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A Fish Out Of Water: A Phenomenological Study  
on Reverse Acculturation of Relocated Anglo-Americans

Ginny Peterson Tennant

A FISH OUT OF WATER: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY  
ON REVERSE ACCULTURATION OF RELOCATED ANGLO-AMERICANS

DISSERTATION

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Adrian Dominican School of Education of

Barry University

by

Ginny Peterson Tennant, B.A., M.A.

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ON REVERSE ACCULTURATION OF RELOCATED ANGLO-AMERICANS

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## ABSTRACT

### A FISH OUT OF WATER: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON REVERSE ACCULTUATION OF RELOCATED ANGLO-AMERICANS

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Barry University, 2011

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#### Purpose

During the last 20 years the demographics of the U.S. have changed dramatically. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), a shift has taken place in many metropolitan areas. Within specific regions of the U.S., the Anglo-American majority group has been replaced by a Hispanic majority. Predictions by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that this trend will continue well into the mid 21<sup>st</sup> century. The present study explored the lived experiences of Anglo-Americans who relocated and acculturated to living in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area. This process is called reverse acculturation.

#### Method

The present study used a qualitative research design using a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to explore experiences of adults during their efforts to acculturate and adapt to living in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area. The research question was: What are the acculturation strategies and adaptation experiences of relocated Anglo-Americans who live within the reverse acculturation situation of Miami-Dade County, Florida? A purposeful sample of eight participants was interviewed.

The participants were adult Anglo-Americans reared in another U.S. state who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida. Each participant had at least one school-aged child and had lived in the county for a minimum of two years.

### Major Findings

Data analysis revealed three major themes, namely, culture shock, coping strategies, and adaptation. The culture shock that the participants encountered included: language barrier, driving style, and lifestyle differences. Once the participants began to use coping strategies, the culture shock dissipated. Specific strategies participants used to cope with their acculturation experience included engaging in activities such as festivals, outdoor concerts and recreational activities, making friends, and changing expectations. Adaptation occurred when participants chose to change their attitude, behavior, and values. The overall picture of the phenomenon can best be stated as: Anglo-Americans who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida underwent a reverse acculturation experience consisting of an initial culture shock, followed by using coping strategies to achieve different degrees of adaptation to their new community.

### Implications

The process of reverse acculturation found in this study adds to the sparse research on this phenomenon. This researcher became better informed by several interesting findings. The participants' attitude towards the culture shock issue of a language barrier was viewed as either an obstacle by some participants or as a surmountable challenge by other participants. Half of the participants in this study used cognitive appraisal to change

their expectations. They coped with their culture shock by changing their expectations. This aided the adaptation process. Adaptation, the hoped for final outcome of the reverse acculturation process, took time and occurred when participants remained open to new people and cultural experiences. The participants' use of acculturation strategies, specifically, the strategy of integration, was the most often used method for coping and adapting to living in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area. This latter finding supports the literature that the acculturation method of integration seems to be the most effective of the four strategies. The finding on lifestyle differences, in particular, differences in etiquette and work ethic rules, supports the Social Skills Model in which culture shock is due to disparities in social skills of a cultural nature. The literature on problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping was supported by this study's action-oriented coping methods of engaging in activities and making friends. Furthermore, Nguyen (2006) cited a gap in the acculturation literature concerning the mechanisms by which a person acculturates and adapts into a new cultural environment. The findings from this study on the reverse acculturation process, in particular, the participant's coping strategies and how they adapted to living within a predominantly Hispanic metropolitan area, contributed to understanding the mechanisms by which some people acculturate and adapt.

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## DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my parents. My mother, Eleanor Peterson, has been indispensable. Without her support I might have never finished this arduous endeavor. Thank you to my father, Robert Peterson, and my mother for having their granddaughter stay with them over vacation breaks. You have both definitely helped to make this dissertation come to fruition.

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Lastly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all people, both this study's participants and to those people whom I will never know, who have had a reverse acculturation experience, acculturated, and adapted to their new location and community within the United States.



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## CHAPTER I

### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

When job offers were extended to us, we decided to relocate our small family from southern New Jersey to southern Florida. We accepted one position that brought us to live and work in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Initially, I was excited and full of anticipation about moving. Little did I know then what my relocation experience would entail.

We moved far away from our families and friends who lived in our hometowns in southern New Jersey which were predominantly Anglo-American and we rented a bungalow near downtown Miami. Then we began the process of settling into our new community. Banking, grocery shopping, haircuts, dining at restaurants, and getting to know our neighbors all brought us into contact with a diverse mix of people. Since I did not have a job waiting for me in Miami-Dade County, Florida I began job hunting once I started to feel somewhat acclimated to living in my new environment.

During the initial phase of becoming familiar with my new community, I noticed that a large percentage of the people that I encountered were from different Hispanic backgrounds. When I finally obtained a job at a large institution of higher education in Miami-Dade County, Florida I began to develop friendships with people at work. To my surprise I noticed something else: I was a minority! Most of my new friends, co-workers, and students came from countries such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Colombia, Chile or the Dominican Republic. As our friendships developed, my new Hispanic friends began to invite us to their homes and family gatherings. I learned much about the different Hispanic cultures from my students, friends and colleagues.

Although my immediate circle of new friends were congenial and understanding, during my first two years of living and working in Miami-Dade County, Florida, I experienced prejudice and occasionally frustrations from other people. These feelings arose as I attempted to conduct errands in stores and to communicate with workmen in my home. One time in particular is etched upon my mind. In an attempt get to the pharmacy to pick up a prescription before they closed the store, I hurriedly left my home while still wearing tattered and stained work clothes. Since there were no parking spaces left in the parking lot of the shopping plaza I had to park on the street. As I quickly walked down the sidewalk towards the pharmacy, I saw a well-dressed Latino family of four walking on the same sidewalk as me. As they approached, they continued to walk four abreast. When our paths crossed, I was surprised that the family was not yielding any part of the sidewalk for me to pass. Instead, they expected me to step off of the sidewalk and to walk around them! Perhaps they assumed from the way that I was dressed that I was a poor person who should “know my proper place.” Since I was not a vagrant and I hailed from a North American culture, I felt as if I had every right to walk on the sidewalk as they did. With these thoughts in my mind, both of our walking came to a standstill. I waited for the family to disassemble from four across and to reassemble to two people across. Then I was able to continue walking on the sidewalk towards my destination. Yet, in spite of experiences such as this one and at sometimes feeling like I was a fish out of water, I persevered.

I kept an open-mind to learning about my new community. I looked for ways to “fit in” or to acculturate. I decided to resurrect my long-forgotten high school Spanish by

enrolling and passing advanced college Spanish courses in the evenings after work. With the encouragement of my college Spanish teacher, I spent one summer in Quito, Ecuador in a Spanish immersion program. To improve my Spanish skills even further, the following summer I ventured to Costa Rica for yet another immersion program. I lived with a host family and attended Spanish language school with both programs. I also had the opportunity to explore the country, culture, and its people on weekend excursions and during a post-school week of vacation.

Equipped with better Spanish language skills and a willingness to use them back in Miami-Dade County, Florida I found that my reverse acculturation experience for the most part was a very positive one for me. Even though I had been raised in a predominantly White non-Hispanic (Anglo-American) environment in the Northeast, I no longer felt like a minority individual living and working in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area. I attributed this adjustment to my willingness and openness to adapt to my surroundings. However, during my journey of reverse acculturation, I noticed that many of my Anglo-American friends seemed to have had opposite experiences than me. Many of their experiences were very different from mine and, at times, very difficult. Thus, I became fascinated with studying the phenomenon of reverse acculturation.

The experience of relocating to a new geographical area is often a stressful life event filled with excitement and apprehensions. Acclimation to one's new community can be a positive or a negative experience or a mixture of both depending upon a host of factors. Both individuals and families need to adapt, assimilate, and acculturate to their new environment. The personal experiences and observations of this researcher piqued

her interest in examining the lived experience of reverse acculturation in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Imagine being raised in the Anglo-American culture (White, non-Hispanic middle-class American values and lifestyle) of the U. S. Then, the family relocates to Miami-Dade County, Florida. Suddenly, the familiar Anglo-American culture that one was accustomed to diminishes tremendously. The familiar environment of an Anglo-American culture is replaced with a new community which is predominantly Hispanic. Neighbors, co-workers, and new friends' way of life is very different from the relocated family's past experiences. Communication between the relocated family and their neighbors, the parents' of their children's friends, co-workers and even with workmen is affected due to language and other cultural barriers. Customs, signs in stores, adherence to traffic laws, and even personal and family values seem to be quite different from the relocated family's familiar world. How do family members adapt to an environment which seems to be so foreign from their own personal experiences?

Reflecting on my own relatively harmonious experience of adjusting from life in the dominant Anglo cultural environment of the Northeast to a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area in Miami-Dade County, Florida, I wondered how other Anglo-Americans who have relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida, coped with their acculturation experience. I further wondered about the factors that might be involved in the acculturation process of Anglo-Americans adapting to living in a vastly different cultural environment within their own country? These questions became the basis for this study.

## **Definitions of Terms**

In an extensive historical review of the phenomenon of acculturation, Rudmin (2003) pointed out the confusion and ambiguity of acculturation terminology that has resulted from researchers ignoring the past and not making links in the literature. Bearing this confusion in mind, to make links to the literature, and to utilize current terminology, I will clarify the meanings of the terms being used in this study. As such, the definition section will appear here rather than later in the chapter, as is customary.

A major issue in acculturation research is a lack of standardization of acculturation terminology. Rudmin (2003) maintains that it is virtually impossible to standardize acculturation terminology because the acculturation field extends across academic disciplines, across decades, and across national boundaries. This researcher is using terminology that is currently being used in the general literature.

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined.

*Acculturation:* The process of change by members of a minority group towards the adoption of elements of the majority group's culture (Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936; Rodriguez & Kosloski, 1998). More recent research has expanded this definition of acculturation to include characteristics such as: the psychosocial adaptation of a newcomer which involves the fundamental changes of relearning the meanings of symbols, adjusting to a new system of values, and releasing some old customs, behaviors, and beliefs as the person adapts to the new culture (Burnam, Hough, Telles, Karno, & Escobar, 1987; Liem, Lim, & Liem, 2000).

*Anglo-American:* A person who is White, non-Hispanic, of Anglo-Saxon origin who belongs to the largest ethnic group in the United States and represents mainstream American culture (Apfelbaum, 1995; Cardona, Nicholson, & Fox, 2000; Chen, 1997; Liem et al., 2000; Negy & Woods, 1992; Rodriguez & Kosloski, 1998).

*Dominant culture:* The beliefs, attitudes, and values of middle to upper middle-class Anglo American families in the United States of America (Cardona et al., 2000; Mahlik, et al., 2005).

*Intranational migration:* When an individual or a family relocates from one geographic location to another within one's own country. Often the new location involves moving a great distance from one's hometown (Allen, 2008).

*Reverse acculturation:* A term coined by Chen to describe the process "in which Anglo-Americans acquire values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns via direct and/or indirect contact with people from cultural origins other than their own" (Chen, 1997, p. 18).

### **Background of the Problem**

Over the past 20 years there has been a dramatic shift in demographics in major metropolitan cities, counties, and states in the U. S. that reflect a greater trend towards reverse acculturation. For example, the city of Denver, Colorado which lost Anglo-American and African-American residents, but gained Hispanic and Asian residents resulting in a loss of Anglo-American majority status (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

According to demographer, William Frey, of the Brookings Institute, "We used to think of the black-white paradigm. In Denver it's a white and Hispanic paradigm" (as cited in

El Nasser & Overberg, 2005, p. A1). This trend is confirmed with an examination of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2003 data which estimates that since the year 2000, 280 of the nation's 3,142 counties have lost their Anglo-American majority status. To further emphasize this point, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 48 of the 3,142 counties have a Hispanic majority as of 2008. Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau (2009) released data that confirms that the U.S. has the second largest Hispanic population worldwide after Mexico. This indicates a significant shift in the demographics of the U.S. away from an Anglo-American majority and towards a larger Hispanic composition.

In August 2008 the U.S. Census Bureau released startling projections about the diversity of the American population by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Currently, minority groups compose one third of the U.S. population; however, by the year 2042 minority groups will become the majority with a projected 54% of the total American population (Bernstein & Edwards, 2008). According to Bernstein and Edwards the Hispanic population will triple in size from its current 46.7 million people to almost 133 million from 2009-2050. The U.S. Census Bureau (2008) predicts that one out of every three residents in the U.S. will be Hispanic by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These projections indicate a major shift in the demographics of the American population away from an Anglo-American majority status over the coming decades.

### **Miami-Dade County Population**

Overall, Miami-Dade County is second only to the Bronx in New York City for having the highest percent of overall residents (roughly 82 %) identify themselves as minorities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The 2010 U.S. Census reported that the

demographics of Miami-Dade County, Florida are as follows: Hispanics are 65%; Anglos (White, non-Hispanic) are 15.4 %; Blacks (non-Hispanic) are 18.9% with a large majority being of Caribbean descent; and Asians are 1.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Given these statistics, Miami-Dade County, Florida has the unique distinction in that the majority of the population is Hispanic (Miami-Dade County's Department of Planning and Zoning, 2003; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). According to the 2010 U.S. Census report, Miami-Dade County, Florida's Hispanic population increased by 26% from the 2000 census report to the 2010 census report and the Anglo-American population decreased by over 18% during the past decade. Hence, a traditional minority group is now the majority group in this large metropolitan area (Miami-Dade County's Department of Planning and Zoning, 2003). What is occurring in large metropolitan areas such as Miami-Dade County, Florida, that once had a majority Anglo-American culture, is a shift to an immigrant minority group dominating the cultural scene. The dramatic demographic shift in the U.S. population that the U.S. Census Bureau (2008) predicts will occur on a national basis has already happened in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

This demographic trend underscores the need for acculturation research to explore reverse acculturation situations. According to Berry (2001), traditional acculturation research focuses on how immigrant and indigenous people adapt and assimilate into the dominant culture of a particular country. Additionally, acculturation and increased contact with a dominant society also brings stressful social encounters, discriminatory experiences and sometimes thwarted career aspirations (Finch & Vega, 2003). More recently, acculturation research has begun to focus on the reciprocal process of mutual



change between members of the host sociocultural group and members of a minority or immigrant group (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2001; Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Given the dramatic shift in demographics in Miami-Dade County, Florida as well as within the U. S. as a whole, a new phenomenon is arising. Anglo-Americans are now a minority group in Miami-Dade County, Florida. As such, the focus of this study was to explore the experience of reverse acculturation by interviewing select members of Anglo-American families as they attempted to cope with living and working within a predominantly U. S. Hispanic metropolitan area. Over the past forty years the acculturation literature has been dominated by research studies which focus on various acculturation issues of immigrants assimilating into the Anglo-American culture of the U.S.

