in schools. *New Directions in Youth Development*(100), 91-109.

Sanchez, B., Reyes, O., & Singh, J. (2006). A qualitative examination of the relationships that serve a mentoring function for Mexican American older adolescents. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 12*, 615-631. doi: 2006-20708-002 [pii] 10.1037/1099-9809.12.4.615 [doi]

Schatzman, L. (1991). Dimensional analysis: Notes on an alternative approach to the grounding of theory in qualitative research. In D. R. Maines (Ed.), *Social organization and social process: Essays in honor of Anselm Strauss* (pp. 303-314). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Schmalzbauer, L. (2004). Searching for wages and mothering from afar: The case of Honduran transnational families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66*, 1317-1331.

Shade, K., Kools, S., Pinderhughes, H., & Weiss, S. J. (2012). Choosing fatherhood: How teens in the justice system embrace or reject a father identity. *Journal of Community Health Nursing, 29*, 91-105. doi: 10.1080/07370016.2012.670573

Sheikh, A., Halani, L., Bhopal, R., Netuveli, G., Partridge, M. R., Car, J., . . . Levy, M. (2009). Facilitating the recruitment of minority ethnic people into research: Qualitative case study of South Asians and asthma. *PLoS Medicine, 6*, e1000148. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1000148 [doi]

Smith, A., Lalonde, R. N., & Johnson, S. (2004). Serial migration and its implications for the parent-child relationship: A retrospective analysis of the experiences of the children of Caribbean immigrants. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 10*, 107-122.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology, an overview. In N.

    Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285).

    Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M. M., & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a new land:*

    Immigrant students in American society. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of

    Harvard University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Todorova, I,, & Louie, J. (2002). Making up for lost time: The

    experience of separation and reunification among immigrant families. *Family*

    Process, 41, 625-643.

Weiss, J. A., Jampol, M. L., Lievano, J. A., Smith, S. M., & Wurster, J. L. (2008).

    Normalizing risky sexual behaviors: A grounded theory study. *Pediatric Nursing,*

    34, 163-169.

Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research.

    Qualitative Health Research, 11, 522-537.

Wier, B. (2009). Child migration: The detention and repatriation of unaccompanied

    Central American children from Mexico. Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief

    Services - US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Yeoh, B. S. A., Huang, S., & Lam, T. (2005). Transnationalizing the 'Asian' family:

    Imaginaries, intimacies and\ strategic intents. *Global Networks, 5*, 307-315.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Implications

In the interviews, youth told us repeatedly that first their parents, and then they themselves came to the US for a better life, and Believing in a Better Life indeed was the process that best explained adolescent experiences with separation and reunification . Youth described abject poverty, barriers to family immigration, and interpersonal violence that impelled mothers and fathers to migrate without them. Participants came to the US to rejoin their parents and for some, to escape the increasing community violence in their home countries. Some youth reported ambivalence about immigration. Once here, they used four main strategies to reconnect with their families: letting time take its course (*poco a poco*), experiencing individual and family crises to become closer, isolating and holding a grudge toward a parent or parents and renegotiating a more equal parent-child relationship. There were generally difficulties with isolation, and examples of successes and difficulties with each of the other strategies.

The quality of home country support and connections with distant parents were more salient than length of separation in sustaining belief in a better life. Use of cell phones and computer technology helped support long-distance parent communication and communication with peers and relatives at home after youth had immigrated. Trauma, both at home and en route to the US, was more pervasive in our population than we had expected. Despite these traumatic events and experiences, youth expressed optimism in their future; this optimism was sometimes tempered by difficulties learning English and uncertainty related to their undocumented status.

Gender of the youth and the migrating parent shaped participants' responses to separation and strategies for reconnection and adaptation in profound and complex ways.

Participants frequently reported the importance of having same-gender parents close by in supporting them during the physical and psychosocial changes of adolescence. Young women felt that their mother played the roles of both a mother and a father for them and were also more active in constructing and reconstructing relationships with their distant mother. Older sisters actively sought out their distant mothers to re-establish a caretaking partnership when home country caretakers were inadequate and brokered the connections between their younger siblings and their mother. Although some young men were grateful for their mothers' sacrifices in coming to the US alone, they still felt that their mother could not help them learn how to be a man, and did not want to burden their mothers with their problems. Only three young men rejoined fathers in the US and for the rest, adult male role models were scarce and/or disappointing.

Verifying the Literature

Findings reveal a picture of family separation and reunification that is congruent with earlier research. Previous researchers have vividly discussed the pain of separation (Artico, 2003; Parreñas, 2005), the actions that children who have been left behind take in order to influence parents' reunification plans (Dreby, 2007), and difficulties with reunification (Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2011), as well as improvements in adolescent adaptation and family relationships over time (Ártico, 2003; Suárez-Orozco et al, 2011). There are emerging reports about increasing numbers of unaccompanied youth who are crossing the border, and about the effect of traumatic border crossings on their emotional well-being (Jones & Podkul, 2012; Ko & Perreira, 2010).

Extending the Literature

In earlier research, Ártico (2003) noted that relationships of reunified youth with their parents improved once youth themselves began to work or parent. We have observed strategies youth are using in real time to renegotiate and improve these relationships, and have been particularly intrigued by the desire of some participants to see their parents as friends. As one of our liaisons remarked, the normative multigenerational homes in Latin America and the tendency of youth to live with their parents into adulthood may encourage shifts into relationships that are less hierarchical (Peluso, Miranda, Firpo-Jimenez, & Pham, 2010).

We have added to the literature on gendered differences in response to family separation and reunification. We interviewed more young men than young women in our study, thereby reaching a group that is underrepresented in adolescent health research (Marcell & Ellen, 2012). Young women engaged in more active relationship-building with distant mothers across borders and after arrival in the US than young men, and also advocated for younger siblings. Young women were also more likely to persist in re-engaging with their parents after a rocky start to reunification. Young men were more likely to report threats by gangs or cartels in their home country, and more likely to report emotional isolation after arrival in the US than young women.

Cell phones, smart phones, tablets and computers are becoming more accessible around the world, and the published literature on their impact on transnational families is just starting to catch up. Lan (2006) reported on the effectiveness of cell phones and texting in enabling daily parenting interactions between Filipino migrant workers in Taiwan and their children back home. Bacigalupe and Lambe (2011) published case studies suggesting the effectiveness of incorporating real-time transnational

communication via computers and cell phones during family therapy. Our study reported the adolescents' views on the effects of electronic media on parent-child communication during separation. After reunification, all of the youth in our study used social networking sites almost daily to connect with friends and relatives in their home country, but many reported on the superficial nature of those contacts.

The participants in our study crossed the border at a time of increasing violence in their home countries ("Gangs overwhelm a small country," 2012; Jones & Podkul, 2012), increased deportations from the US, greater scrutiny and militarization of the border, harsher anti-immigrant laws and a polarized discourse in the media (Massey & Pren, 2012). A fuller discussion of immigration policy is beyond the scope of this study, and will be touched on in the Implications section below. What is important for their adaptation to life in the US and for our model is that they have been transformed by this journey in profound ways that they may not be communicating to their parents, their teachers or to health care providers. Every youth in this study had something to say about his or her journey to the US, either spontaneously or when asked if there was anything else "we had not asked" that was important. It became clear that "Telling my story" or narrating the difficult stories of separation, immigration, and reunification was a powerful need that had great impact on youth adaptation.