Additionally, a growing body of research has examined the acculturation experiences of international students learning to adapt to living in another country. As Berry (2001) and Negy and Woods (1992) point out, acculturation is rarely discussed when members who were accustomed to being the dominant cultural group adapt to living within an ethnic minority group's culture. Yet, this very situation is occurring in Miami-Dade County, Florida as in other areas of the U.S.

Even though there have been a few scholars in the area of reverse acculturation, there is still a need to conduct further research. As Chen (1997) pointed out in her doctoral dissertation, rarely has reverse acculturation, the adaptation of Anglo-Americans into a minority group's culture, been studied. Since the publication of Chen's 1997 dissertation only a minute amount of research has explored the phenomenon of reverse

acculturation. One of the few scholars who has discussed this phenomenon is Alex Stepick. His perspective on reverse acculturation emphasized resident Anglo-Americans who have adopted Hispanic ways. He focused on the reverse acculturation of Anglo-Americans who were already living in Miami-Dade County, Florida when the waves of Cuban and then other Central and South American immigrants and refugees relocated to this county (Stepick, 2003). More recently, Kim (2009) researched reverse acculturation from a different angle. Kim used the term “reverse acculturation” to mean a cultural practice in which a U.S. born, raised, and acculturated member of a minority group learns the heritage culture of his or her parents and introduces it to U. S. society.

Negy and Woods (1992) stated that within the U. S., those of non Anglo-American backgrounds (such as Native Americans, African-Americans, and immigrants) are said to have become acculturated to the American life-style when they have acquired the language, customs, and values of the Anglo-American culture. What happens when Anglo-Americans relocate to Miami-Dade County, Florida and are faced with a reverse acculturation situation in which they are the ones who need to acculturate to a predominantly U. S. Hispanic metropolitan area? This researcher was interested in the experiences, acculturation strategies, and the adaptation processes that Anglo-Americans use when reverse acculturation occurs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to study the lived experiences of relocated Anglo-Americans to learn what acculturation strategies and adaptation processes people used as they lived within the reverse acculturation situation of Miami-Dade County,

Florida. It was my intention that a body of knowledge on this understudied phenomenon may be established and expanded upon so that professional counselors, in particular, marriage and family therapists as well as human resource personnel can utilize this information. This was the focus and thrust of this research study.

### **Research Question**

The following research question guided this present study: What are the acculturation strategies and adaptation experiences of relocated Anglo-Americans who live within the reverse acculturation situation of Miami-Dade County, Florida? Pertinent to this study were the specific strategies and methods of coping used by adult participants who had lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for two or more years. By examining the participants' unique stories of acculturation and adaptation a composite picture of the reverse acculturation experience emerged.

### **Theoretical Constructs**

An overview of the research pertinent to reverse acculturation is presented here. A more extensive discussion of these topics can be found in the literature review section. Significant to this study is intranational migration, homesickness, culture shock, acculturation, and acculturation strategies as they are all relevant to reverse acculturation.

Intranational migration describes relocating within one's own country from one distinct geographic region to another one (Allen, 2008). From Allen's research on intranational migration, a person's coping style was pertinent to this study. How a person copes with relocation and the ensuing issues of homesickness and culture shock was explored in the literature. Specifically, after people move a great distance to a new

location, it is common for them to experience homesickness. Homesickness, a psychological reaction to the absence of significant people and familiar surroundings, is characterized by the negative aspects of loneliness, sadness, loss, and adjustment difficulties (Archer, et al., 1998; Constantine, et al., 2005).

Not only might the participants in this study experience homesickness, but they did undergo culture shock. Culture shock, according to Winkelman (1994), is a multifaceted experience that results from coming in contact with numerous stressors in a different culture. Immigrants, international students, overseas businessmen and their families, missionaries, and military personnel have all been sources of studies on culture shock.

More recently, the aforementioned groups have also been the subject of research for the related phenomenon of reverse culture shock. This experience often occurs when a person has spent an extended period of time overseas and upon returning to their native country experiences culture shock in reverse with the home culture (Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Huff, 2001; Schineller, 1991). Culture shock and reverse culture shock inform this study because people experience varying degrees of culture shock in unfamiliar cultural or subcultural environments in our increasingly multicultural society (Merta, Stringham, & Ponterotto, 1988).

As culture shock subsides, the process of reverse acculturation begins. This acculturation process is impacted by three factors: contact, reciprocal influence, and psychological change (Sam, 2006). According to Sam, a person experiencing acculturation needs to have continuous and firsthand encounters with the new society. He also stated that members of both the dominant cultural group and the non-dominant cultural

group shape and influence each other in both powerful and subtle ways. The literature referred to psychological change as psychological acculturation which involves internal processes of change in affect, behavior, and cognitions (Padilla & Perez, 2003; Ward, 2001). In negotiating the acculturation process, people tend to employ different acculturation strategies.

Acculturation strategies consist of two parts: attitudes and behaviors that are exhibited in daily intercultural encounters as a person chooses to maintain or reject all or parts of his culture of origin as well as accept or decline all or parts of the culture of the new society (Berry, 2006a; Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). According to Berry (1997, 2003, 2006b) there are four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. The strategies are methods of coping with the acculturation process.

During the acculturation process if a person experiences conflict and problems then acculturative stress occurs (Berry, 2006b). According to Ward (1996, 2001) if the acculturation process goes smoothly, that is, changes and behavior shifts occur easily, then the person has adjusted to the new culture and no acculturative stress happens. The hoped for final outcome of the acculturation process is adaptation to a person's new cultural environment (Berry, 2005). This concludes the overview of the theories and ideas upon which this study was based.

### **Qualitative Approach**

Due to the fact that reverse acculturation is an area in which little research has taken place, an excellent approach for learning more about the topic was a qualitative one. Qualitative inquiry examines an issue in depth (Creswell, 2003). It allows for detailed

information to be obtained, and permits the researcher to construct a comprehensive picture of a particular experience (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 2002). Patton maintains that a qualitative method allows researchers to study problems in which little information is known.

### **Phenomenological Tradition**

One of the oldest qualitative approaches is the phenomenological tradition. Phenomenology is a system of interpretation that helps a person to perceive and conceive of one's self in relation to one's contacts, interchanges, and experiences with others (Wagner, 1983). The major objective of phenomenology is to describe the lived experiences of everyday life (Moustakas, 1990; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Methodologically, phenomenology does this by uncovering and extrapolating the essences of a phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990). It has the advantage of being able to give attention to nuances, setting, and complexities and to understand a phenomenon as a whole (Patton, 2002).

### **Overview of the Methodology**

In this phenomenological study a purposeful sample of 8 Anglo-American participants, who were born and raised in another U.S. state, were interviewed. The participants had to have relocated, lived and worked in Miami-Dade County, Florida at least 2 years ago. Each participant had to be at least 21 years old or older and currently raising one or more children between the ages of 3-18 years. By focusing on adults who are raising children it was thought that the adults would be actively interacting with members of their new community; thus, giving them the opportunity to experience a

reverse acculturation situation. A broad view of family was used in this study. Families included married couples raising children, a single parent rearing children on his or her own, or co-habituating couples raising children together. The participants were recruited through flyers posted at a community center, library, and a church (see Appendices A, B, C). Participants were also found by snow-balling, whereby, a current participant recommends other potential people for the study (Groenewald, 2004; Patton, 2002).

Each participant read and signed a consent form before beginning the interview (see Appendix D). The interview lasted an hour. Eight pre-determined questions, listed on an interview guide, were used to elicit the participant's experiences (see Appendix E). The interviews were audio-taped and then later transcribed. The transcribed interviews were analyzed utilizing Van Manen's (1990) method for processing phenomenological data by this researcher.

### **Significance of the Study**

Given the rapidly changing demographics in the U.S., this study which examined the relatively unexplored phenomenon of reverse acculturation, would add to the body of knowledge in acculturation research. It explored the process of acculturation of Anglo-Americans into a traditional minority group's dominant culture. Research in this area can help professionals in the field of mental health by further developing multiculturally competent counselors. In particular, those therapists who work with marriage and family issues can become better able to identify Anglo-American clients who are struggling with acculturation issues as they begin to adapt to living in a predominantly Hispanic-American metropolitan area of the U.S. Findings from this study could inform

professional counselors in regions of the country where reverse acculturation is taking place so that they would be in a better position to understand and work with the needs of their clients. Using the experiences of participants in this study, recommendations for people who are coping with reverse acculturation situations are suggested.

Numerous authors and organizations have already called for professional counselors to develop multicultural competencies (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Constastine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). This research study adds a new layer of knowledge for professional counselors as they learn about Anglo-American clients' needs in a reverse acculturation situation. In addition to filling in some of the gaps in the research and giving insights to professional counselors, knowledge from this present study helps mental health professionals to employ counseling techniques to lessen the acculturative stress experience for people living in increasingly culturally diverse communities.

### **Assumptions**

Several assumptions were made in this study. One, participants in the study experienced a reverse acculturation situation. Two, all participants experienced an adjustment period of living in their new environment of Miami-Dade County, Florida. It is also assumed that the participants responded to the questions and shared their experiences to the best of their recollection.

### **Limitations**

A purposeful sample of participants born and raised within the dominant Anglo-American culture of the U. S. and who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida were



included in this study. By its very design as a purposeful sample, there were a small number of participants. This limits the transferability of the results. Participants had to have school-aged children to ensure that they were involved in the community. It was assumed that participants with children would interact with their children's friends, parents, teachers, coaches, scout leaders, et cetera. Therefore, the stories and experiences of adults who had never had children or whose children were grown were not captured.

### **Summary**

The researcher's personal experience with the phenomenon of reverse acculturation was described. Pertinent data and trends concerning relocation and demographics from various sources including the U.S. Census Bureau were given. Both the background and the rationale for using a phenomenological approach to research the topic of this study was presented. The statement of the problem as well as its purpose and significance were outlined in this chapter.

The remaining chapters are organized in the following manner: the second chapter is a review of the relevant literature. The third chapter is the methodology section which explains how the research was conducted. A presentation of the results of this study is given in the fourth chapter. In the final chapter the findings are discussed.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Overview

“The time of living and dying in the place we were born in, is long past.”

Ad Vingerhoets, Dutch researcher (1997)

Today, professional opportunities and educational goals as well as vacation activities often take families from their home towns, bringing them in contact with new places, people, and cultures. The average American can expect to move at least five times in his or her lifetime (Allen, 2008). In the U. S. relocating is often viewed as a normative means for people to obtain better opportunities, to receive advancements in education or careers, and accomplish lifestyle changes such as marriage (Allen, 2008; Altman & Werner, 1985; Gober, 1993; Myers, 1999; Settles, 1993; Shumaker & Conti, 1985).

Often these changes require families, couples, or an individual to relocate to other regions of the U. S. Relocating within the U. S. is termed “intranational migration.” This describes a major move from one geographic location to another often including distinctly different geographic regions and/or relocating a great distance from one’s home town (Allen, 2008). Only recently have researchers begun to study the phenomenon of intranational migration (Allen).

#### **Intranational Migration**

Three research perspectives have emerged from the family studies literature on intranational migration. They are: a) demographics of mobility, b) correlate of mobility, and c) coping styles with mobility (Allen, 2008). Essentially, the literature on

demographics of mobility focuses on who moves. In attempting to predict who will move, this research area has examined related issues of relocation distance, percentages of voluntary and involuntary moves, migration patterns, reasons for mobility, rates of residential mobility, types of movers, and the residential mobility rate changes over the course of a person's lifetime (Allen, 2008; Long, 1992a; Long, 1992b; Settles, 1993).

The correlate of mobility literature studies the effects of mobility on psychological distress, physical health, and academic performance (Brett, 1980; McAllister, Butler, & Kaiser, 1973; McKain, 1973; Vernberg, 1990; Vernberg & Field, 1990; Vingerhoets, 1997). The third focus of intranational migration research examines coping styles during the relocation and adaptation process. Within this third area of intranational migration research the primary issues that emerge include: homesickness, feelings of loss, culture shock, acculturation, coping and acculturation strategies, acculturative stress, and adaptation (Fisher, 1990b; Turner, 1991; Van Tilburg, 1997).

Both the demographics of mobility and the effects of geographic mobility are areas worthy of research in and of themselves. However, of particular relevance to this study is the third area of intranational migration, which is the coping styles associated with mobility. This study examined the acculturation experience and coping styles resulting from a major geographic move. In particular, the research explored the intranational relocation experience and the coping and acculturation strategies used by a member of a family that relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida from another U.S. state. The relevant issues associated with acculturating and adapting into a new geographic location encompass the ensuing remainder of this literature review.

## **Homesickness**

The concept of homesickness refers to the commonly experienced distress state of people who leave their home and find themselves in a new and unfamiliar environment (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets, & Van Heck, 1996). Often homesickness is experienced by people who move within a country from one geographic location to another one, and by students who leave home for school (Fisher, 1989, 1990a; Fisher, Frazer, & Murray, 1984, 1985; Fisher & Hood, 1987, 1988; Stroebe, van Vliet, Hewstone, & Willis, 2002; Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets, Kirschbaum, & Van Heck, 1996). The symptoms of homesickness tend to be psychological in nature. They include a strong longing and thoughts of their former home, a preoccupation need to return home, feelings of loss and grief for the people, place, and things left behind, unhappiness and/or a depressive mood, and sometimes feelings of disorientation in their new home environment (Aroian, 1990; Eurelings-Bontedkoe, Vingerhoets, & Fontijn, 1994; Furnham, 1997; Pedersen, 1975; Poyrazli & Lopex, 2007; Stroebe et al, 2002; Van Tilburg et al., 1996; Vingerhoets, Van Tilburg, & Van Heck, 1995).