Attachment and Ambiguous Loss

In the attachment literature, adolescence is seen as a time during which emotions, behavior and the ability to think critically about parent-child relationships are evolving rapidly, and attachment behaviors are used less frequently than during early childhood (Allen, 2008). For immigrant youth who have experienced family separation and

reunification, the developmental adjustments of parent-teen relationships that generally occur over years have been compressed into a short time after reunification. Allen suggests that a measure of attachment security in adolescence is the ability of adolescents and parents to engage in heated interactions about areas of conflict while still attempting to maintain relationships. In our study, the strategy of reconnecting through crisis is congruent with Allen's depiction of adolescents as using attachment behaviors episodically and when most distressed. The strategy of renegotiating relationships is consistent with the Allen's depiction of securely attached adolescents. By contrast, the behaviors of the youth who remained isolated from family member are consistent with the compulsive self-reliance described by Bowlby (1980) as an outcome of disrupted attachment and unresolved mourning. Attachment in adolescence is typically assessed through either measures of internal working models such as attachment interviews, or through observations of parent-child interactions (Allen). Our study did not use either formal attachment scales or observations of parent-child interactions. Therefore we can only suggest that some of the re-engagement strategies in our conceptual model, Believing in a better life, are consistent with attachment theory.

The fourth strategy, allowing time to take its course (*poco a poco*), was used by youth and families who were able to tolerate the conflicted emotions of the adolescents who were leaving behind much-loved caregivers and reuniting with parents who were relative strangers. While these adolescents did not necessarily communicate with their parents about past traumas or struggle to actively renegotiate relationships, they noticed positive changes in parent-child relationships over time. This ability to tolerate the lived

ambiguity of relationships is a hallmark of ambiguous loss theory (Boss, 1999, 2006, 2010).

The beliefs in a better life that sustained teenagers through their years of separation and their difficult journey northward were accompanied by an idealized version of who their parent was and what the post-reunification family would be like (Yeoh, Wang & Lam, 2005), and this ideal and reality did not always match. Open communication for some teens was especially important in facilitating or hindering a bridge between the ideal and real, between belief in a better life and making that belief a reality in the US. This open communication about past traumatic events and current relational difficulties is supported by both ambiguous loss theory (Boss, 2010) and by attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), as a way to renegotiate relationships and allow the reactivation of attachment behaviors. In addition, ambiguous loss theory emphasizes the difficulties in resolving delegitimized grief (Boss, 2010). Given the current public discourse about immigration (Massey & Pren, 2012) and the personal reluctance of some parents to hear about their children's traumatic border crossing, the ability to tell one's migration story in family, school or health care settings may represent an important step in legitimizing and resolving these experiences.

Challenging the Literature

Much research about immigrant families from Mexico and surrounding regions emphasizes the importance of *familismo* (Falicov, 2005; Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006) and some studies about Latino immigrants emphasize a high proportion of two parent families (Dreby, 2010; Potochnik & Perreira, 2010; Smith, 2006). Yet in our study, only four of our participants migrated to rejoin two-parent families; for all other teens, fathers

214

had minimal involvement or negative involvement in their lives. The research literature about paternal involvement in transnational families is contradictory, with high levels of paternal involvement noted in some studies (Dreby, 2010; Smith, 2006), and more fragmented families in others (Menjívar, 2000). A large randomized survey of Latino immigrant families in North Carolina, showed that most immigrant teens lived in two parent families (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010), which may reflect regional variations of family constellations in the US. Gender studies within Mexico have documented changing and diverse attitudes toward fatherhood, thought to be a cornerstone of Latino male gender identity, and multiple forms of absent fatherhood have been documented within Mexico (Vigoya, 2001).

Limitations

With our small purposive sample, we make no claims of a representative study. Although we aimed for adolescents between 14 and 22, we achieved a smaller age range of teens between 16 and 19. The few teens we knew of who declined interviews were 14 or 15, and it may be that the format of a lengthy one-to-one interview lends itself to older teens. There are other formats being used in qualitative research, such as photo-voice (Bibeau et al., 2012) and visual ethnographic methods (Salazar, 2008) that might engage younger adolescents more effectively. We also did not reach adolescents who were not in school, as community staff members at school-linked services were most effective at recruiting participants. The literature reports that many older adolescents who migrate to the US never enter the educational system (Martinez, 2009). Since we were interviewing participants between 2010 and 2012, a time of higher unemployment in the region, it is

possible that we were capturing some of these youth, as they complained of being unable to find jobs during their interviews.

Finally, although we obtained rich data about the context in which youth were reunifying with their families, we were unable to state whether successful family reunification was causally related to successful school and community adaptation.

Implications for Future Research

Family reunification. Several participants talked about the importance of extended family gatherings and of cousins and younger aunts and uncles who offered practical and emotional support. This was an emerging area in the data that would benefit from further exploration in future research. The literature review indicated that the voices of adolescents were under-represented in the research, and I interviewed only teens in school-linked and community environments, rather than parent-adolescent dyads in their own homes. This was a deliberate choice, as other research (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008) has shown that newly arrived adolescent immigrants may not feel entirely comfortable in their parents' homes, and schools are traditionally a site where adolescents feel safe. However, future research should incorporate youth and their parents, to see if the conceptual model holds up when the unit of analysis is the family, rather than the teen.

Technology. As technological supports for long-distance communication and social networks continue to evolve, it will be important to further explore the benefits of these new modalities in extending long-distance communication among members of transnational families. While every participant participated frequently in social networking sites with friends and relatives in the US and their home country, they hinted that these connections were relatively superficial, and the content and quality of these

connections should be explored. Some therapists are starting to use these technologies in order to bring working or distant relatives into the room (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011), and the use of technology and social networking could be part of intervention studies.

In-depth interviews yield valuable information and are a time-honored part of GT research (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), as well as other interpretive methodologies. However, newer modalities are also being explored, such as photo voice (Bibeau et al., 2012), go along interviews, and visual ethnography, and these visual modalities may yield a different perspective, may lend themselves to participatory action research, and possibly elicit information from younger adolescents (Salazar, 2008).

Gender. Many large-scale studies of adolescents show that, among Latino youth, young women are more likely to drink alcohol, endorse symptoms of depression and attempt suicide than young men, but are less likely to use tobacco, marijuana or be in a physical fight (Eaton et al., 2012). Gender roles and gendered reactions to adverse circumstances, as socially constructed phenomena, may be shaped by the same globalized media and economic and social forces that have influenced increasing numbers of transnational families (Connell, 1998). In newer models of immigrant adaptation, social structure may be as significant as culture, and gender is seen as a social determinant (Viruell-Fuentes, Miranda, & Abdulrahim, 2012).

The young men in our study who did not trust peers to hear about their sorrows and did not want to burden their mothers with their problems may be acting on internalized ideals of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). It is crucial to understand these dynamics more thoroughly. While many participants in the study gave eloquent answers to the question, "How would your life and experiences have been

different for a twin brother or sister?," other participants had a harder time answering this question, and it is possible that youth-driven participatory action study designs, photovoice or other methods using visual data may help elicit these more nuanced gender distinctions.

Adolescent health researchers have documented the underrepresentation of young men in health care settings (Marcell, Ford et al., 2007; Marcell, Klein et al., 2002), and this is borne out in our study, in which young women could all report the name of a clinic they had visited for health care, and young men were more likely to say that they had only received immunizations and emergency care. School-based health centers are one strategy for providing care to underserved and uninsured youth (Keeton, Soleimanpour, & Brindis, 2012) and the study indicates that they have the flexibility to offer targeted services to recent immigrants. One next step in research could be to develop and measure ways to reach out to youth in school-based and school-linked settings, and to incorporate strategies for eliciting migration stories, other lifetime adversities and supports in both the US and their home country. In general pediatric and adolescent practices, the pressure is continually on how to provide more services in less time; pilot interventions in efficiently incorporating sensitive questions to immigrant youth in history-taking and suggestions for anticipatory guidance would be important.

Resilience. Youth in the study said that they wanted to be able to tell their story to their health care providers, and that they were not routinely asked about their lives in their home countries and their migration histories. One of the research settings was in the process of reaching out to youth and offering them opportunities to share stories with their parents under the aegis of mental health counselors. Staff at another study site

reported that they were referring all youth with a history of migration-related family separations to at least one visit with their case manager. Both of these settings provided some health care services at schools. As a beginning step to evaluating these and other interventions, metrics should be developed for evaluating these interventions and measuring these outcomes with the participation of school-based health providers and immigrant youth. A recently published study showed lower rates of high school graduation and life time earnings for youth who immigrate after age 10, especially those whose native language was not English (Beck, Corak, & Tienda, 2012). Resilience research often focuses on achievements despite adversity in the domains of home, school and peers (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten & Obradovic, 2006). Outcome measures may look somewhat different for reunifying youth in the 1.5 generation.

Public Health & Policy Implications

Being undocumented affected nearly every aspect of adaptation to home, schools and community among the youth in this study, from affecting their future aspirations, to the stresses on family members, to divisions even among immigrant youth, depending on status, with undocumented youth feeling lower status. Deportations of undocumented children and adults reached an all-time high during the Obama Administration, with 400,000 deportations each in 2010 and 2011(Dreby, 2012). These deportations have not only torn apart children and their parents, but also have a chilling effect on even those undocumented immigrants who have not had contact with immigration authorities (Dreby, 2012).

Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, the three Central American home countries for participants in this study, currently have the highest per capita murder rates

in the world, and El Salvador's homicide rate is higher now than during the Civil War of the 1980s ("Gangs overwhelm a small country," 2012). Among the Central American youth who are detained at the border, 75% were male in one recent study, and the reasons given for migrating were to work and to reunite with family; it is unclear if fleeing violence was an option in the questionnaires that were administered to the detained youths (Wier, 2009). However, a new report indicates that numbers of unaccompanied Central American youth apprehended at the border have doubled in the past year, despite an overall drop in immigration, and in this report fleeing violence and poverty are cited as the primary reasons for attempting to enter the US (Jones & Podkul, 2012). Unaccompanied minors from Mexico are usually returned to their home country without processing (Jones & Podkul), and it is unclear how many of these children are seeking asylum because of threats or actual violence at the hands of cartels, and unclear how many immigrant youth currently in the US would be in danger if returned to their home countries.

Several policy issues could have a positive effect on the lives of undocumented immigrant youth – including the proposed Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act and the current stay of deportation. Under current Federal legislation, immigrant youth are not eligible for Federal educational grants in post-secondary education, although States such as California and Texas have allowed undocumented college students to pay instate tuition rates (Crosnoe & Turley, 2011). The DREAM act, if passed, could eliminate these Federal restrictions, provide a path to legal status for youth in the US for 5 years who had arrived before age 16, completed two years

of college or military service, and prevent deportation of students over age 12 who had not completed high school.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, announced on June 15, 2012, allows undocumented individuals who arrived before age 16 and are currently under 30 years old to apply for two year stays of deportation if they have been in the United States for five years, are in school or have a high school diploma, GED, or military service and no serious criminal offenses. This policy has the potential to affect 1.7 million youths (Passel & Lopez, 2012). And yet, most of the undocumented youth in the study have not been in the US long enough to benefit from this stay.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) specifically excludes undocumented immigrants and even some recent documented immigrants from both public sources of care and health insurance exchanges (National Immigration Law Center, 2012). Uninsured children and adults typically seek care in safety net providers such as community health centers and public health clinics, in emergency rooms, or simply forego care (Jerome-D'Emilia & Suplee, 2012). One effect of the ACA may be a decrease in subsidies and supports to clinics who care for the uninsured, as more and more US residents are covered by some form of health insurance. As Jerome-D'Emilia and Suplee point out, these changes are occurring at a time when advocating for immigrant health access is politically unpopular and when even public health advocacy has little traction in allocating public dollars. One aim of this study was to provide nurses who are working with immigrant youth more knowledge and tools to improve their care, just as public policy may be locking them out of more sources of care.

Conclusion

Some of the youth in our study were thriving in the US, well-connected at school, comfortable in their homes, connecting with peers and maintaining emotional ties to relatives at home. Others had not fared as well. We have described the importance of frequent and meaningful communications between youth and their parents during separation and during reunification and suggest that young men may be having more difficulty reconnecting than young women. We have suggested legalization policies that would relieve some of the stress on undocumented youth. Finally, we have underscored the importance of giving youth an opportunity to tell their migration stories and express their conflicting emotions about their new separation from their home country. With focused attention and supports, these energetic young people can become productive and thriving young adults.

References

Abrego, L. (2009). Economic well-being in Salvadoran transnational families: How gender affects remittance practices. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 71*, 1070-1085. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00653.x

Aguilera-Guzmán, R. M., de Snyder, V. N., Romero, M., & Medina-Mora, M. E. (2004). Paternal absence and international migration: Stressors and compensators associated with the mental health of mexican teenagers of rural origin. *Adolescence, 39*, 711-723.

Ainsworth, M. D., Blehar, M.C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ainsworth, M. S., & Bell, S. M. (1970). Attachment, exploration, and separation: Illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation. *Child Development, 41*, 49-67.

Ainsworth, M. S., & Bowlby, J. (1991). An ethological approach to personality development. *American Psychologist, 46*, 333-341.

Allen, J. P. (2008). The attachment system in adolescence. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, reasearch, and clinical applications* (Second ed., pp. 419-435). New York: The Guilford Press.

Amuedo-Dorantes, C., & Pozo, S. (2010). Accounting for remittance and migration effects on Children's Schooling. *World Development, 38*, 1747-1759. doi: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2010.05.008

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*.

    Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Arnold, E. (2006). Separation and loss through immigration of african caribbean women

    to the UK. *Attachment & Human Development, 8*, 159-174.

Artico, C. I. (2003). *Latino families broken by immigration: The adolescents'*

    perceptions. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

Artico, C. I. (2001). Perceptions and memories of Latino adolescents separated in

    childhood due to piecemeal patterns of immigration. (Doctoral dissertation).

    Retrieved from Proquest (UMI Number: 304671911).

Avila, E. M. (2009). *Transnational motherhood and fatherhood: Gendered challenges*

    and coping (Doctoral dissertation). 69. Retrieved fromPsycINFO database. (9-A)

Bacallao, M. L., & Smokowski, P. R. (2007). The costs of getting ahead: Mexican family

    system changes after immigration. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal*

    of Applied Family Studies, 56, 52-66. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3729.2007.00439.x

Bacigalupe, G., & Lambe, S. (2011). Virtualizing intimacy: Information communication

    technologies and transnational families in therapy. *Family Process, 50*, 12-26. doi:

    10.1111/j.1545-5300.2010.01343.x

Barber, P.G. . (2000). Agency in Philippine women's labour migration and provisional

    diaspora. *Women's Studies International Forum, 23*, 399-411.

Batalova, J. (2008). Mexican immigrants in the United States. *Migration Information*

    Source, (April 2008). Retrieved from

    http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=679

Beck, A., Corak, M., & Tienda, M. (2012). Age at immigration and the adult attainments of child migrants to the United States. *The Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science, 643*, 134-159. doi: 10.1177/0002716212442665

Behrens, Kazuko Y. (2010). *Amae* through the eyes of Japanese mothers: Refining differences and similarities between attachment and *amae*. In P. Erdman & K.-M. Ng (Eds.), *Attachment: Expanding the cultural connections.* (pp. 55-69). New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, New York, NY.

Bibeau, W. S., Saksvig, B. I., Gittelsohn, J., Williams, S., Jones, L., & Young, D. R. (2012). Perceptions of the food marketing environment among African American teen girls and adults. *Appetite, 58*, 396-399. doi: 10.1016/j.appet.2011.11.004

Black, A. E. (2006). *The separation and reunification of recently immigrated Mexican families* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest (UMI Number: 3196552).

Blaustein, M. E., & Kinniburgh, K. M. (2010). *Treating traumatic stress in children and adolescents: How to foster resilience through attachment, self-regulation, and competency*. New York, NY, US: Guilford Press, New York, NY.