### **Research on Homesickness**

A review of the literature on homesickness reveals that research in this area is sparse and limited (Stroebe, et al 2002; Van Tilburg et al., 1996). The few scholars who have undertaken this research have concentrated on the notion of loss and culture shock. The first researcher to notice this gap in the literature focused on the effects of leaving home for long periods of time in the adult population of Great Britain. At that time there were an increasing number of British who were relocating for better job opportunities

within Great Britain and experiencing difficulties adjusting to their new environment (Fisher, 1990a). The seminal theories that emerged on homesickness were informed by ideas of attachment and loss, stress/distress, reduced control, and role changes (Fisher, 1984, 1986, 1989, 1990a; Fisher & Hood, 1987, 1988; Fisher, Murray, & Frazier, 1985). In fact, most of the existing literature on homesickness comes from European research conducted primarily in Great Britain and the Netherlands (Fisher, 1989, 1990a; Fisher, Frazer, & Murray, 1984, 1985; Fisher & Hood, 1987, 1988; Stroebe, et al., 2002; Van Tilburg, et al., 1996; Vingerhoets, 1997). A lesser amount of published research has been done by Australian and New Zealand scholars who contribute to this earlier work by pointing to the significant impact of culture shock (Eisenbruch, 1990; Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Ward & Styles, 2005). Considering the number of college students and international migrants in the U. S., it is surprising that only recently has the phenomenon of homesickness been the subject of research studies in the U. S. (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Vingerhoets, 1997). The Americans, like the Australian/New Zealand researchers have looked to culture shock in addition to newer areas such as loneliness, and adjustment difficulties (Archer et al. 1998; Constantine et al. 2005; Winkelman 1994).

### **Psychological and Physical Separation**

Obviously, leaving one's home and all that is near, dear, and familiar to a person involves a degree of psychological and physical separation. The result of such a separation is both real and perceived loss (Fisher, 1989). The change in routine behavior brought on by the transition of a geographic move might have a powerful effect on a

person's ability to function and cope in their new environment (Fisher, 1990b). Because a routine is disrupted and the new environment is unfamiliar and at times even strange, the relocated person might experience disorganization and a reduced sense of control. During this period, the person involved in the move needs to learn about new places, people, routines, and procedures. Couple this reduced control over the environment with a separation from the support of significant family members and friends, the result can be a state of homesickness (Fisher, 1984, 1990a).

### **Multi-causal Model of Homesickness**

A descriptive multi-causal model to explain the phenomenon of homesickness has been developed (Fisher, 1990b). Summarizing the major findings from this research, a rich descriptive composite of homesickness emerged. Homesickness is a complex syndrome manifesting itself with intrusive thoughts of home, dissatisfaction with the new environment, distress, absent-mindedness, feelings of low control over the new situation, high demands and expectations over the new environment, depressive feelings over the move and the new situation, and sometimes psychoneurotic symptoms (Fisher, 1989, 1990c; Fisher, Frazer, & Murray, 1984, 1986; Fisher & Hood, 1987, 1988; Fisher, Murray, & Frazer, 1985). Additionally, homesickness seems to occur in people of all ages, both sexes, and in 50-70% of most populations (Fisher, 1989). Lastly, it tends to be episodic with occurrences mostly in the morning or night or during passive times or during mental tasks (Fisher, 1989).

### **Key tenets of homesickness model**

Two key elements form the basis of Fisher's composite model of homesickness. The key tenets are: 1). Separation from a person's familiar environment, and 2). Entrance into a new environment. Separation from one's home can be accompanied by perceptions of loss and withdrawal from others which can result in ruminative thinking and depressive feelings. Simultaneously, contact with the new environment may lead to strain or distress and/or dissatisfaction or commitment. Strain or distress and/or dissatisfaction with the new environment may lead to compulsive thinking about home; whereas, commitment to the new environment may lead to seeking out new experiences and information. If there is a high degree of commitment to the new environment, then information concerning the new environment may successfully counteract any homesick thoughts. For a person who is highly committed to his or her new home environment, then he or she can successfully adjust and adapt to the new setting. Those people who do not become satisfactorily committed to their new environment are much more likely to become homesick (Fisher, 1989, 1990a; Van Tilburg et al., 1996).

### **Homesickness implication.**

From her research with college students who left home to attend a university, Fisher (1989) found that leaving home was not the critical factor. The students who self-reported homesickness did not experience it until they had been in their new environment at least six weeks or more. Fisher's research indicated that the critical factor for developing homesickness seemed to be prolonged immersion in the new environment.

This implies that as a person and/or family begins to settle into a new environment, then issues of acculturation begin to surface.

### **Loss**

Throughout the literature on homesickness a pervasive theme is the idea of loss. When a person and/or family move to a new location each person experiences multiple losses. They need to psychologically negotiate a loss of their old home, family, friends, community, retail establishments, restaurants, shops, local celebrations and customs (Garza-Guerrero, 1974; Ward & Styles, 2005). Losses might also include careers, valued possessions left behind, and places of emotional significance (Van Tilburg et al., 1996). It is not unusual for people to respond to these multiple losses with either separation anxiety or with a form of grief (Van Tilburg et al.). Separation from significant people and familiar places creates a void and a sense of loss. The experience of loss can be manifested by anxiousness, distress, anger, a searching behavior and sometimes apathy (Fisher, 1989; Van Tilburg et al.).

The relationship between the loss of one's former home, community, family and friends and grief is an interesting one. Typically, one's former home and community still exists and family and friends are still alive. Thus, a person is able to contact people or return for a visit to the former community. According to Van Tilburg et al. (1996), the result is a type of grief or reversible bereavement. Additionally, homesickness can be exacerbated by perceived changes in roles. When a person leaves one geographic location and moves to another unfamiliar one, certain roles end and other roles need to metamorphose into new ones. As a result of relocating, a person's sense of self-concept is



influx during this transitional period increasing the likelihood of homesick feelings (Fisher, 1986, 1990c).

### **Role loss**

Another area of exploration within the loss and homesickness literature involved the loss of significant roles. As Wickland stated a person's level of self-consciousness increases in relation to how strange and unfamiliar a new environment happens to be. With transitions such as those involved with a move, Hormuth notes that when particular roles end, a person's self-concept is not stable, but in a state of flux. Additionally, according to Oatley (1990), "Habits and roles enable us to be effective in controlling a limited aspect of our world and to sustain a self in relation to the other people with whom we interact" (p. 78). Moving to a new locale signifies the end of some roles and the need to adjust or transform other familiar roles. Losing an old role, having to adopt a role, and acquiring new roles certainly can cause a person to experience anxiety and distress (Oatley). Brown and Harris (1978) propose that when a familiar role ends or a new role needs to be created, it can affect a person's sense of self which could trigger clinical depression. Indeed, losses of valued roles are a major provocative agent in depression (Brown & Harris; Oatley). A further review by Oatley and Bolton (1985) revealed that "depression is most often associated with role loss in the presence of a low social support" (p. 382).

### **Homesickness and Culture Shock Distinctions**

Homesickness and culture shock are related concepts, but there exists distinct differences (Furnham, 1997). One major difference is that home-sickness is expected to

some degree when a person relocates or travels whereas culture shock is usually unanticipated. Homesickness is usually a negative experience, whereas culture shock can sometimes be an exciting, pleasant, and positive experience. According to Furnham (1997) this last distinction is that culture shock almost always involves moving to another country whereas homesickness tends to be an intranational relocation phenomenon.

It is on this last point that I beg to differ. Given the recent trends in demographics in the U. S., I believe that in certain geographic regions of the U. S., a person can experience culture shock within one's own country. Current thinking views homesickness as a by-product of culture shock (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Ward, Bochner, Furnham, 2001). Therefore, an exploration of the culture shock literature is warranted.

### **Culture Shock**

Early in the literature, Cleveland, Margone, and Adams (1963) wrote that culture shock occurs when a person who is either living or visiting a new culture receives an unpleasant surprise or shock due to unexpected encounters which then leads to a negative evaluation of the new culture. Bock (1970) wrote that culture shock was an emotional reaction that occurs when a person is not able to understand, control, and/or predict other people's behavior. The ideas of loss and stress pervade the literature on culture shock.

Whether a person is cognizant of it or not, each person has a distinct culture. Adler (1975) proposed that culture is a perceptual frame of reference in which a person experiences the world through his or her own cultural filters of values, assumptions, and beliefs. Often, most people are unaware of their own values, beliefs, and attitudes (Adler). As Adler aptly stated, "One need not sojourn outside of one's own country to

experience culture shock” (p. 13). Indeed, a person can experience the frustrations as well as growth resulting from culture shock within one’s own country. The concept of culture shock involves emotional reactions due to the loss of perceptual reinforcement from one’s own culture. It also includes exposure to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning to a person as well as misunderstanding new cultural experiences that a person encounters (Adler).

### **Sources of culture shock experiences**

Traditionally, personal observations and antidotal accounts of culture shock experiences have been recorded throughout time. Personal diaries, business reports, and professional journals have been the written sources. Most of these accounts have come from early explorers, business people, international students, immigrants, military personnel, and missionaries (Lysgaard, 1955; McKain, 1973; Oberg, 1960; Smalley, 1963; Suh & Lee, 2006). More recently, culture shock had been examined with the experiences of minority students entering college as well as with families relocating due to divorce or remarriage (Adler, 1975; Allen, 2008; Burton, Winn, Stevenson, & Clark, 2004; Long, 1992a; Settles, 1993; Turner, 1991).

### **Stage Theory Perspectives**

One of the earliest documented accounts of culture shock in the literature comes from Lysgaard (1955) who studied 200 Norwegian Fulbright grantees as they attempted to adjust to living in the United States for a period of time. From his research, Lysgaard proposed a stage theory on culture shock. The three stages are: initial adjustment, crisis, and regained adjustment (Lysgaard). The famous U-curve hypothesis was attributed to

Lysgaard. It states that a person started at the top of the “U” with the initial adjustment stage, then dropped down to the bottom of the “U” during the crisis stage, and finally swung back upward to complete the other side of the “U” curve when he or she goes through the regained adjustment stage, (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Furnham, 1990; Jacobson, 1963; Selltic & Cook, 1962).

Those who ascribe to the U-curve hypothesis believed that the crisis stage is akin to the actual experience of culture shock and the adjustment stage is the time when the person becomes comfortable and confident in his or her new cultural environment (Church, 1982). After reviewing the U-curve literature, Church found that for every study that supported the hypothesis an equal number of studies did not substantiate it. Longitudinal studies conducted by Ward and colleagues have actually contradicted the U-curve hypothesis (Ward & Kennedy, 1996; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). According to Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001) the U-curve hypothesis seems to be “atheoretical, deriving from a combination of post hoc explanation and armchair speculation” (p. 80). Amongst researchers, the U-curve hypothesis is no longer considered the most viable explanation for the culture shock experience (Adler, 1975; Church; Furnham, 1990; Ward, et al., 2001).

### **Oberg’s contribution.**

The actual term “culture shock” is credited to Kalervo Oberg (Lonner, 1986). An anthropologist, Oberg’s journal article included rich descriptions of culture shock experiences along with symptomology and finally a stage theory. Oberg (1960) lists the following six symptoms of culture shock:

1. Strain – resulting from the effort to bridge psychological differences and make adaptations.
2. Feelings of loss – friends, family, job, status, and certain possessions have been left behind.
3. Rejection – being rejected or perceived rejection by members of the new culture.
4. Confusion – new role and self-identity, new role expectations, along with conflicting feelings and values.
5. Surprise, anxiety, indignation, and sometimes disgust – feelings that appear once cultural differences sink in.
6. Impotence – feeling useless due to the inability to cope with the new environment.

Oberg's (1960) descriptive account of culture shock has been considered to be primarily within a medical model (Adler, 1975; Furnham, 1990). The reference to a medical model means that the outlined symptomology is reminiscent of a check-list that a physician or psychiatrist would use with a patient. His model consisted of the following four stages that a person undergoes while experiencing culture shock. They are:

1. Honeymoon stage – the person is initially fascinated, enthusiastic, enchanted, friendly, and cordial.
2. Crisis – the person feels inadequate, frustrated, anxious, and angry due to differences in language, values, symbols, and concepts.
3. Recovery – as the person begins to learn the language and culture of the host country his or her crisis state subsides.

4. Adjustment - the person may have occasional bouts of anxiety and strain, but overall he/she begins to assimilate and enjoy the new culture.

#### **Adler's contribution.**

Expanding upon the earlier work of Lysaard and Oberg, Adler (1975) developed a much more elaborate five stage theory of culture shock based upon his research and personal experiences of living and working in Hawaii. The stages consist of: contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and independence. For each of the five stages a person would undergo an initial perception, a range of emotions, varying behaviors, and finally his or her interpretation of the cultural experience. Adler's approach to culture shock theory is that it is transitional and a person will eventually overcome it given enough time of living in the new environment.

#### **Problems with stage theories**

While the stage theories of culture shock are certainly descriptive, there are inherent problems. One issue lies within the idea of classifying a person. In order to affix a particular stage on a person, that person must have specific key elements of that stage. Often, people's "stages" are not necessarily clear cut. It's possible for a person to have elements of two different stages, e.g. if a person is in transition from one stage to the next. Another point raised by Church (1982) focuses on the rigidity of stages. He uses rhetorical questions to make his point: "Is the order of stages invariant? Must all stages be passed through or can some be skipped by individuals?" (p. 542). Indeed, Furnham and Bochner (1986) maintain that the rate of acculturation is not uniform for all sojourners. For instance, sophisticated travelers often become full participants in a culture

without necessarily experiencing much or any culture shock while there are other sojourners who never really seem to adjust to their new home environment (Furnham, 1990). Thus, there are individuals who do not go through all of the stages.