Bledsoe, C. H., & Sow, P. (2011). Back to Africa: Second Chances for the Children of West African Immigrants. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 73*, 747-762. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00843.x

Blumer, H. (1969/1998). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bocknek, E. L., Sanderson, J., & Britner, P. A. (2009). Ambiguous loss and posttraumatic stress in school-age children of prisoners. *Journal of Child and Family Studies,*

18, 323-333. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3729.2003.00195.x.2003-05798-
00110.1111/j.1741-3729.2003.00195.x http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-008-
9233-y

Boehm, D. A. (2011). "Deseos y dolores": Mapping desire, suffering, and (dis)loyalty
within transnational partnerships. *International Migration, 49*, 95-106.

Borges, G., Breslau, J., Su, M., Miller, M., Medina-Mora, M. E., & Aguilar-Gaxiola, S.
(2009). Immigration and suicidal behavior among Mexicans and Mexican
Americans. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*, 728-733. doi:
AJPH.2008.135160 [pii] 10.2105/AJPH.2008.135160 [doi]

Boss, P. (1977). A clarification of the concept of psychological father presence in
families experiencing ambiguity of boundary. *Journal of Marriage and Family,
39*, 141-151.

Boss, P. (1988). *Family stress management*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Cambridge,
MA: Harvard University Press.

Boss, P. (2006). *Loss, trauma, and resilience: Therapeutic work with ambiguous loss*.
New York, NY: W W Norton

Boss, P. (2007). Ambiguous loss theory: Challenges for scholars and practitioners.
Family Relations, 56, 105-111.

Boss, P. (2010). The trauma and complicated grief of ambiguous loss. *Pastoral
Psychology, 59*, 137-145. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00037.x

Boss, P. G. (1980). The relationship of psychological father presence, wife's personal

qualities and wife/family dysfunction in families of missing fathers. *Journal of*

Marriage and Family, 42, 541-549.

Boss, P., & Greenberg, J. (1984). Family boundary ambiguity: A new variable in family

stress theory. *Family Process, 23*, 535-546.

Boss, P., Roos, S., & Harris, D. L. (2011). Grief in the midst of ambiguity and

uncertainty: An exploration of ambiguous loss and chronic sorrow *Grief and*

bereavement in contemporary society: Bridging research and practice. (pp. 163-

175). New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, New York, NY.

Bowers, B. (2009). Leonard Schatzman and dimensional analysis. In J. M. Morse, P. N.

Stern, J. M. Corbin, K. C. Charmaz, B. Bowers & A. E. Clarke (Eds.),

Developing grounded theory: The second generation (pp. 86-106). Walnut Creek,

CA: Left Coast Press.

Bowers, E. P., von Eye, A., Lerner, J. V., Arbeit, M. R., Weiner, M. B., Chase, P., &

Agans, J. P. (2011). The role of ecological assets in positive and problematic

developmental trajectories. *Journal of Adolescence, 34*, 1151-1165. doi:

10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.07.007

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Separation and anger* (Vol. 2). New York: Basic

Books.

Bowlby, J. (1977). The making and breaking of affectional bonds. I. Aetiology and

psychopathology in the light of attachment theory. An expanded version of the

fiftieth Maudsley lecture, delivered before the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 19

november 1976. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 130*, 201-210.

Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Loss, sadness and depression* (Vol. 3). New

    York: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and loss: Retrospect and prospect. *American Journal of*

    Orthopsychiatry, 52, 664-678.

Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human*

    development. New York: Basic Books.

Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary

    Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology, 28*, 759-775.

Brush, B. L., & Vasupuram, R. (2006). Nurses, nannies and caring work: Importation,

    visibility and marketability. *Nursing Inquiry, 13*, 181-185.

Carroll, J. S., Olson, C. D., & Buckmiller, N. (2007). Family boundary ambiguity: A 30-

    year review of theory, research, and measurement. *Family Relations, vol, 56*, 210-

    230.

Cauce, A. M., Cruz, R., Corona, M., & Conger, R. (2011). The face of the future: Risk

    and resilience in minority youth. In G. Carlo (Ed.), Health disparities in youth and

    familiesNebraska Symposium on Motivation (Vol. 57): Springer Science +

    Business Media. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4419-7092-3_2

Cerrutti, M., & Massey, D.S. (2001). On the auspices of female migration from mexico to

    the united states. *International Migration Review, 372*, 187-201.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through*

    qualitative analysis. London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2009). Shifting the grounds: Constructivist grounded theory methods. In J.

    M. Morse, P. N. Stern, J. Corbin, B. Bowers, K. Charmaz & A. E. Clarke (Eds.),

Developing grounded theory: The second generation (pp. 127-154). Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Child Trends Data Bank. (2007, Summer 2007). Dropout rates. Retrieved 10/30/08, from http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/pdf/1_PDF.pdf

Clarke, A. E. (2003). Situational analyses: Grounded theory mapping after the postmodern turn. *Symbolic Interaction, 26*, 553-576.

Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Connell, R. W. (1998). Masculinities and globalization. *Men and Masculinities, 1*, 3-23. doi: 10.1177/1097184x98001001001

Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society, 19*, 829-859. doi: 10.1177/0891243205278639

Crawford-Brown, C. P. J., & Rattray, J. M. (2001). Parent-child relationships in Caribbean families. In N.B. Webb (Ed.), *Culturally diverse parent-child and family relationships: A guide for social workers and other practitioners* (pp. 107-130). New York: Columbia University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Second ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Second ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crosnoe, R., & Turley, R. N. (2011). K-12 educational outcomes of immigrant youth. *Future of the Child, 21*, 129-152.

Daly, K. (1997). Re-placing theory in ethnography: A postmodern view. *Qualitative Inquiry, 3*, 343-365. doi: 10.1177/107780049700300306

de la Cuesta, C. (2001). Taking love seriously: The context of adolescent pregnancy in colombia. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 12*, 180-192.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discpline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2010). Latin American Outlook 2010   Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/48/14/44121339.pdf

Dikaiou, M. (1989). Peer interaction in migrant children: Observational data and parents' evaluations. *Internaitonal Migration, 27*, 49-67.

Dreby, J. (2006). Honor and virtue: Mexican parenting in the transnational context. *Gender & Society, 20*, 32-59.

Dreby, J. (2007). Children and power in Mexican transnational families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69*, 1050-1064.

Dreby, J. (2009a). Gender and transnational Gossip. *Qualitative Sociology, 32*, 33-52. doi: 10.1007/s11133-008-9117-x

Dreby, J. (2009b). Negotiating work and parenting over the life course: Mexican family dynamics in a binational context. In N. Foner (Ed.), *Across generations: Immigrant families in America* (pp. 190-218). New York: New York University Press.

Dreby, J. (2010). *Divided by borders: Mexican migrants and their children*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dreby, J. (2012). The burden of deportation on children in Mexican immigrant families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 74*, 829-845. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.00989.x

Dreby, J., & Adkins, T. (2010). Inequalities in Transnational Families. *Sociology Compass, 4*, 673-689. doi: 10.1111/j.1751-9020.2010.00297.x

Duffy, M. E. (2001). A critique of cultural education in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 36*, 487-495.

Duncan, P. M., Garcia, A. C., Frankowski, B. L., Carey, P. A., Kallock, E. A., Dixon, R. D., & Shaw, J. S. (2007). Inspiring healthy adolescent choices: A rationale for and guide to strength promotion in primary care. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 41*, 525-535. doi: S1054-139X(07)00240-6 [pii] 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.05.024 [doi]

Duque Paramo, M. C. (2010). Migración Parental: Niñas, niños, y jovenes cuentan sobre sus experiencias y situación de salud. Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

Eaton, D. K., Kann, L., Kinchen, S., Shanklin, S., Flint, K. H., Hawkins, J., . . . Wechsler, H. (2012). Youth risk behavior surveillance - United States, 2011. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries, 61*(4), 1-162. doi: ss6104a1 [pii]

Falicov, C. J. (1996). Mexican families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano & J. K Pearce (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2d ed., pp. 169-182). New York: Guilford Press.