### **Social Skills Model**

A different approach to the culture shock experience was taken by Furnham and Bochner (1986). They used a model based on social psychology that emphasized the adjustment of sojourners abroad. They suggested that the sensitivity of sojourners to culture differences and their various ways of coping with the differences is critical to a person's adaptation.

Based upon the premise that a person's difficulties and distress in a new cultural environment are due largely to lacking the social skills of a particular cultural group, Furnham and Bochner (1986) maintained that this lack of social skills created barriers for effective communication to take place. Since most people are unaware of a culture's written and unwritten rules and customs, it is only when a person breaks these rules or transgresses upon a custom that cross-cultural misunderstanding occurs. The result is conflict and distress (Furnham & Bochner). Thus, the social skills model of Furnham and Bochner definitely lends a theoretical explanation for why many newcomers to a new cultural and geographical region might experience difficulties in negotiating ordinary routine social encounters with the local inhabitants.

Authors on culture shock have written that people who experience culture shock often lack reference points, social norms, as well as knowledge of written and unwritten rules to guide their actions and understand the behavior of others in their new

environment (Adler, 1975; Furnham, 1997, Ward et al., 2001). The result often is feelings of anxiety, confusion, and indifference until the person has developed new cognitive constructs to understand and enact appropriate behavior (Furnham). Interestingly, the quantity and quality of culture shock seemed to be related to the amount of difference between the person's own culture and the culture of the new environment (Babiker, Cox, & Miller, 1980; Fisher, 1990b; Ward et al., 2001).

The research on culture shock tends to be associated with negative consequences. However, all experiences of culture shock need not be unpleasant. People who have lived abroad and/or traveled extensively as well as those people who are sensation-seekers might not necessarily suffer adverse affects from culture shock. Instead, they tend to enjoy the arousing stimulation of an unfamiliar situation or environment (Adler, 1975; Furnham, 1997; Ward et al., 2001).

Unfortunately, few researchers have studied the positive side of culture shock for those individuals who immensely enjoy exciting and different environments (Adler, 1975; Furnham, 1997). Regardless of whether the culture shock experience is perceived as positive or negative, it is a transitional experience fraught with possibilities such as adopting new values, attitudes, and behaviors (Furnham; Ward et al., 2001). Once a person who is living in a new cultural environment recovers from the initial culture shock, then the process of acculturation can begin. An extensive review of the acculturation literature ensues.



## **Acculturation**

The study of acculturation first began as an area of academic pursuit in the field of anthropology with research on indigenous peoples and in the field of sociology with immigrants (Sam & Berry, 2006). It was not until the 1980s that psychologists and counselors began to study acculturation issues. Sam and Berry believe that the interest in acculturation issues within the field of psychology and counseling developed as a result of the increase in worldwide migration as well as a desire to understand the link between culture and individual human behavior.

Today the phenomenon of acculturation is now a field of study in and of itself. The classical and often cited definition of acculturation put forth by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) stated that acculturation is “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149). According to Sam and Berry (2006), a finite definition of acculturation was issued by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2004, which stated that acculturation is “the progressive adoption of elements of a foreign culture (ideas, words, values, norms, behavior, institutions) by persons, groups, or classes of a given culture” (p. 11). As Sam (2006) insightfully pointed out, the IOM definition “overlooks the fact that acculturation could also entail ‘rejection of’ or ‘resistance to’ cultural elements and not simply the ‘adoption’ of foreign cultural elements” (p. 11). Perhaps a more comprehensive definition of acculturation came from Burnam, Hough, Telles, Karno, and Escobar’s (1987) who define acculturation as a psychosocial adaptation of a newcomer

which involves fundamental changes such as modifying and/or relinquishing some old beliefs, customs, and behaviors, adapting to a new value system, and relearning the meaning of certain symbols.

### **Basic acculturation question**

One of the basic acculturation questions addressed by researchers in the field, explored how people who are born and raised in one society manage to live in another society that is culturally different from the one to which a person is accustomed (Sam & Berry, 2006). As Berry (2006a) noted not everyone becomes a member of a new society in the same manner. Some people jump in with both feet, wishing to be absorbed into a new culture rapidly, while others are more cautious, wanting to retain a clear sense of their own heritage and cultural identity (Berry). Individuals develop psychological characteristics that have been cultivated and sanctioned within and by their cultural background (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002). When intercultural contact takes place these different cultural and psychological features encounter one another resulting in three important corollary factors during the acculturation process (Berry).

### **Acculturation Factors**

The factors of contact, reciprocal influence and change impact the acculturation process (Sam, 2006). In order for acculturation to take place a person needs to experience continuous and firsthand contact with the new society (Sam). By firsthand contact, it is meant that a person has direct interaction with others within the same time and space and the contact is continuous, that is, the interactions with members of the new culture occur

over a period of time. Sam notes that “the issues of ‘how long’ or ‘continuous’ contact in themselves are not as important as the resulting change following the contact” (p. 14).

Reciprocal influence referred to the idea that both groups influence each other (Sam, 2006). Normally, one group has more influence over the other group due to power differences. The group that exerts more influence is referred to as the dominant group. They might be dominant due to the sheer number of people from that group or they might be the dominant group because of economic or military power (Sam). It is often incorrectly assumed that since the dominant group exerts more influence that only the non-dominant group changes (Sam). Both groups affect and influence each other in both subtle and powerful ways.

### **Psychological Acculturation**

Of particular relevance to this study was the research aspect of psychological change as a result of experiencing the acculturation process. The literature referred to this as psychological acculturation which involves: affective, behavioral, and cognitive changes, abbreviated as the ABCs of acculturation by Ward (2001). Both Berry (1997) and Berry and Sam (1997) view the ABCs of change as short-term acculturation outcomes resulting in shifts of behavior and acculturative stress. Long-term outcomes of acculturation are thought of as “adaptation” (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). In this study a point of interest was to learn how participants have coped and adapted to living and working in a culturally diverse environment. Both short-term and long-term outcomes of change as a result of the reverse acculturation experience were explored in this study.

### **Pivotal Acculturation Research.**

In his pivotal work, John W. Berry (1990, 1997, 2003, 2006a, 2006b) proposed a framework for conceptualizing the acculturation process on both a group and individual level. At the group level, changes shaped by the acculturation process include the economic base, the social structure, and/or the political thrusts of a group (Berry, 1990). From an individual perspective, changes resulting from the acculturation process include attitudes, behaviors, values, and identity changes (Berry, 1990). Additionally, the rate at which any of these changes occur within an individual will vary from person to person (Berry, 1990).

Acculturation involves contact, which refers to social interaction that takes place at both the group and individual levels. This contrast leads to changes which for the individual entail affective, behavioral and cognitive changes as well as subsequent long-term modifications of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation (Berry, 2006a; Sam, 2006). According to Sam (2006), “The acculturation process evolves according to the degree to which a person simultaneously participates in the cultural life of the new society and maintains his or her original cultural identity” (p. 19). A person’s level of participation within a new culture stems from the particular acculturation strategy or strategies that the person chooses to utilize.

### **Acculturation Strategies**

Acculturation strategies are based on a person’s attitudes towards maintaining his or her culture of origin along with the person’s attitudes toward the new cultural group(s) that resides in the new environment (Berry, 1990; Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986).

Essentially, acculturation strategies are composed of two major components: attitudes and behaviors that are exhibited in daily intercultural encounters (Berry, 2006b). By attitudes, it is meant “what a person prefers and seeks out in the new cultural environment” and behaviors are “what a person is actually able to do in the new environment, e.g., speak or read another language” (Berry, 2006b). Berry’s four acculturation strategies are: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2006b). It should be noted that these four strategies are not an end in and of themselves; rather, they are part of the acculturation process (Sam, 2006). A person may use different strategies at different times to cope with different issues that occur in an individual’s life (Sam). Also, the strategies are not accumulative with the goal of a person becoming fully “integrated” into a new society; rather, they are specific ways or methods of coping with the acculturation process which may be used over and over again or combined during a particular period of a person’s life (Sam).

### **Descriptions of Acculturation Strategies**

When individuals or families from the non-dominant group use the assimilation strategy, they do not wish to maintain their original cultural identity. Rather, they prefer to interact every day with members of the new cultural environment and to learn how to merge into the new society (Berry, 2001, 2006b). Individuals or families from the non-dominant group who value retaining their own culture and at the same time avoid interacting with members of the dominant culture are using the separation strategy.

People from the non-dominant group who show an interest in both maintaining their own culture and simultaneously interacting with people from the dominant culture on a daily

basis are employing the integration strategy. The fourth strategy which is called marginalization occurs when individuals or groups have little interest in having relationships with others from the dominant culture often due to reasons of discrimination or exclusion (Berry, 2001, 2006b).

### **Integration Strategy.**

According to Berry (2006b), the integration strategy seems to be the healthiest acculturation strategy of the four approaches. In order for integration to be selected and successfully pursued by members of the non-dominant group, the new society needs to be open and inclusive towards the idea of cultural diversity (Berry, 2000). Thus, for integration to be attained there needs to be mutual accommodation, that is, the recognition and permission by both the dominant and the non-dominant groups that all groups have the right to live as culturally different peoples within the same society (Berry, 2001). This strategy requires newcomers to adopt the basic values of the receiving society while at the same time the dominant group in the new cultural environment must adapt policies and institutions to better meet the needs of all groups that are now living together in a larger plural society (Berry, 2006b).

Additionally, it is important to realize that the integration strategy can only be sought in societies that are explicitly multicultural (Berry & Kalin, 1995) and certain preconditions exist. The preconditions for integration to be realized are: low levels of prejudice and discrimination; positive mutual attitudes among ethnic groups; the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity; and a sense of

attachment and belongingness to the new larger community by all individuals and groups (Berry & Kalin).

The four strategy model is “based on the assumption that non-dominant group and their individual members have the freedom to choose how they want to engage in intercultural relations” (Berry, 2006a, p. 35). Unfortunately, this does not always occur, especially when dominant groups impose constraints or enforce certain choices and limit relations for members of the non-dominant group to interact with members of the dominant cultural (Berry, 1974). When these impositions occur different terminology needs to be used (Berry, 2006a).

### **Dominant Group Influences**

When the dominant group forces the non-dominant group to assimilate into the new society, this is called a melting pot. When the dominant group demands and enforces separation upon the non-dominant group, it is termed segregation. A dominant group that imposes marginalization upon the non-dominant group is using a form of exclusion. Lastly, when cultural diversity is the objective of a society as a whole, then the strategy of mutual accommodation now becomes multiculturalism (Berry, 2006a). For the purposes of this study, Berry’s four acculturation strategies from the perspective of the non-dominant group were used.

### **Acculturative Stress**

Acculturative stress is a person’s response to life events that are rooted in contact of an intercultural nature (Berry, 2006b). With acculturative stress, reactions include depression, often linked to loss of one’s culture; anxiety, related to uncertainty about how

a person should act in the new society; identity confusion; and, feelings of alienation and marginalation (Berry, 2006b; Sam & Berry, 1995).

Acculturative stress is the preferred terminology for two reasons. First, the aspect of stress is based on extensive research studies on how people deal with stressors by using different coping strategies which then leads to some type of adaptation (Berry, 2006b; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Secondly, the source of the stressful experiences originates in the interaction between cultures rather than being rooted in only one culture; hence, the use of the term acculturative for acculturative stress rather than using the term stress (Berry). Research evidence indicates that the greater the disparity of cultural differences between the dominant and the non-dominant groups during the acculturation process, the greater will be the difficulties for an individual's or a group's acculturation experience (Ward et al., 2001). Often the result of the disparity between the two groups is acculturative stress as they attempt to achieve a successful adaptation and establish harmonious relationships (Ward et al.).

### **Process of Acculturative Stress**

The process of acculturative stress begins with events or people making demands and expectations on an individual. "During acculturation, these demands stem from the experience of having to deal with two cultures in contact, and having to participate to various extents in both of them" (Berry, 2006b, p. 46). The person evaluates the demands and expectations as either a source of strife, that is, as stressors, or as a possible opportunity (Berry). Depending upon the person's evaluation of the situation and the demands he or she might experience accultative stress or he or she might not experience



it. According to Ward (1996), if the acculturation process goes smoothly, that is, changes are easy and behavior shifts go well, then it is said that the person has “adjusted” and no acculturative stress has happened. During the acculturation process when a person experiences conflict and it is deemed to be problematic, but controllable and surmountable, then acculturative stress occurs (Berry, 2006b). With acculturative stress, a person understands that the problems result from intercultural contact and cannot be resolved quickly or easily by simply adjusting or assimilating to them (Berry). To reiterate, acculturative stress is a type of stress in which a person reacts to stressors that are rooted in the acculturative experience (Berry). It takes time and effort to resolve the source(s) of one’s acculturative stress.

### **Physiological Aspects of Stress**

From a physiological perspective, when an individual experiences stress various bodily systems become activated. With the perception of a stressor and an appraisal of a “threat” the hypothalamus and other brain structures alert the autonomic nervous system (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2006). In particular, the autonomic nervous system’s sympathetic nervous system and the endocrine system are involved in both acute and chronic stress (McEwen & Dhabhar, 2002; Mellner, Krantz, & Lundberg, 2004). During the stress process, the more commonly known sympathetic adrenal-medullary system (SAM) combines with the hypothalamo-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis to produce catecholamines – hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, epinephrine, and norepinephrine (McEwen & Dhabhar; Mellner et al.).

Early stress pioneer researcher, Hans Selye, discovered that chronic stress activates a second endocrine pathway that involves the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland, and the adrenal cortex (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2006). When a stressor is perceived, the hypothalamus signals the pituitary gland to secrete a hormone called adrenocorticotrophic (ACTH) which then stimulates the adrenal cortex to release the stress-related hormones called corticosteroids. One of the most important corticosteroids is cortisol (Hockenbury & Hockenbury). These stress arousing systems indicate the intensity of stress and arouse and influence a person's heart rate and blood pressure (Mellner et al., 2004). In a person who perceives a stressor, this is the physiological reaction for chronic stress.

The psychological and physiological experience of stress is a response to stressors in a person's environment. Acculturative stressors are rooted in the relocation experience. People, events, and situations in the person's new environment are all potential stressors. These stressors are viewed as stressful life events due to significant physical, attitudinal, social, political, and religious differences between the newcomer's environment of origin and the new society (Ying, 2005). Stressors moderate the relationship between the experience of acculturation and psychological distress (Berry, 2006b).

### **Acculturative Stressors**

Five major types of stressors have been identified by Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987) and later expounded upon and supported by other researchers. The six major categories of acculturative stressors are: physical, biological, environmental, social, cultural, and functional (Berry et al.). Physical stressors include an unfamiliar

environment (Ben-Sira, 1997), climate (Ben-Sira; Ritsner, Modai, & Ponizovsky, 2000), housing (Ben-Sira; Ritsner et al.) and safety issues (Ben-Sira; Ryan & Twibell, 2000). Biological stressors include obtaining particular foods as well as health issues (Ben-Sira; Ritsner et al.; Ryan & Twibell). Social stressors seem to be an area of particular emotional distress (Ying, 2005). They include homesickness (Church, 1982; Fisher, 1990a; 1990b; Van Tilburg et al., 1996; Yeh & Inose, 2003) loneliness (Church; Fisher; Ritsner et al.; Ryan & Twibell) and difficulty making new friends (Ben-Sira; Ryan & Twibell; Sam & Berry, 1995; Yeh & Inose; Zheng & Berry, 1991). Cultural stressors include cultural differences (Berry, 2006b; Sam & Berry; Ward & Kennedy, 1993) and value differences (Ben-Sira; Pedersen, 1995; Ritsner et al.) and discrimination and racial encounters (Ben-Sira; Church; Ying, 1996; Ying, Lee, & Tsai, 2000). Functional stressors are those stressful events or things which consist of essentials for survival in a society. They include language proficiency (Berry et al.; Church; Ryan & Twibell; Yeh & Inose; Zheng & Berry), work and study related issues (Ben-Sira; Church; Ritsner et al.; Ryan & Twibell), finances (Ben-Sira; Church; Ritsner et al.; Ryan & Twibell), and transportation issues (Ryan & Twibell).

In conclusion the process of acculturative stress begins with the experience of acculturation and acculturative stressors occurring. This combination can result in acculturative stress (Sam & Berry, 1995). As Zheng and Berry (1991) point out a person's acculturation experience varies. For some people, the stressors are experienced as distress and for others they might be benign and viewed as opportunities (Berry, 2006b; Sam & Berry, 1995; Zheng & Berry, 1991). Additionally, research indicates that a

person's attitudes and expectations toward the acculturation experience might affect the person's coping strategies, ability to adapt, and hence, the person's distress level (Hovey, 1999; Williams & Berry, 1991). An investigation of the relationship between coping and adaptation follows in the next section.

### **Coping and Adaptation**

A major influence on the theoretical acculturation model of “stress, coping, and adaptation” comes from Richard Lazarus's work on stress and coping strategies (Berry, 2006b; Ward, 2006). In particular, acculturation researchers focus on psychological stress which stems from the type of relationship that a person has with the environment (Lazarus, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Lazarus much of the stress that people experience is based on daily life hassles and demands, as well as constraints that are chronic or reoccurring within the person-environment relationships.

### **Cognitive-Relational Theory of Stress**

Lazarus' interactive model, called a cognitive-relational theory of stress, states that people vary in their vulnerability to stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Depending on a person's beliefs and coping abilities, a given life hassle may be insignificant for one person and of major significance to another person (Lazarus, 1990). Thus, Lazarus believes that stress is always a result of a person's appraisal of the person-environment situation. “Once a person has appraised a transaction as stressful, coping processes are brought into play to manage the troubled person-environment relationship, and these processes influence the person's subsequent appraisal and hence the kind and intensity of the stress reaction” (Lazarus, 1990, p.3). Therefore, the level of stress that a person

experiences is directly influenced by an individual's coping abilities with the stressors in his or her environment.

### **Coping Strategies**

In dealing with the coping process in response to stressful encounters three basic coping strategies exist (Berry, 2006b). The first two coping strategies which were identified by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) are problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping occurs when a person attempts to change or solve the problem to alter the source of stress. Emotion-focused coping occurs when a person attempts to regulate his or her emotions to reduce the distress associated with the problem. A third coping strategy, avoidance-oriented coping, was identified. With the avoidance-oriented coping strategy a person chooses to ignore, avoid, or repress stressful situations (Crockett, et al., 2007; Endler & Parker).

Just as people's stress appraisals differ, so too will people's ability or inability to cope with psychological stress also vary (Lazarus, 1990). The stress reaction tends to be mitigated or prevented when the person's coping abilities are effective. Stress tends to be greater when a person's coping abilities are inept (Lazarus). Research has found that active coping (in which the stressful problem is handled either with taking action or thinking through the situation) tends to mitigate the stressful situation; whereas, avoidant coping tends to be less effective in dealing with the stressful problem. Both of these strategies have been empirically tested and supported (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001). Borrowing from these theories on stress and coping strategies found in the health psychology literature, acculturation researchers have linked

them to the concept of acculturation strategies to further understand the process of acculturation (Berry, 2006b).

Additionally, the idea of acculturative stress draws upon the broader concept of stress, coping, and adaptation formulated by Lazarus (1990) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984) to ascertain how a person copes with acculturative problems and their accompanying stressors upon first encountering them as well as dealing with them over time (Berry, 2006b). According to Berry, when acculturative stressors arise and are coped with successfully, then a person's stress level will be low and he or she will have a positive experience; but when stressors are not successfully surmounted, then the person will have high stress levels and a more negative experience. When the acculturative problems seem overwhelming and they have not been successfully coped with then the person's stress levels can become incapacitating with negative effects such as anxiety, personal crises, and depression ensuing. In essence, when old coping strategies are no longer effective and the person is not using new coping methods, then acculturative stress can occur (Berry, 1997; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004).

### **Coping Strategies and Acculturation Strategies**

The three coping strategies of problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidance-oriented coping seem to be related to the four acculturation strategies of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 2006b; Kosic, 2004). Empirical evidence, such as that of Schmitz (1992), found that the acculturation strategy of integration was positively correlated with task or problem-focused coping, the segregation acculturation strategy was positively correlated with both emotion-focused

coping and avoidance-oriented coping, and the acculturation strategy of assimilation was positively correlated with both problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.

### **Adaptation**

Adaptation to one's new cultural environment is the hoped for final outcome of the acculturation process (Berry, 2006b). From an acculturation perspective, adaptation "refers to the relatively stable changes that take place in an individual or group in response to environmental demand" (Berry, 2006b, p. 48). Two types of adaptation have been identified by Ward and her colleagues: psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Psychological adaptation refers to a person's emotional or psychological well-being, satisfaction, and happiness (Berry, 2006b). Sociocultural adaptation refers to a person's ability to acquire culturally appropriate skills such as language abilities, social skills, values, norms, and perspectives needed to negotiate or "fit into" a new cultural milieu (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

Research has shown that an individual's ability to adapt is effected by at least three major influences: coping abilities, acculturation strategies, and cultural distance, i.e., how dissimilar the two cultures are in language, religion, values, et cetera (Berry, 2006b). Various research studies have shown how a person's coping strategies affect the individual's ability to adapt in the acculturation process (Berry; Zheng & Berry, 1991). Numerous other studies have found that the four acculturation strategies have been exhibited by many different acculturation groups (Berry, 1990; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Berry & Sam, 1997). Of the four acculturation strategies, integration

seemed to be the most successful; marginalization was the least successful; and assimilation and separation were in-between. In conclusion, Berry (2006b) maintains that when combined, both the coping and acculturation strategies allow researchers “to identify patterns of relationships between acculturation experiences and adaptation that suggest ways to deal with the challenges of acculturation that will enhance the adaptation outcome” (p. 54).

### **Reverse Acculturation**

A newer, but related phenomenon to acculturation is reverse acculturation. The term reverse acculturation refers to the “process in which Anglo-Americans acquire values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns via direct and/or indirect contact with people from cultural origins other than their own” (Chen, 1997, p. 18). Most often this term is used in situations in which an Anglo who was raised within the dominant American culture relocates to an area of the U.S. where a minority group’s culture predominates. Consequently, the Anglo-American becomes a minority member. This phenomenon of reverse acculturation has been explored by only a limited number of researchers. Their studies are reviewed next.

One of the earliest researchers to study reverse acculturation was Chen (1997) in Austin, Texas. She worked on devising a framework for understanding reverse acculturation. Essentially, the participants with their individual childhood experiences, demographics, and personality come into either direct or indirect contact with members of the Hispanic community in Texas through school, neighbors, co-workers, friends, romantic relationships, the media, and travel. Using a mixed methods study, the degree of



reverse acculturation was measured by participants' attitudes towards ethnic minorities, cultural diversity, and minority images in the mass media using a survey. The findings from the qualitative portion of this study indicated that the rise of multiculturalism has "forced Anglo-Americans to reassess their vision of cultural diversity in the United States" (Chen, 1997, p.153). The results from the quantitative section of the study revealed a positive attitude towards cultural diversity in society as a whole as well as a positive attitude towards personal interactions with ethnic minorities. In assessing the study's findings, the author raised the point that participants may have given politically correct answers instead of giving their true opinion to certain questions. The author noted that the depth and magnitude of cultural learning and adaptation varied widely for each person. It was also observed that some Anglo-Americans choose to retain much of their ethnocentric values, attitudes, and behaviors while others enthusiastically embraced and accepted aspects of the minority culture (Chen).

During the past twenty years Stepick (2003) has conducted research on the impact of immigration on Miami-Dade County, Florida. Specifically, his work focused on Anglo-Americans already living in Miami-Dade County, Florida who had adopted Hispanic attitudes and behaviors into their lifestyle. Established Anglo-American residents were "forced to adapt in the face of cultural transformations, political dominance and economic influence initiated by the influx of Cubans following the 1959 Cuban Revolution" (Stepick, 2003, p. 3). As used here, reverse acculturation refers to the adaptation of resident Anglo-Americans already living in Miami-Dade County, Florida at the time when waves of Hispanics came from Cuba, then Central America, and more

recently South America. Stepick's work indicated that the reverse acculturation experience demonstrates a transformation of not only newcomer immigrants, but established residents too.

### **Phenomenological Approach**

Since reverse acculturation is an area in which little research has been conducted, an excellent venue in which to study this phenomenon is a qualitative approach. Among qualitative methodologies many traditions exist. They include case studies, ethnographies, grounded theory, narrative research, and phenomenology. Perhaps one of the more established qualitative approaches is phenomenology. According to Van Manen (1990), "phenomenology asks for the very nature of a phenomenon, for that which makes a some-thing what it is – and without which it could not be what it is" (p. 10). The fundamental goal in phenomenological inquiry is to explore the meaning, structure, and essence of a lived experience for a particular phenomenon as it has been experienced by a person (Patton, 2002).

Indeed one of the major focuses of phenomenological inquiry is the importance of knowing what people experience and how they interpret the world (Patton, 2002). A second thrust of phenomenological inquiry focuses on the idea that "the only way for us to really know what another person experiences is to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves" (Patton, p. 106). As a researcher who experienced reverse acculturation when she relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida from another U.S. state, this researcher has her own first-hand experiences with the phenomenon of inquiry in this present study.

## **Philosophical Assumptions**

As a qualitative researcher my own personal story with the experience of acculturating in Miami-Dade County, Florida coincides with the phenomenological doctrine of Verstehen. Verstehen is the German word for understanding. It refers to the human ability to make sense of the world (Patton, 2002). One of its premises is that people's behavior has special meaning to them and the world that humans live in has special meaning to them (Patton).

Phenomenology is different from other qualitative approaches in that it attempts to obtain insightful descriptions of how people experience the world pre-reflectively, without classifying, or abstracting it (Van Manen, 1990). It is an immediate experience of our lifeworld (Husserl, 1964, 1970; Schultz & Luckmann, 1973). Phenomenology aims to make explicit and to seek universal meaning from people's lived experiences (Van Manen). It differs from other qualitative approaches in that it assumes that there are "essences" to shared experiences. Essences are core meanings mutually understood through a commonly shared experience (Patton, 2002). Thus, phenomenological research is the study of essences found among the lived experiences of people who share a common phenomenon.

### **Foundations of Phenomenology**

A review of the origins of phenomenology will ensue. The foundations of phenomenology will enlighten the reader as to the strength of this approach for this study. Following is a summary of the two major phenomenological schools.

## **Two Major Schools of Phenomenology**

Credited as the father of phenomenology research, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a German philosopher and mathematician, focused his research interests on how humans attend, perceive, recall, and think about their experiences in the world (Gadamer, 1983/1994; Kockelmans, 1994; Lavery, 2004). As it tends to be with great masters, there are often student prodigies. Husserl's star student was Martin Heidegger, who also became a philosopher and a mathematician (Steiner, 1978). Heidegger developed a related, but distinct brand of phenomenology from his mentor.

The two major schools of phenomenological thought developed by Husserl and Heidegger, respectively, are transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology which are frequently used in the fields of counseling and education. Both embody different philosophical assumptions, methods for organization, and ways of analyzing data. Transcendental phenomenology, which is associated with Husserl, takes a descriptive approach, whereas hermeneutic phenomenology, which is associated with Heidegger, uses an interpretative approach (Rapport & Wainwright, 2006). There are two major differences between these phenomenological doctrines:

1. To what degree is it possible to suspend one's knowledge and suppositions?
2. To what degree is it possible for someone to know the world prior to conscious knowing? (Rapport & Wainwright, 2006).

Concerning the first point, Husserl (1907/1964) believed that researchers can suspend their natural tendencies and assumptions concerning knowledge. This suspension of knowledge is done through the process of epoche (reductionism). Epoche or

reductionism is impossible to achieve, maintained Heidegger (1927/1962) because the researcher is inseparable from the world in which he or she is observing.