Falicov, C. J. (2003). Immigrant family processes. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity* (3rd ed., pp. 280-300). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Falicov, C. J. (2005). Emotional transnationalism and family identities. *Family Process, 44*, 399-406.

Falicov, C. J. (2005). Mexican families. In Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano & Nydia Garcia-Preto (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (3rd ed. ed., pp. 229-241). New York: Guilford Press.

Falicov, C. J. (2007). Working with transnational immigrants: Expanding meanings of family, community, and culture. *Family Process, 46*, 157-171.

Falicov, C. J. (2008). Transnational journeys. In M. McGoldrick & K. V. Hardy (Eds.), *Re-visioning family therapy: Race, culture, and gender in clinical practice* (2nd ed., pp. 25-38). New York: Guilford Press.

Farquhar, S. A., Parker, E. A., Schulz, A. J., & Israel, B. A. (2006). Application of qualitative methods in program planning for health promotion interventions. *Health Promotion Practice, 7*, 234-242.

Frankowski, B. L., Leader, I. C., & Duncan, P. M. (2009). Strength-based interviewing. *Adolescent Medicine State of the Art Reviews, 20*, 22-40, vii-viii.

Furman, R., & Negi, N. J. (2007). Social work practice with transnational Latino populations. *International Social Work, 50*, 107-112.

Gangs overwhelm a small country. (2012, 4/12/12). 399 words, *The Globe and Mail,* p. EDITORIAL; DRUG TRADE / SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS; Pg. A18.

George, S. M. (2005). *When women come first: Gender and class in transnational migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ginsburg, K. R., & Carlson, E. C. (2011). Resilience in action: An evidence-informed, theoretically driven approach to building strengths in an office-based setting. *Adolescent Medicine State of the Art Reviews, 22*, 458-481, xi.

Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967/1999). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction.

Glasgow, G., & Gouse-Sheese, J. (1995). Themes of rejection and abandonment in group work with caribbean adolescents. *Social Work with Groups, 17*(4), 3-27.

Gonzales, N. A., Coxe, S., Roosa, M.W., White, R. M. B., Knight, G. P., Zeiders, K. H., & Saenz, D. (2011). Economic hardship, neighborhood context, and parenting: Prospective effects on Mexican-American adolescents' mental health. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 47*, 98-113. doi: 10.1007/s10464-010-9366-1

González-Ferrer, A., Baizán, P., & Beauchemin, C. (2012). Child-Parent separations among Senegalese migrants to Europe. *The Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science, 643*, 106-133. doi: 10.1177/0002716212444846

Graham, E., & Jordan, L. P. (2011). Migrant Parents and the Psychological Well-Being of Left-Behind Children in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Marriage & Family, 73*, 763-787. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00844.x

Gutmann, M. C. (1996/2007). *The meanings of macho: Being a man in Mexico City* (10th
    Anniversary Edition ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Haddal, C. C. (2007). Unaccompanied alien children: Policies and issues *CRS Report for
    Congress*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

Halcomb, E. J., Gholizadeh, L., DiGiacomo, M., Phillips, J., & Davidson, P. M. (2007).
    Literature review: Considerations in undertaking focus group research with
    culturally and linguistically diverse groups. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 16*,
    1000-1011.

Halgunseth, L. C., Ispa, J. M., & Rudy, D. (2006). Parental control in Latino families: An
    integrated review of the literature. *Child Development, 77*, 1282-1297.

Haraway, D. (1989). *Primate visions: Gender, race, and nature in the world of modern
    science*. New York: Routledge.

Hernandez, D. J., Denton, N. A., & Macartney, S. (2009). Children in immigrant families
    - the U.S. and 50 states: Economic need beyond the official poverty measure.
    Research Brief Series, (Publication 2009-19). Retrieved from
    http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-
    2009_04_09_RB_ChildImmigPoverty.pdf

Hernandez, M. G. (2009). *An exploratory narrative study of the migration patterns,
    parent-child relationships, and the adaptation of immigrant Central American
    and Mexican adolescents* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest (UMI
    Microform 3367306).

Hine-St. Hilaire, D. (2008). *When children are left behind: The perceptions of West
    Indian adolescents separated from their mothers during childhood due to*

migration, and the effects of this separation on their reunification (Doctoral

Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest (UMI Microform 3287893).

Hoang, L. A., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2011). Breadwinning wives and "left-behind" husbands:

Men and masculinities in the Vietnamese transnational family. *Gender & Society,*
25, 717-739. doi: 10.1177/0891243211430636

Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. *The*

American Journal of Sociology, 85, 551-575.

Hochschild, A. R. (2002). Love and gold. In B. Ehrenreich & A. R. Hochschild (Eds.),

Global woman: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy (pp. 15-30).

New York: Metropolitan Books.

Hochschild, A. R., & Machung, A. (2003/1989). *The second shift*. New York: The

Penguin Group.

Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: Flexibility, consistency, and

coherence. *Qualitative Research, 3*, 345-357.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1994). *Gendered transitions: Mexican experiences of*

immigration. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., & Avila, E. (1997). "I'm here, but i'm there": The meanings of

latina transnational motherhood. *Gender & Society, 11*, 548-571.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., Gaudinez, G., Lara, H., & Ortiz, B. C. (2004). "There's a spirit

that transcends the Border": Faith, ritual, and postnational protest at the U.S.-

Mexico Border. *Sociological Perspectives, 47*, 133-159. doi:

doi:10.1525/sop.2004.47.2.133

International Organization for Migration. (2009). New center for unaccompanied minors

opens on Mexico's southern border. *International Organization for Migration*

Press Briefing notes. Retrieved from International Organization for Migration

website: http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/media/press-briefing-

notes/pbnAM/cache/offonce/lang/en?entryId=25843

International Organization for Migration. (n.d.). International Organzation for Migration

facts and figures Retrieved from http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-

migration/facts-and-figures/global-estimates-and-trends

Isaksen, L. W., Devi, S. U., & Hochschild, A. R. (2008). Global care crisis: A problem of

capital, care chain, or commons? *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*, 405-425.

doi: 10.1177/0002764208323513

James, D. C. (1997). Coping with a new society: The unique psychosocial problems of

immigrant youth. *Journal of School Health, 67*, 98-102.

Jerome-D'Emilia, B., & Suplee, P. D. (2012). The ACA and the undocumented.

American Journal of Nursing, 112, 21-27. doi:

10.1097/01.naj.0000413450.28454.25

Jia, Z., & Tian, W. (2010). Loneliness of left-behind children: A cross-sectional survey in

a sample of rural China. *Child Care Health & Development, 36*, 812-817. doi:

10.1111/j.1365-2214.2010.01110.x

Jia, Z., Shi, L., Cao, Y., Delancey, J., & Tian, W. (2010). Health-related quality of life of

"left-behind children": a cross-sectional survey in rural China. *Quality of Life*

Research, 19, 775-780. doi: 10.1007/s11136-010-9638-0

Johnson, H., & Hill, L. (2011). Illegal immigration *At Issue: Critical Facts on Critical Issues*. San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California.

Jones, J., & Podkul, J. (2012). *Forced from home: The lost boys and girls of Central America* (pp. 43). New York: Women's Refugee Commission.

Keeton, V., Soleimanpour, S., & Brindis, C. D. (2012). School-based health centers in an era of health care reform: Building on history. *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care, 42*, 132-156; discussion 157-138. doi: S1538-5442(12)00054-5 [pii] 10.1016/j.cppeds.2012.03.002

Ko, L. K., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). "It turned my world upside down": Latino youths' perspectives on immigration. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 25*, 465-493. doi: 10.1177/0743558410361372

Kools, S. (1999). Self-protection in adolescents in foster care. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 12*, 139-152.

Kools, S. McCarthy, M., Durham, R., & Robrecht, L. (1996). Dimensional analysis: Broadening the conception of grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research, 6*, 312-330. doi: 10.1177/104973239600600302

Kotuby, J. M. (2003). *The effects of parental separation on the social networks of recent Caribbean immigrants*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest (UMI Number: 305508698).

Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lahaie, C., Hayes, J. A., Piper, T. M., & Heymann, J. (2009). Work and family divided across borders: the impact of parental migration on Mexican children in

transnational families. *Community, Work & Family, 12*, 299-312. doi: 10.1080/13668800902966315

Lam, A. M., Chan, T. S., & Tsoi, K. W. (2005). Meaning of family reunification as interpreted by young Chinese immigrants. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine & Health, 17*, 105-122.

Lan, P.-C. (2006). *Global cinderellas: Migrant domestics and newly rich employers in taiwan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lashley, M. (2000). The unrecognized social stressors of migration and reunification in Caribbean families. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 37*, 203-217.

Lee, R. E., & Whiting, J. B. (2007). Foster children's expressions of ambiguous loss. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 35*, 417-428.

Leinaweaver, J. B. (2007). On moving children: The social implications of Andean child circulation. *American Ethnologist, 34*, 163-180. doi: 10.1525/ae.2007.34.1.163

Leinaweaver, J. B. (2010). Outsourcing Care: How Peruvian Migrants Meet Transnational Family Obligations. *Latin American Perspectives, 37*, 67-87.

Lempert, L. B. (2007). Asking questions of the data: Memo writing in the grounded theory tradition. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 245-264). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Lemy, M.-E. (2000). *The effect of early separation on parent-child attachment among Haitian immigrants families*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest (UMI Number: 304668522).

Levitt, P. (2001). *The transnational villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Levitt, P., & Jaworsky, B. N. (2007). Transnational migration studies: Past developments and future trends. *Annual Review of Sociology, 33*, 129-156. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131816

Liu, Z., Li, X., & Ge, X. (2009). Left too early: The effects of age at separation from parents on chinese rural children's symptoms of anxiety and depression. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*, 2049-2054. doi: AJPH.2008.150474 [pii] 10.2105/AJPH.2008.150474 [doi]

Luster, T., Qin, D., Bates, L., Johnson, D., & Rana, M. (2009). The lost boys of Sudan: Coping with ambiguous loss and separation from parents. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 79*, 203-211. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00037.x http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0015559

Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development, 71*, 543-562.

Main, M. (1996). Introduction to the special section on attachment and psychopathology: 2. Overview of the field of attachment. *Journal of Consulting Clinical Psychology, 64*, 237-243.

Main, M., Hesse, E., & Kaplan, N. (2005). Predictabilty of attachment behavior and representational processes at 1, 6 and 19 years of age: The Berkeley longitudinal study. In K. E. Grossmann, K. Grossmann & E. Waters (Eds.), *Attachment from infancy to adulthood: The major longitudinal studies* (pp. 245-304). New York: The Guilford Press.

Main, M., Kaplan, N., & Cassidy, J. (1985). Security in infancy, childhood, and

adulthood: A move to the level of representation. *Monographs of the Society for*

Research in Child Development, 50(1-2), 66-104.

Marcell, A. V., & Ellen, J. M. (2012). Core sexual/reproductive health care to deliver to

male adolescents: Perceptions of clinicians focused on male health. *Journal of*

Adolescent Health, 51, 38-44. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.10.013

Marcell, A. V., Ford, C. A., Pleck, J. H., & Sonenstein, F. L. (2007). Masculine beliefs,

parental communication, and male adolescents' health care use. *Pediatrics, 119*,

e966-975.

Marcell, A. V., Klein, J. D., Fischer, I., Allan, M. J., & Kokotailo, P. K. (2002). Male

adolescent use of health care services: Where are the boys? *Journal of Adolescent*

Health, 30, 35-43.

Martinez, I. (2009). What's age gotta do with it? Understanding the age-identities and

school-going practices of Mexican immigrant youth in New York City. [080 s;

143 Reports: Research]. *High School Journal, 92*(4), 34-48.

Massey, D. S., & Pren, K. A. (2012). Unintended consequences of US immigration

policy: Explaining the post-1965 surge from Latin America. *Population*

Development Review, 38, 1-29.

Masten, A. S., & Obradovic, J. (2006). Competence and resilience in development.

Annals of the N Y Academy of Science, 1094, 13-27. doi: 1094/1/13 [pii]

10.1196/annals.1376.003

Mazzucato, V., & Schans, D. (2011). Transnational families and the well-being of

    children: Conceptual and methodological challenges. *Journal of Marriage and*

    Family, 73, 704-712. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00840.x

McCarthy, E. D. (1996). *Knowledge as culture: The new sociology of knowledge*.

    London: Routledge.

McGuire, S., & Georges, J. (2003). Undocumentedness and liminality as health variables.

    Advances in Nursing Science, 26, 185-195.

McGuire, S., & Martin, K. (2007). Fractured migrant families: Paradoxes of hope and

    devastation. *Family and Community Health, 30*, 178-188.

Menjívar, C. (2000). *Fragmented ties: Salvadoran immigrant networks in America*.

    Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mitrani, V. B., Santisteban, D. A., & Muir, J. A. (2004). Addressing immigration-related

    separations in Hispanic families with a behavior-problem adolescent. *American*

    Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 74, 219-229.

Moran-Taylor, M. J. (2008). When mothers and fathers migrate North: Caretakers,

    children, and child rearing in Guatemala. *Latin American Perspectives, 35*, 79-95.

    doi: 10.1177/0094582x08318980

National Immigration Law Center. (2012). How are immigrants included in health care

    reform? *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*. Los Angeles, CA: National

    Immigration Law Center.

Nazario, S. (2006). *Enrique's journey: The story of a boy's dangerous odyssey to reunite*

    with his mother. New York: Random House.

Ong, A. (1996). Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States. *Current Anthropology, 37*, 737-751.

Ong, A. D., Phinney, J. S., & Dennis, J. (2006). Competence under challenge: Exploring the protective influence of parental support and ethnic identity in latino college students. *Journal of Adolescence, 29*, 961-979.

Orellana, M. F., Thorne, B., Chee, A., & Lam, W. S. E. (2001). Transnational childhoods: The participation of children in processes of family migration. *Social Problems, 48*, 572-591.

Osofsky, J. D. (1995). Perspectives on attachment and psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 12*, 347-362.

Parreñas, R. S. (2001). *Servants of globalization: Women, migration, and domestic work.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Parreñas, R. S. (2005). *Children of global migration: Transnational families and gendered woes*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Passel, J. S. (2011). Demography of immigrant youth: Past, present, and future. *Future of the Child, 21*(1), 19-41.

Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D'V. (2009). A portrait of unauthorized immigrants in the United States *Pew Research Center Report* (pp. 52). Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

Passel, J. S., & Lopez, M. H. (2012). Up to 1.7 million unauthorized immigrant youth may benefit from new deportation rules. Washington,DC.: Pew HIspanic Center.

Peluso, P. R., Miranda, A. O., Firpo-Jimenez, M., & Pham, M. T. (2010). Attachment dynamics and Latin cultures: Areas of convergence and divergence. In P. Erdman

& K.-M. Ng (Eds.), *Attachment: Expanding the cultural connections.* (pp. 281-295). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, New York, NY.

Perreira, K. M., & Ornelas, I. J. (2011). The physical and psychological well-being of immigrant children. *Future of the Child, 21*(1), 195-218.

Peterson, J. T. (1993). Generalized extended family exchange: A case from the Philippines. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55*, 570-584.

Potochnick, S. R., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). Depression and anxiety among first-generation immigrant Latino youth: Key correlates and implications for future research. *Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease, 198*, 470-477. doi: 10.1097/NMD.0b013e3181e4ce24 [doi] 00005053-201007000-00002 [pii]

Pottinger, A. M. (2005). Children's experience of loss by parental migration in inner-city Jamaica. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 75*, 485-496.

Pribilsky, J. (2001). Nervios and 'modern childhood': Migration and shifting contexts of child life in the Ecuadorian Andes. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research. Special Issue: Capitalizing on concern, 8*, 251-273.