With regards to the second point, Husserl's philosophical stance is that knowing occurs only through a state of pure consciousness; that is, we direct our minds towards objects and abstract concepts that can be reflected upon (Husserl, 1964). This viewpoint contrasts with Heidegger's contention that people know the world before they are even consciously aware that they know the world (Rapport & Wainwright, 2006). I interpret Heidegger as referring to the idea of pre-reflection. Without really knowing a fact or that a thing already exists, without reflecting on it, we have an innate sense, an intuition, a subliminal feeling about a thing, person, or situation which might be quite accurate.

Essentially, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology emphasizes discovering the essences of experience which is the idea of "human consciousness transcending situations" (Ryba, 2008, p. 337). With hermeneutical phenomenology Husserl's transcendental theme of essences is replaced by Heidegger's existential theme of understanding what it feels like to be in the world of another person's experiences (Van Manen, 1990). The phenomenological school of thought that guided my research is that of hermeneutical phenomenology. It interfaces well with my training and background in counseling. The ideas purported by both Heidegger and his pupil, Gadamer, resonate with my graduate school training which emphasized existential counseling techniques and emphatic listening. A discussion of hermeneutics and how it came to meld with phenomenology follows.

### **Hermeneutics.**

Hermeneutics began as a philosophy under German philosopher, Frederick Schleiermacher. It was later used in human science research by Wilhelm Dilthey (Patton, 2002). Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word, *hermeneuein*, which means to interpret or to understand (Kisiel, 1985). Hermeneutic philosophy focuses primarily on interpretation (Kisiel). It establishes a theoretical foundation for interpreting meaning with an emphasis on the context of the data (Patton).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century the hermeneutic philosophical movement challenged the prevailing empirical philosophical belief that an interpretation of research data is the absolute truth by stating that an interpretation is simply that – an interpretation (Patton, 2002). According to hermeneutic philosophers many interpretations can exist for the same object of study (Steiner, 1978). Therefore, different researchers, philosophers, and authors can have their own distinct interpretation of information and data based upon their own perceptions.

The interpretation of the phenomenological written text of a human experience is guided by hermeneutical analysis (Robertson-Malt, 1999). According to psychological researchers Allen and Jensen (1990) hermeneutical analysis aims to explicate an understanding of human behavior and actions beyond the initial impressions of reading the text at face value.

### **Hermeneutic Phenomenology.**

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a marriage of two complimentary methodologies from Heidegger and his student, Hans Georg Gadamer (Gadamer, 1983/1994). Whereas

Heidegger's approach to hermeneutic phenomenology is comprehensive, Gadamer's approach to hermeneutical phenomenology is more narrow and specific with its emphasis on interpretation of texts (Kisiel, 1985; Robertson-Malt, 1999). Gadamer focuses on the idea that human understanding takes place through language within a specific tradition. "The problem of understanding moves entirely in the sphere of meaning which is mediated through the linguistic tradition" (Kisiel, 1985, p. 11). The marriage of the two methodologies, hermeneutics and phenomenology, enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the human experience by paying particular attention to the nature and meaning of the language used to describe the experience (Robertson-Malt). Accordingly, hermeneutic phenomenology is both a descriptive and an interpretive methodology because "the (phenomenological) 'facts' of lived experience are always already meaningfully (hermeneutically) experienced" and "need to be captured in language . . . and this is inevitably an interpretive process" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 180-181).

For Heidegger, hermeneutics is an interpretative phenomenology, hence, hermeneutic phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990). At the core of Heidegger's phenomenology is the idea of *Being*. "Being is always the Being of an entity" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 29). To ask for the Being of something is to inquire into the nature of meaning of that phenomenon (Heidegger).

A key Heideggerian concept is *dasein* or being in the world. *Being in the world* refers to the way people exist, act, or are involved in the world based upon our different roles as a parent, educator, counselor, or friend (Van Manen, 1990). *Being-in-the-world*

emphasizes the connection between the permanent and the temporal relationships in our daily lives and our understandings of the world (Robertson-Malt, 1999; Van Manen).

The hermeneutic phenomenological tradition as espoused by Heidegger is a well-suited methodology for this study. One of the strengths of hermeneutic phenomenology is that one gains a greater understanding of an experience while remaining true to the lived experience through interpretative methods (Robertson-Malt, 1999; Van Manen, 1990). In particular, being able to understand a participant's experience of living in a reverse acculturation situation will be meaningful to this researcher because she, too, experienced this phenomenon. Since little is known about the experience of reverse acculturation, this methodology assisted in increasing the understanding of this phenomenon.

Phenomenologists advocate that "the subjective experience incorporates the objective thing and becomes a person's reality, thus the focus on meaning making is at the essence of human experience" (Patton, 2002, p. 106). Therefore, as a phenomenological researcher, the reality for this study was the reality constructed by the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and the researcher.

### **Advantages of Phenomenology**

Phenomenologists focus on how people view the phenomenon that they experience in order for them to make sense of the world; thereby, enabling them to develop their own worldview (Patton, 2002). As a phenomenologist, this researcher's relationship with the participants in the study was one of collaboration since she was interested in learning about their worldview, in particular, their reverse acculturation experience in Miami-Dade County, Florida. This is in line with the qualitative approach



of becoming an actively engaged researcher (Creswell, 2005). Additionally, as a qualitative researcher the position is taken that research is not value-free. As such, it was necessary for this researcher to identify and state her personal biases and values with regards to the study. Recollections, thoughts, and personal experiences were written in a journal prior to commencing with the data gathering phase of this study.

Another advantage of using a phenomenological method is that it made visible, that is, brought to people's awareness, the experience of reverse acculturation for those people who have never encountered this type of situation (Gullickson, 1993; Van Manen, 1990). A greater understanding of the lived experience of reverse acculturation was illuminated by the participants' voices in the form of written texts of the interviews along with this researcher's interpretation of the data. For those counselors, researchers, therapists, educators, and lawmakers who have not experienced reverse acculturation first-hand, it is hoped that they will gain insight into this growing phenomenon by the research found in this study.

### **Summary**

An extensive review of the literature relevant to the topic of reverse acculturation was covered. Beginning with intranational migration, the theme of coping abilities and its importance both during and throughout the relocation and adaptation process set the tone for the chapter. Issues that often arise during the acculturation process such as homesickness, feelings of loss, culture shock, acculturative stress, coping and acculturative strategies, and adaptation were explored.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

*The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experiences into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflexive appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience.*

*Van Manen, 1990, p. 36*

#### **Overview**

The method for this research study is described in this chapter. A discussion for the qualitative approach of the hermeneutic phenomenological research method ensues. Additionally, the sampling methods, participant selection, data-gathering techniques, and the data analysis techniques are presented.

#### **Qualitative Inquiry**

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the study's use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in people's lives. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000)

Qualitative inquiry examines issues in depth and provides a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002).

A wealth of detailed information about a small number of people is provided with the different qualitative approaches (Patton, 2002). Typically, qualitative research involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observations and interviews of people (Creswell, 1998, 2003).

### **Purpose of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative researchers strive to understand a phenomenon as a whole rather than focusing on one smaller finite part of the whole as is often the case in quantitative research (Patton, 2002). Basically, the qualitative inquirer gathers data on multiple aspects of the phenomenon under study to construct a comprehensive and complete picture of a particular situation or experience (Patton). According to Patton, one of the advantages of using a qualitative approach is that greater attention can be given to the nuances, setting, interdependencies, complexities, idiosyncrasies, and context of the phenomenon in question.

Some of the major goals of qualitative research are to understand the phenomenon being investigated as well as to reconstruct participants' experiences and knowledge into a holistic picture. Creswell (2005) indicates qualitative research is often used to study research problems in which little is known about a particular problem. Since people's experience in a reverse acculturation situation is an understudied area, a qualitative approach would lend itself well to further explore this phenomenon. Then the voices of the participants and the breadth and depth of their experience would have an opportunity to be heard and understood.

## **Research Question**

The research question for this present study was: What are the acculturation strategies and adaptation experiences of relocated Anglo-Americans who live within the reverse acculturation situation of Miami-Dade County, Florida? The specific coping strategies and methods that the participants used to acculturate and to adapt to living in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area were of significant interest to this researcher due to the rapidly changing national demographics and the fact that Miami-Dade County is 62.4% Hispanic. Possible knowledge gained about the specific strategies that the participants used to cope and adapt could help to fill the gap on people's acculturation mechanisms. The findings from this study would also further expand and enlighten the reverse acculturation experience.

## **Research Method**

### **Sampling**

In qualitative research the recommended method of sampling is a purposeful sample (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The essential criteria for locating and selecting potential participants include the following: the research participant has experienced the phenomenon and is intensely interested in learning and understanding more about it; is willing to participate in a lengthy interview and possibly a follow-up interview; permits the interviewer to audiotape the interview, and allows the researcher to use the data in a dissertation and/or in another publication (Moustakas, 1994). Purposeful sampling also includes selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about the

issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry (Patton, 2002). Qualitative inquiry typically uses relatively small samples because the logic behind purposeful sampling emphasizes in depth understanding of information-rich cases (Patton).

### **Participant Selection**

According to Van Manen (1990) and Polkinghorne (1983) the goal of participant selection in phenomenological research is to choose participants who have lived the experience that is the subject of the study; are willing to talk about their experience; and are diverse enough from each other to yield abundant data from their unique stories of their individual experience with the study's phenomenon. Diversity for this research study was achieved by using participants of different genders, age ranges, and who originally lived in very different regions of the U. S. prior to moving to Miami-Dade County, Florida. To be as authentic to the research question and study as possible participants were selected based upon pre-established criteria. In particular, using a criterion works well with participants who have experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 1998).

### **Participant Criteria**

Criteria for the sample participants included these following features: an adult male or female parent who is 21 years old or older and is currently raising school-age children (between the ages of 3 to 18 years) within the context of a family. It was thought that by having participants with school-aged children, the participants would be actively interacting with people in the community. This would afford them the opportunity to experience reverse acculturation. For the purposes of this study, a broad definition of

family was used which included married couples raising children together, single parents raising children on their own, and co-habiting parents rearing children together. The participants must to have been born and raised in the U. S. and to have relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida from another U.S. state. All of the participants must to have resided in Miami-Dade County, Florida for at least two years. The reason for limiting the research participants to the aforementioned population is primarily due to the nature of the study and the phenomenon being examined as well as the participants needing time to acculturate to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Also, if the population were expanded to include other groups, they could possibly confound the results due to the possibility of non-study related issues.

### **Sample Size**

In qualitative research there are no hard and set rules regarding sample size (Patton, 2002). However, many researchers use the concept of saturation as a means of determining when enough data has been gathered from participants (Creswell, 2005). In qualitative research saturation is said to have been reached when no new data is provided by interviewing additional participants. In other words, the completion of data collection occurs when the information gathered from subsequent participants becomes repetitive (Creswell; Groenewald, 2004; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999).

For conducting a qualitative study Creswell (1998) recommends “long interviews with up to 10 people” as an ideal sample size (p. 65). For this study I conducted 8 in-depth interviews with a parent from a family who relocated to Miami-Dade County,

Florida from another U.S. state who also met the other pre-established criterion. The concept of saturation was used to signal the completion of data collection.

### **Recruitment Methods**

The participants for this study were recruited by two means. One method used flyers announcing the study. The flyers were posted at a local community center (see Appendix A), the local library (see Appendix B), and the researcher's church (see Appendix C) which has a large Anglo-American congregation. Permission to post the flyers was obtained from the appropriate people at each location such as the director of the community center, the library director and the pastor of my church. In addition to the flyers, the recruitment technique of snowballing was used. Snowballing, also known as chain sampling, is a method of expanding a sample by asking participants to recommend other potential participants for possible inclusion in the study (Groenewald, 2004; Patton, 2002). This technique was used for locating participants who were information rich and had experienced the phenomenon (Patton). Since all of the participants in phenomenological research do not have to come from the same site, both recruitment techniques of posting flyers and snowball sampling proved to be effective methods for recruiting study participants (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Screening Participants**

Prior to scheduling interviews, each person who was interested in participating in the study called the researcher to express his or her desire to be a part of the research. At this time an initial screening interview was conducted by the researcher over the telephone to ascertain if the potential participant met the criteria for study participants

(see Appendix F). If the person met the criteria, then an appointment was scheduled for the in-depth interview conducted by this researcher.

### **Informed Consent**

In conducting the research study, this researcher adhered to the informed consent regulations of Barry University's Internal Review Board. In brief, on the actual day for the interview the participants were given an informed consent form to read and sign (see Appendix D). The participants completed a brief demographic form (see Appendix G). The informed consent agreement included the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the research participation, the procedures of the research, the risks and benefits of the research, how the participant's confidentiality would be protected, and the participant's right to disengage from the research at any time (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Groenewald, 2004; Kvale, 1994).

## **Data Collection**

### **Interviewing**

One of the best qualitative collection methods to learn about people's experiences and worldviews is face-to-face verbal interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). As Patton (2002) reveals "the major way qualitative researchers seek to understand the perceptions, feelings, and knowledge of people is through in-depth, intensive interviewing" (p. 21). Thus, interviewing will be the major technique for data gathering in this study.

For one hour, each participant was extensively interviewed with predetermined open-ended questions (see Appendix E). The questions were worded and presented in such a way as to evoke deep and meaningful self-disclosing statements from the



participants. Asking broad and timely questions is highly recommended by Moustakas (1994). If further clarification was needed or more detailed answers sought than phenomenological inquiry suggests that researchers ask probing questions (Patton, 2002). Probing questions are follow-up questions designed to deepen the response to a previously asked question, increase the richness of a response, and to give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired during the interview process (Patton). This researcher did ask probing questions when appropriate. The in-depth interviews allowed for thick rich descriptions of the participants' acculturation experiences to come forth during the data collection process.

With the permission of the participants, all of the interviews were audio-taped for data storage (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Groenewald, 2004). The identity of each interviewee has been kept confidential. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber. The researcher analyzed the transcribed data for major themes. After the researcher finished her analysis, each participant checked their interview and the emergent themes for accuracy and concurrence of found themes by reading and reviewing their transcript with the researcher. The total data collection, transcription, and member checking occurred over a five-month time period. If someone did not agree to be audio-taped, then they would not have been interviewed for this study. All participants did agree to be audiotaped. At a later date, the audio-tapes will be erased.

### **Interview Guide**

Moustakas (1994) recommends that researchers ask particular types of questions in their phenomenological inquiry. In keeping with Moustakas recommendations, an

interview guide was used to facilitate the participants' responses on their acculturation experience. An interview guide provided topics within which both the researcher and the participant could explore, elucidate, and elaborate on the research subject (Patton, 2002).

The interview guide began with the overarching question for this study: What has the experience of acculturating and adapting to living in Miami-Dade County been like for you? This central question was the lead question. Following the aforementioned research question, related corollary questions were also poised to the participants (see Appendix E).

This research study was guided by the following interview questions worded and delivered in a conversational style:

1. What has the experience of acculturating and adapting to living in Miami-Dade County been like for you?
2. Compared to the state that you used to live in, how is living in Miami-Dade County similar and different to your former place of residence?
3. What have you liked about living in Miami-Dade County?
4. What have you not liked about living and working here in Miami-Dade County?
5. Describe for me some of the feelings, thoughts, and emotions that you have experienced during your process of relocating here.
6. What did you do to cope with living here?
7. How have you changed as a result of moving and living here?
8. What have you learned as a result of this experience?

## **Observing**

In addition to interviewing the participants in the study I also observed them as they respond to different questions. I noted on a memo form if a participant used gestures, suddenly changed posture, used certain facial expressions and/or appeared to be relaxed, nervous, excited, etc. I used observations as a means of checking on the content that was being reported in the interviews, a method recommended by Patton (2002).

## **Memoing**

Additionally, during the data collection process, I used a technique called memoing (see Appendix H). Memoing involves reflection notes made by the researcher during the data collection process (Groenewald, 2004). The reflection notes typically consist of impressions, hunches, and feelings on what occurred during the data collection process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By engaging in memoing during the data collection process the emerging material remained fresh and lent insight later on during the analysis phase of research (Miles & Huberman). This was an important aspect of research because researchers can become so immersed in the data-collection process that they fail to reflect on what occurred during the data collection process (Groenewald). The insights gained through memoing aided in analyzing the audio-taped interviews during the data analysis stage. Later, the reflection notes will be destroyed at the same time as the transcribed interviews as specified by the IRB criteria.

## **Role of the Researcher**

Similar to the participants who took part in this research study, I too relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida from another state. Being an Anglo-American woman who

was raised as a member of the dominant or privileged culture of the United States, my experience of adapting to living in the Miami-Dade County, Florida area was one of reverse acculturation. I experienced culture shock, losses, and some homesickness. I also viewed my experience as an adventure filled with exciting times. Obviously, my own experiences with reverse acculturation in Miami-Dade County, Florida guarantee that I have had some biases.

Some of my biases regarding the phenomenon of reverse acculturation included people's attitudes of being open or closed to experiences which are different than what one is accustomed, and people's prior exposure and experience with the Spanish language and culture. It is my opinion that people with an attitude of closed-mindedness as opposed to an attitude of open-mindedness would have the tendency to withdrawal or isolate themselves from interacting with people from other cultures. They would tend to interact mostly with their family and live in areas of Miami-Dade County, Florida in which other Anglos predominated. Conversely, I thought that those intranational migrants who were open to cultural diversity and learning about other cultures would tend to adapt well and enjoy living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. I believed that those people, who studied Spanish in middle school, high school, or college as opposed to other languages or no foreign language exposure, would be predisposed towards having a positive acculturation experience in Miami Dade County, Florida. Having made my biases explicit, I took steps, such as journaling and bracketing, to mitigate their influence during the data collection and analysis stages as Patton recommended (2002).

## **Emic Perspective**

My personal journey of learning to adapt to living in a cultural milieu that was radically different than the environment in which I was raised, gave me an emic or insider point of view as a researcher. An emic perspective, developed within the anthropology field, is the point of view of a person who is coming from the inside – one who has been there. A strength of the emic perspective is that a researcher can capture and be true to the perspective of those participants in a study (Patton, 2002). Additionally, in writing the analysis of the data, quotations from the interviews would emphasize the emic point of view (Patton). The emic perspective did fit within the qualitative tradition of phenomenology by highlighting the perspectives, voices, and words of the participants. In a critical history of acculturation research, Rudmin's (2003) extensive review of the acculturation literature revealed that very few researchers have explored acculturation experiences from the emic perspectives of either the majority or even the minority population. This research study explored reverse acculturation from an emic viewpoint.

In order to learn about and capture the voices of people who have undergone the acculturation process of coping and adapting to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida, the participants in this study must have lived in this area at least two years. The rationale for the two year requirement is that most people tend to acculturate to a new area within a year and a half to two years of living in a new area.

My own acculturation experience began twenty years ago. My former husband and I relocated from New Jersey to Miami-Dade County, Florida. Since my own personal

experience occurred a long time ago, I am somewhat removed from the actual experience of coping and adapting to life in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

This distance of time helped me as a qualitative researcher to remain fairly neutral in my data collection phase. However, as I listened to my participants' stories of their experiences of coping and adapting to living in Miami, I realized that occasionally some of their accounts triggered certain memories and feelings inside of me. In order to counteract bias from happening, I remained open and aware of my own thoughts and feelings during the data collection phase and I recorded my thoughts and biases in a journal during this phase of research.

### **Journaling**

It is recommended that investigators engage in a process of self-reflection as a preparatory phase of research (Colazzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1983). This is done so that the researcher becomes aware of the biases that might prejudice the interpretation of the data. To counteract the possibility of becoming biased, I jotted down my thoughts, recollections, and reflections of my own experience with reverse acculturation in a journal. Later, during the data analysis phase, I referred to my self-reflections in my journal to become aware of my biases and assumptions. My self-reflections were bracketed so that I did not impose my own biases and assumptions on the research study. Bracketing is a technique whereby the researcher identifies any preconceived ideas about the phenomenon and separates them from what they know or believe about the issue of investigation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Knowing that I have a bias about people's attitudes towards new experiences as well as a bias about people's receptivity towards

Spanish culture based upon their prior language experience, I needed to take care to remain neutral. Thus, both the journal and bracketing helped me to remain impartial about the phenomenon of reverse acculturation.

### **Data Analysis**

For the analysis of the data I selected van Manen's research methods (1990, 2002) which are based on Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology. In this research study, the transcribed interviews became the phenomenological texts upon which the hermeneutic analysis took place. Van Manen's methodical steps for processing hermeneutic phenomenological data are outlined as follows:

1. The interviews were transcribed verbatim.
2. I immersed myself in the transcribed texts by reading them and listening to the voices of the participant rather than relying on my own preconceived ideas of the phenomenon.
3. As I sought greater understanding of the experience of reverse acculturation, I identified and set aside my own biases and prejudices with the techniques of journaling, bracketing, and the hermeneutical circle of interpretation.
4. To determine the essential themes of the phenomenon, I used Van Manen's method of free imaginative variation to verify whether a theme is essential to the phenomenon or incidental.
5. The emergent themes from the data were shared with the participants for confirmation and validation. Each participant was asked if the themes were essential.
6. Each chosen theme was compared to the particular passage in the text that it emanated from as well as to the text as a whole.

7. The essential themes were supported with selected exemplars and anecdotes from the participant's stories to illustrate the essence of the participant's lived experience.
8. When no more new themes emerged from the data then the analysis came to a close.
9. All of the essential themes were used to write a single sentence that Van Manen (1990) calls a sententious phrase to capture the essential nature of the phenomenon of reverse acculturation.

To elaborate upon some of the aforementioned techniques which are unique to hermeneutical phenomenology, a brief description of the hermeneutical circle of interpretation and free imaginative variation are given. The hermeneutical circle of interpretation is used to reflect upon and analyze how the participants' perspectives interacted with the situations that they encountered. This method allows the researcher to be as neutral as possible (Denzin, 1989; Patton, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). The technique of free imaginative variation is described next.

According to Van Manen (1990) "the most difficult and controversial element of phenomenological human science research may be to differentiate between essential themes and themes that are more incidentally related to the phenomenon under study" (p. 106). To assist with this task Van Manen uses free imaginative variation. As I used this technique I asked myself "Does the phenomenon lose its fundamental meaning without this theme?" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 107). At this juncture I attempted to "discover aspects or qualities that make the phenomenon what it is and without these qualities the phenomenon could not be what it is" (Van Manen, p. 107). These techniques were used in the analysis of the data. Authenticating the data will be discussed in the next section.



## **Trustworthiness of Results**

Researchers Lincoln and Guba (1995) advocate using trustworthiness and authenticity as guidelines for conducting qualitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1995), qualitative trustworthiness and authenticity speak to the accuracy and credibility of the inquiry. It is considered to be credible when the data reflect the findings. In particular, phenomenological research has accuracy when the interpretations and descriptions are faithful to the participants' responses (Lincoln & Guba).

### **Establishing Trustworthiness**

In establishing trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1995) suggest using these four criteria: credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. One of the ways in which I established credibility was through prolonged engagement with the data. Also, as Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended, I was true to my phenomenon of study through the use of memoing during the data collection phase. To establish dependability I conducted the research process in a consistent manner (Lincoln & Guba). Since conformability refers to the extent to which the results are supported by the data, I used the technique of member checking. Member checking involved the participants' reviewing their texts and verifying my interpretation of the data after I had analyzed it. Thus, member checking increased the credibility of the data (Lincoln & Guba; Miles & Huberman; VanManen, 1990). The last criterion of transferability pertains to the idea that the findings from this research study could be meaningful to other people who are experiencing a similar situation. For people who have recently relocated to the Miami-Dade County, Florida area they could potentially benefit from the findings of this study. Also, the

results of this study could inform people who are experiencing similar reverse acculturation situations in other communities, especially in predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan areas.

According to Patton (2002), a researcher is able to validate and crosscheck the findings by using a combination of data sources such as interviewing, observations, and document analysis. This method is called data triangulation. In this research study triangulation consisted of checking for consistency by looking for similar words spoken by the interviewees that point to the same themes as well as comparing these themes with the interviewer's observations and memos. Also, member checking was used whereby the participants reviewed the researcher's thematic analysis of their transcribed interviews. By using triangulation, the strengths of one data gathering approach compensated for the weaknesses of another approach.

### **Peer Debriefing**

I asked two colleagues to engage in the method of peer debriefing. The method of peer debriefing consisted of each colleague separately reviewing and discussing with me the selected categories and themes that emerged from my analysis of the data. Then, I ascertained if their themes and categories corroborated with those that I identified. By using self-reflections and peer debriefing my results fairly depicted the research material. Thus, the study has credibility, authenticity, and trustworthiness.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Care, caution, and confidentiality were taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants in the study. Prior to any data collection, this research study was

reviewed and approved by Barry University' Institutional Review Board (IRB) for ethical considerations. The ethical guidelines of the American Counseling Association as well as federal rules and regulations were followed both during and after the data collection and analysis stages.

### **Ensuring Confidentiality**

To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, I followed established guidelines and procedures. To remove direct identifiers for each participant I used a pseudonym instead of their real names on all collected data. In writing the analysis and discussion sections, the pseudonyms were used to disguise the person's identity. The participants' identities were further protected by keeping the consent forms separate from all other written data. The transcriber who typed the participant's interviews only had pseudonyms to identify each interview. She did not know the real identity of any of the participants. Confidentiality would have been breached in the event that there was imminent danger to myself or others as directed by applicable laws.

Due to the subject of the study, reverse acculturation, it was assumed that there was minimal risk of harm to the participants. Keeping in mind that research interviewers are not therapists, Patton's idea that the "purpose of the research interview is first and foremost to gather data, not change people" (2002, p. 405) certain safeguards were put in place in the event that any possible painful feelings were evoked during the interview process. First, the informed consent form explained possible risks. If any concerns or strong emotional issues arose during the research interviews, I would have referred the participants to a licensed mental health counselor, psychologist, or mental health agency.

**Data Protection**

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest safeguarding the data collected from the participants. To safeguard the data, all original audiotapes and documents were stored in a separate locked file cabinet. Written analysis and findings were stored in my computer under secured files. Following Barry University's IRB standards, I will destroy the materials and files after five years have elapsed.

**Signed Consent**

Prior to the commencement of the interviews, all participants read and signed an informed consent form (see Appendix D). The three basic principles of informed consent, that is, voluntariness, disclosure, and comprehension were followed. With informed consent the participants freely gave their consent to participate in the study, they understood the purpose of the study and any possible risks and benefits, and they had the right to withdrawal from the study at anytime. Participants freely gave their consent to participate in the research study without coercion or undue influence and understood the study and their participatory role.

Lastly, I checked that all participants understood the study. I answered any questions that they had regarding any aspect of the research and I informed them that all data would be destroyed after the appropriate time limit of five years had elapsed. Copies of the informed consent form, recruitment flyers, telephone screening, interview questions, participant's demographic information form, and the memoing/observation form may all be found in the appendix section of this dissertation.

## **Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter outlined the philosophies and methods inherent in the qualitative research approach of phenomenology. A particular methodology, hermeneutical phenomenology, was presented as the structural girder that upheld this study. The data analysis method was briefly outlined. Key concepts, tenets, and researchers in the field have been cited.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### **Overview**

*You can't go home again.*

Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward Angel*, 1929

The purpose of this present study was to explore the lived experiences of relocated Anglo-Americans to learn about their reverse acculturation and adaptation experiences as well as to examine the acculturation strategies that they used in adjusting to living within a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area. In conducting this phenomenological study, this researcher interviewed, transcribed, and analyzed the stories of 8 adults who were actively raising children in Miami-Dade County, Florida at the time of the research. In keeping within the phenomenological tradition of research, particular themes and sub-themes emerged from the data during the analysis process.

Eight participants, all of whom had been born and reared in other U.S. states, shared their lived experiences of relocating, adjusting, and adapting to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Participants were selected through purposive sampling methods to ensure that all study participants will have had experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 2002).