Pribilsky, J. (2004). 'Aprendemos a convivir': Conjugal relations, co-parenting, and family life among Ecuadorian transnational migrants in New York City and the Ecuadorian Andes. *Global Networks, 4*, 313-334.

Pribilsky, J. (2007). *La chulla vida: Gender, migration, and the family in Andean Ecuador and New York City* (First ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Qin-Hilliard, D. B. (2003). Gendered expectations and gendered experiences: Immigrant students' adaptation in schools. *New Directions in Youth Development*(100), 91-109.

Ratha, D., Mohapatra, S., & Silwal, A. (2010). *Migration and remittances factbook 2011*
Retrieved from http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/migration-and-remittances

Riggen, P. (Writer). (2008). Under the same moon. In G. Barrera & L. Villalobos
(Producer). United States: Fox Searchlight.

Rivera, F. I., Guarnaccia, P. J., Mulvaney-Day, N., Lin, J. Y., Torres, M., & Alegria, M.
(2008). Family cohesion and its relationship to psychological distress among
Latino groups. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science, 30*, 357-378. doi:
10.1177/0739986308318713 [doi]

Rothbaum, F., Rosen, K., Ujiie, T., & Uchida, N. (2002). Family systems theory,
attachment theory and culture. *Family Process, 41*, 328-350.

Rouse, R. (1991). Mexican migration and the social space of post-modernism. *Diaspora,
1*(1), 8-23.

Rouse, Roger. (1995). Questions of identity. *Critique of Anthropology, 15*, 351-380.

Rousseau, C., Hassan, G., Measham, T., Moreau, N., Lashley, M., Castro, T., . . .
McKenzie, G. (2009). From the family universe to the outside world: family
relations, school attitude, and perception of racism in Caribbean and Filipino
adolescents. *Health Place, 15*, 721-730. doi: 10.1016/j.healthplace.2008.12.004

Rousseau, C., Rufagari, M. C., Bagilishya, D., & Measham, T. (2004). Remaking family
life: Strategies for re-establishing continuity among Congolese refugees during
the family reunification process. *Social Science in Medicine, 59*, 1095-1108.

Rumbaut, R. G. (2004). Ages, life stages, and generational cohorts: Decomposing the
immigrant first and second generations in the united states. *International
Migration Review, 38*, 1160-1205.

Rumbaut, R. G. (2005). Turning points in the transition to adulthood: Determinants of
educational attainment incarceration, and early childbearing among children of
immigrants. *Ethnic and Racial Studies. Special Issue: The Second Generation in
Early Adulthood, 28*, 1041-1086.

Rumbaut, R. G., & Komaie, G. (2010). Immigration and adult transitions. *Future of the
Child, 20*(1), 43-66.

Salazar, M. L. (2008). *Bodies in place, bodies in motion: Images of immigrant youth
negotiating food, location and identity* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from
ProQuest (UMI Number: 3344713).

Sanchez, B., Reyes, O., & Singh, J. (2006). A qualitative examination of the relationships
that serve a mentoring function for Mexican American older adolescents. *Cultural
Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 12*, 615-631. doi: 2006-20708-002 [pii]
10.1037/1099-9809.12.4.615 [doi]

Sánchez, P. (2007). Cultural authenticity and transnational Latina youth: Constructing a
meta-narrative across borders. *Linguistics and Education. Special Issue:
Transnational literacies: Immigration, language learning, and identity, 18*, 258-
282.

Schapiro, N. A. (2002). Issues of separation and reunification in immigrant latina youth.
Nursing Clinics of North America, 37, 381-392.

Schapiro, N. A., Pinderhughes, H. L., & Kools, S. M. (2009). Phone Cards and
Webcams: Latino Immigrant Youth and Transnational Parenting in the 21st
Century. *The Journal of Adolescent health, 44*, S24.

Schatzman, L. (1991). Dimensional analysis: Notes on an alternative approach to the

    grounding of theory in qualitative research. In D. R. Maines (Ed.), *Social*

    organization and social process: Essays in honor of Anselm Strauss (pp. 303-

    314). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Schmalzbauer, L. (2004). Searching for wages and mothering from afar: The case of

    Honduran transnational families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66*, 1317-

    1331.

Schmalzbauer, L. (2009). Gender on a new frontier: Mexican migration in the rural

    Mountain West. *Gender & Society, 23*(6), 747-767. doi:

    10.1177/0891243209346563

Schwartz, S. J., Pantin, H., Coatsworth, J. D., & Szapocznik, J. (2007). Addressing the

    challenges and opportunities for today's youth: Toward an integrative model and

    its implications for research and intervention. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 28*,

    117-144. doi: 10.1007/s10935-007-0084-x

Shade, K., Kools, S., Pinderhughes, H., & Weiss, S. J. (2012). Choosing fatherhood: How

    teens in the justice system embrace or reject a father identity. *Journal of*

    Community Health Nursing, 29, 91-105. doi: 10.1080/07370016.2012.670573

Sheikh, A., Halani, L., Bhopal, R., Netuveli, G., Partridge, M. R., Car, J., . . . Levy, M.

    (2009). Facilitating the recruitment of minority ethnic people into research:

    Qualitative case study of South Asians and asthma. *PLoS Medicine, 6*, e1000148.

    doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1000148 [doi]

Smith, A., Lalonde, R. N., & Johnson, S. (2004). Serial migration and its implications for

    the parent-child relationship: A retrospective analysis of the experiences of the

children of Caribbean immigrants. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 10*, 107-122.

Smith, R. C. (2006). *Mexican New York: Transnational lives of new immigrants*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Attachment and development: A prospective, longitudinal study from birth to adulthood. *Attachment Human Development, 7*, 349-367.

Star, S. L. (2007). Living grounded theory: Cognitive and emotional forms of pragmatism. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 75-93). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Steinberg, L., & Morris, A. S. (2001). Adolescent development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 83-110. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.83

Steinberg, N. (2011). *Neither rights nor security: Killings, torture, and disappearances in Mexico's "War on Drugs"* (pp. 208): Human Rights Watch.

Sternberg, R. M. (2010). The plight of transnational latina mothers: Mothering from a distance. *Field Science Action Reports,* (Special Issue 2). Retrieved from http://factsreports.revues.org/486

Sternberg, R. M., & Barry, C. (2011). Transnational mothers crossing the border and bringing their health care needs. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 43*, 64-71. doi: 10.1111/j.1547-5069.2010.01383.x

Strauss, A. L. (1959/1997). *Mirrors & masks: The search for identity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (Second ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology, an overview. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Bang, H. J., & Kim, H. Y. (2011). I felt like my heart was staying behind: Psychological implications of family separations & reunifications for immigrant youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 26*, 222-257. doi: 10.1177/0743558410376830

Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M. M., & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Todorova, I,, & Louie, J. (2002). Making up for lost time: The experience of separation and reunification among immigrant families. *Family Process, 41*, 625-643.

Vaughn, B., Egeland, B., Sroufe, L. A., & Waters, E. (1979). Individual differences in infant-mother attachment at twelve and eighteen months: Stability and change in families under stress. *Child Development, 50*, 971-975.

Ventura, S. J., Abma, J. C., Mosher, William D., & Henshaw, S. K. (2009). Estimated

    pregnancy rates for the United States, 1990-2005: An update. *National Vital*

    Statistics Reports, 58, 1-16.

Vigoya, M. V. (2001). Contemporary Latin American perspectives on masculinity. *Men*

    and Masculinities. Special Issue: Men and masculinities in Latin America, 3(3),

    237-260. doi: 10.1177/1097184x01003003002

Viruell-Fuentes, E. A., Miranda, P. Y., & Abdulrahim, S. (2012). More than culture:

    Structural racism, intersectionality theory, and immigrant health. *Social Science in*

    Medicine. doi: S0277-9536(12)00082-2 [pii] 10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.12.037

Walter, C. A., & McCoyd, J.L.M. (2009). *Grief and loss across the lifespan: A*

    biopsychosocial perspective. New York: Springer.

Waters, M. C. (1999). *Black identities: West Indian immigrant dreams and American*

    realities. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Weiss, J. A., Jampol, M. L., Lievano, J. A., Smith, S. M., & Wurster, J. L. (2008).

    Normalizing risky sexual behaviors: A grounded theory study. *Pediatric Nursing,*

    34, 163-169.

Wen, M., & Lin, D. (2012). Child development in rural China: Children left behind by

    their migrant parents and children of nonmigrant families. *Child Development, 83*,

    120-136. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01698.x

Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research.

    Qualitative Health Research, 11, 522-537.

Wier, B. (2009). Child migration: The detention and repatriation of unaccompanied

    Central American children from Mexico. Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief

    Services - US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Willgerodt, M. A. (2003). Using focus groups to develop culturally relevant instruments.

    Western Journal of Nursing Research, 25, 798-814.

Yanow, D. (2000). *Conducting interpretive policy analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

    Publications.

Yeoh, Brenda S. A., Huang, Shirlena, & Lam, Theodora. (2005). Transnationalizing the

    'Asian' family: Imaginaries, intimacies and\ strategic intents. *Global Networks, 5*,

    307-315.

APPENDIX A: **Question Guide**

Question Guide: CHR Attachment

I am conducting a study to help nurses understand the processes by which adolescent immigrants who have been separated from their parents for a long time re-establish family connections when they arrive in the United States. I am interested in learning about teen and family strengths which make this process easier, and any challenges they may face. I am also interested in understanding if the process is different for girls than for boys, and how these young people adapt to school and their community in their new country.

My long-range goal is to help nurses to provide guidance for reunifying families who are having difficulty with the adjustment.

Below are some specific questions to help get the discussion started.

Questions Guide : CHR Attachment

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are the strengths/good things about you that have helped you adjust to life in San Francisco? What would your friends say about you? Your family?

2. What do you think the most positive part of coming to the US/San Francisco has been?

3. At what grade did you enter school in San Francisco?

4. Tell me about school. Are you in school right now? (If yes, continue below)
    a. What is different about going to school here than school in your home
        country?
    b. Has anything been easy in your adjustment to school? Tell me about it.
    c. Tell me about the most difficult parts of adjusting to school in San
    Francisco/the US?
    d. Have you been in English learner classes? What was that like? What sorts
of   things can schools, teachers or other students do to help immigrant
students?
    e. Who do you go to for help in school? (teachers, counselors, friends)
    f. What are your goals for high school and beyond?
    g. How has your mother/father/parents helped you to adjust to school or
    being in the U.S., if at all? Have any siblings or cousins or other family friends
    helped you?

5. What do you think that schools in San Francisco can do to make life easier for new immigrants? What kinds of help do you think other immigrant youth need?

6. What do you know about the reasons your mother (father/parents) came to the United States?

      a. How much warning did you have that she/he/they was/were leaving?
      b. What do you remember her telling you before she left?
      c. How was her leaving presented to the neighbors, extended family?
      d. What was your response to your parent leaving?

7. Tell me who took care of you in your home country after your mother/parents left and what was it like to live there?

      a. What was the relationship like between your mother and the people who took care of you? (family, friends, paid caretakers)
      b. What were you told by your caretakers about your mother's/parents' reasons for coming to the United States?
      c. How did you feel about your caretakers?
      d. Were you with any of your brothers or sisters? Other family members?
      e. (If there were both girls and boys in the family/extended family): did you notice that you had any different care, treatment or expectations from your sisters/brothers, girl/boy cousins

8. What kind of contact did you have with your mother/father/parents while she was gone?

      a. Letters, phone calls, e-mail, videos? Webcam? IM?
      b. Visits?
      c. When and how often did you have contact with your mother?
      d. How did you feel about the contact?

9. How was life in your home country after your mother/father/parents/left

      a. What were some of the good things about living in XX (or with XX)?

10. Were there any problems?

      a. Serious illnesses or accidents?
      b. Difficulties with school or behavior at home?
      c. Feeling depressed, stressed out or angry?
      d. How do you think those problems might be related to the separation from your family or what you have gone through in getting back together with them?

11. How did you find out you were going to come to the United States?

      a. How much time did you have to prepare?
      b. Were you able to say good-bye to friends and relatives?
      c. How did you feel about moving to the US?

12. Tell me what it was like to start living with your mother (parents) again?

      a. What was the easiest thing? The hardest thing?
      b. How much was it like what you expected?

c. How much was it different from what you expected?
d. What has helped you and your family most in adjusting to being together again?
e. Have you noticed that your sisters/brothers (opposite gender siblings) or cousins receive any different treatment or expectations than you?
f. What did you or your mother/parents do that helped you to feel closer to teach other or more connected again?
g. What kind of contact do you have (if any) with your caretakers in your home country?

13. Have you had any major health or emotional problems since coming to the United States?
a. Serious illnesses or accidents?
b. Difficulties with school or behavior at home?
c. Feeling depressed, stressed out or angry?
d. How do you think these problems might be related to the separation from your family or what you have gone through in getting back together with them again?

14. What are some aspects of your own character and of your family support, here or in your home country, that have helped you to overcome the stresses of migrating to a new country?

15. "How do you think that being separated from your family affected you personally and your relationship with your family?"

16. Is there anything that nurses or other health care providers can do to help families like yours who are getting back together after a long separation?

17. Is there anything important that I have missed in these questions?

Appendix B: Revised Interview Map

Question Guide/Guía de Preguntas -- Proyecto Reunificación Familiar

SCHOOL

Are you in school right now?
Differences, home country vs. US
Easiest/most difficult adjustment (*conformar, ajustar*)
English learner/level
Help from school/teachers/other students
Goals – HS/Beyond/career (*carrera, camino*)
How have parents helped adjustment, advocated (*apoyar?*not

IMMIGRATION/FAMILY TIMELINE

Do a timeline
When did parent leave/you come
How did you find out they were leaving/
you were coming?
Caretakers
Contacts with family (technology)
Daily life in home country –before/after
parent left
Daily life here (typical day)
Memorable story of first day or week
you came

CONNECTIONS

How are family relationships now?
What do you talk about?
Adjustments, easy, difficult
Communication with family/friends in
home country
What do you miss about life at home?
Friends – activities, help, talking or not
Do you talk with anyone about your
feelings?

INSTITUTIONS

Any access to health care here?
Counseling?
School services?
If so, how have they been helpful or
could be helpful?
If not, do you want access to those
services?
How could they serve immigrant youth/
families better?

1

Appendix B: Revised Interview Map

Question Guide/Guía de Preguntas -- Proyecto Reunificación Familiar

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

What personal characteristics have helped you to overcome the challenges/difficulties of immigration/family separation?

Who has helped you/guided you to be the person you are?

What would other teen immigrants need in order to overcome (*superar*) the transitions here?

GENDER

Do you have any brothers/sisters/primos/primas?
(different gender)
How their experience different from yours?
What do you think your life there/here would have been like if you were a boy/girl?
Anything about life at home/here more dangerous/less dangerous?
School easier/harder?
Family expectations same/different?

SAFETY

Safety of home community/here
Neighborhood/school issues
Gangs? How much of an issues?
Home? Here?

2

Publishing Agreement

It is the policy of the University to encourage the distribution of all theses, dissertations, and manuscripts. Copies of all UCSF theses, dissertations, and manuscripts will be routed to the library via the Graduate Division. The library will make all theses, dissertations, and manuscripts accessible to the public and will preserve these to the best of their abilities, in perpetuity.

Please sign the following statement:

I hereby grant permission to the Graduate Division of the University of California, San Francisco to release copies of my thesis, dissertation, or manuscript to the Campus Library to provide access and preservation, in whole or in part, in perpetuity.

_____
Author Signature

_____1/10/13_____
Date

256