### Description of Participants

Before presenting the analysis of the data, an introduction to the eight participants is warranted. The interviews and member checking process took place between April and July 2010. The participants ranged in age from 28 years to 60 years. Some of them had lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for two and a half years while others had lived in the area for as long as 30 years. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were assigned to each of them. The following table (Table 1) summarizes the basic demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

<i>Demographics of Participants</i>						
Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Home State	No. Years Residing in Miami-Dade County	Education Level	Occupation
Betsy	F	44	Texas	15 years	B.A.	Flight Attendant
Megan	F	43	Illinois	13 years	B.S.	Engineer
Tim	M	47	Maryland	20 years	J.D.	Attorney
Gary	M	45	Texas	14 years	J.D.	Attorney
Ellen	F	48	Pennsylvania	30 years	B.A.	Real Estate Sales
Joan	F	50	Ohio	28 years	B.A.	Registered Nurse
Cindy	F	28	Ohio	2 ½ years	B.A.	Director of Religious Education
Greg	M	60	New Jersey	27 years	B.S.	Accountant

**Betsy** – Betsy was originally from Texas. After graduating from college, Betsy began working as a flight attendant with a major airline. With this first job she was based in New York City where she subsequently met and married her husband. After living in New York City for three years, Betsy and her husband decided to move to Miami-Dade County, Florida to start a restaurant on Lincoln Road in South Beach. While they were preparing to open the restaurant, Betsy was also expect-ing her first baby. Initially excited about moving to South Beach, experiences during her first two years of trying to open and run a restaurant with her husband and acclimating to a new city doused her enthusiasm. During the first several years of living in Miami-Dade County, Florida, Betsy and her husband did not know anyone here. She and her husband divorced. Afterwards, Betsy continued to live in Miami-Dade County, Florida. She has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for 15 years. She is a single parent with one child.

**Megan** – Originally from the Chicago area, Megan was the only participant who possessed proficiency in a language other than English. She had spent one summer during her high school years living with a host family in Japan. Later, during her junior year of college she spent a semester in Japan. She accepted a position that took her to Dallas, Texas after she graduated from college with a degree in engineering. While living in Dallas, Megan met her future husband. A job offer took her fiancé to Miami-Dade County, Florida. After marriage, Megan joined her husband where they lived in a rented townhouse. A year and a half later they bought their first home in the northern part of Miami-Dade County, Florida. Soon thereafter, they had two children. Even though Megan did not know anyone in Miami-Dade County, Florida other than her spouse, she



began to meet people through her husband who had already established several friendships. Megan said that she was excited about moving to the Miami-Dade County, Florida and relished the unique cultural mix. Megan works full-time and has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for the past 13 years. She is married and has two children.

**Tim** – Twenty years ago Tim moved from Maryland to Miami-Dade County, Florida. Right out of law school he accepted a position as an attorney. During his first year in Miami-Dade County, Florida he absolutely detested living here. His roommate was an old college friend who never seemed to leave the apartment. Within Tim's first six months of living in Miami-Dade County, Florida his roommate decided to move back to his home state. Tim decided to stay even though he did not know anyone. Gradually, he made friends through work. As he started to go out into the community and try new experiences he began to like living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Tim married a woman who is Cuban-American. He and his wife have two children.

**Gary** – Gary is a 45 year old attorney originally from Texas. He is married and has two children. He has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for 14 years. He described his acculturation experience as mostly positive. He had lived in various places in the U.S., but he said that Miami-Dade County, Florida was significantly different from other places where he had lived. He does not speak Spanish, but he likes the multi-ethnic aspect of the region.

**Ellen** – Ellen has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for 30 years. She moved from the Philadelphia area to Miami-Dade County, Florida. Her first year of living here was a shock. She moved to Miami-Dade County, Florida at a time of turmoil. The Mariel

Boat Lift had just happened and there was terrible racial tension between Cubans and African-Americans. Also, the multicultural environment in which she had been raised in the suburbs of Philadelphia was very different from the multicultural environment of Miami-Dade County, Florida. For many years Ellen worked in the travel and tourism industry. Then she made a career switch to commercial real estate sales. Ellen is 48 years old. She is married and has been raising two children with her husband: one nephew and one biological child.

**Joan** – Joan was originally from a small town in Ohio. She has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for 28 years. She first visited Miami Beach 29 years ago and relocated to the area one year later. She moved without a firm job offer, but she felt confident that she could get a position as a nurse, which she did. During her first year of living here, Joan felt very lonely and homesick. She said that moving to Miami-Dade County, Florida was also a culture shock because she had moved from a small town where everyone was Anglo and there were no people from other cultures. Eventually she began to make friends and became involved in activities in the community. Joan then enjoyed learning about other cultures and customs. She married a man from South America and has two children.

**Cindy** – Cindy is from a small city in Ohio. She is 28 years old and has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for the past two and a half years. She lives with a partner and has two children. During her first two years of living here, Cindy was very homesick. She had not wanted to move far away from her family, but a wonderful job opportunity brought her partner here. Her homesickness has lessened due to two factors. First, she has

made frequent trips back to Ohio to be with family and friends. On one of these trips, she lived with her mother and worked at a seasonal job. It was during this extended stay that she realized that she could never truly return home. What has helped to mitigate her homesickness is the fact that Cindy has made friends in Miami-Dade County, Florida and she has connected with a church. She and her family have enjoyed frequenting the many different parks and beaches in Miami-Dade County, Florida which has helped her to like living here. She and her life-partner have two children: one adoptive and one biological.

**Greg** – Greg has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for 27 years. Originally from New Jersey, he had spent several years working in Atlanta, Georgia before coming to Miami-Dade County, Florida. Greg is a certified public accountant who was enticed to move to Miami-Dade County, Florida after a job recruiter approached him to come for an interview. The allure of South Beach also intrigued Greg to relocate to Miami-Dade County. During his first year of living here, Greg quickly made friends through work and a co-ed softball team that he joined. He also knew two people from high school that helped him to quickly adjust to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Greg is 60 years old. He is married and has two children, one living at home and one living independently.

### **Data**

During the data gathering process, the participants shared their personal experiences of moving from another U.S. state and acculturating to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. From their collective voices this researcher heard tales of loneliness and homesickness, frustrations with hired workers and traffic, triumphs in making friends and learning to understand the predominate culture, engagement with the thriving cultural

scene, adjustments to values and expectations, laughing over cultural faux pas and the establishment of a new home. Their shared stories helped to form a picture of the reverse acculturation process and how each person coped with his or her individual experience.

An interesting observation noted by this researcher involved participants speaking about their families during the course of their interviews. During the course of each interview, the participants were able to speak openly and freely with their responses to the questions from the interview guide. All five of the female participants mentioned their children and/or spouse in their interviews. Only one of the three male participants briefly mentioned either his children or his wife. The other two male participants did not speak of their families during the course of their interviews. It is not known if this inclusion or omission of family is connected to personality variables, socialization, or other factors.

### **Findings**

A composite picture emerged from the textual data. The guiding research question: What has the experience of acculturating and adapting to living in Miami-Dade County been like for you? acted as the overarching umbrella that lead to the other interview questions. In-depth analysis of the data revealed major themes with adjoining sub-themes. Using the major themes, a single sentential statement captured the essence of the phenomenological experience of reverse acculturation: Anglo-Americans who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida underwent a reverse acculturation experience consisting of an initial culture shock followed by the use of coping strategies to achieve various levels of adaptation to their new community.

## **The Reverse Acculturation Process**

The following excerpts from Tim's story illustrate the findings on the phenomenon of reverse acculturation. He said, "I can say that in the beginning I detested it. I hated it down here" (Tim, 1, 6-7). He continued "I hated the fact that I didn't speak Spanish and everyone here spoke Spanish or Creole. I didn't feel like I fit in at all" (Tim, 1, 15-16). During the first six months of living in Miami-Dade County, Florida Tim related that he had isolated himself "from what makes this community tick" (Tim, 1, 36). Then he shared the following experience:

I started making friends at the office; a lot of them were Cuban and Puerto Rican and various Hispanics. I started doing more and that's when I started kind of saying, "You know I actually like this." I remember going to a friend's party whose parents were not wealthy, but they were comfortable and they had mariachis there. People were out late. The weather was beautiful some time in February. And I thought, "I could get used to this" and I thought this was kind of neat. (Tim, 1, 41-46)

The aforementioned anecdote illustrated the coping strategies that Tim used to acculturate to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The following two reflections from Tim's account highlight his adaptation process:

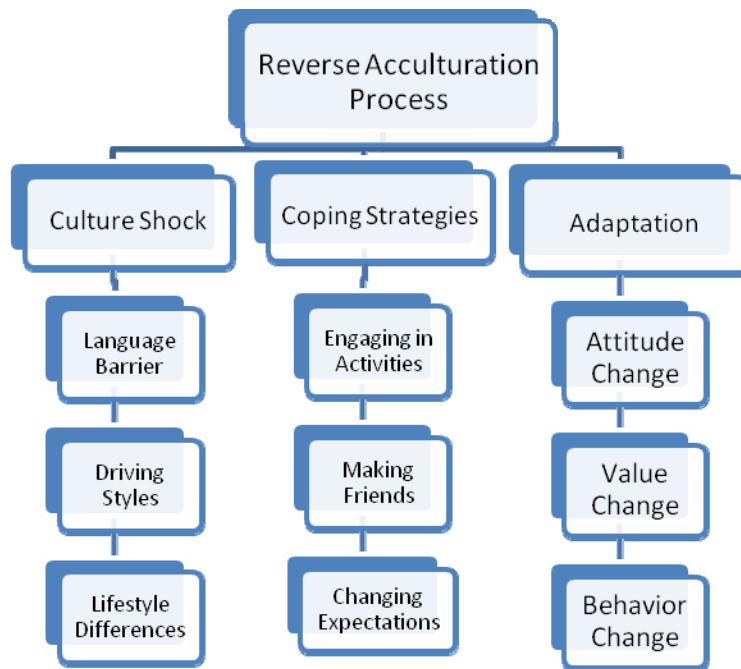
For instance, to give an example, when I first moved down here, when I was in the process of moving down here, I really didn't know much about Cubans other than the Cuban missile crisis. And I would talk to people up there and they'd go, "Oh my God, you're living among a bunch of crazy Cubans." That's just the kind of

thing that you would get. When I came down here I sort of had – I was either going to see Ricky Ricardo or I was going to see some nutcase that was protesting and things like that. Your images are not universally positive that I had. (Tim, 7, 43-46)

This example of Tim's lived experience segues into his reflection of adapting to the predominantly Hispanic culture in Miami-Dade County, Florida:

At heart, people – because again, the biggest impact on me here is not as much as I like it, is not the weather, the blue skies, it's the fact that this place is filled with people that are very different than the people that I was with when I grew up. Ultimately, I guess what I've learned is that people really aren't all that much different. (Tim, 7, 36-41)

Tim's story is just one of many accounts that allow the reader to grasp the experience of reverse acculturation in Miami-Dade County, Florida. His account as well as the stories of the other participants formed a composite picture of the phenomenon of reverse acculturation. The major themes and sub-themes that emerged from the participants' data is graphically presented in the following figure.



*Figure 1. Reverse acculturation process of participants in Miami-Dade County, Florida*

The overall picture of the participants' reverse acculturation experience began when a participant first relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida from another U.S. state. As the participant began to settle into the new community he or she noticed and experienced disparities between his or her own cultural background and the new cultural environment. This unexpected disparity of cultures resulted in a shock experience. The resulting culture shock was informed mainly by the issues of a language barrier, driving style and lifestyle differences. The participant's culture shock began to subside once he or she employed different coping strategies to acculturate to the new environment. Three coping strategies that the participants used involved: engaging in activities, making friends and changing his or her expectations. As a result of using these strategies to cope with acculturating, each of the participants learned to adapt to living in Miami-Dade

County, Florida. They learned to adapt by changing or shifting their attitudes, values, and behaviors slowly over time.

Together, these experiences formed particular themes and sub-themes. The subsequent sections describe, in greater detail, the themes that emerged from the data. The section also describes the sub-themes that emerged and explains how they intersect to form the participants' overall experience of reverse acculturation.

### **Themes and Sub-Themes**

Each participant had his or her unique journey of experiencing reverse acculturation and learning to adapt to living in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area. Similarities appeared among their stories as did subtle differences. The participants' stories, gathered via in-depth interviews, became the texts or data. This researcher analyzed the data by looking for themes and sub-themes. Van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology approach was used to interpret or analyze the texts. Using Van Manen's method, this researcher listened to the interviewee's story. From each of his or her transcribed interview emerged anecdotes and narratives that highlighted each theme. The themes were systematically analyzed and sub-themes appeared which supported each major theme (Van Manen, 1990). The first theme that emerged from the data was culture shock.

### **Theme: Culture Shock**

Using Adler's definition of culture shock (1975), each of the participants experienced some level of emotional reaction to the lack of familiar cultural stimuli and reinforcement and exposure to new cultural stimuli. All eight participants experienced



culture shock during their first 12 – 18 months of living in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

*Joan* recalled her experience “. . .when I first came here originally, a little bit culture shocked as far as meeting people from all parts of different countries, different customs” (Joan, 1, 6-8). *Ellen* recounted this anecdote:

I think the first year was pretty much a shock, I would say. I had lived in the same house, the same little town for 18 years. It wasn't the growing up and moving away from my home and my parents; however, it was what I experienced when I arrived. I moved to a small town named Opa-locka at the time. It was 1979-1980 and at that time, the Mariel boatlift, . . . the cultural tense feeling between the new Cubans that were here and the blacks that were here. . . for me to be kind of dropped into a community of turmoil was a little scary and I was shocked to see how everyone was *not* getting along. (Ellen, 1, 25-28; 33-36)

The theme of culture shock was further highlighted by two other supporting sub-themes that emerged from the data: language barrier, driving styles, and lifestyle differences.

#### **Sub-Theme: Language Barrier**

All of the participants believed that not knowing Spanish was part of their culture shock experience. They viewed the fact that they did not know much or any Spanish as a barrier to being able to communicate effectively with people in the community. However, not all of the participants shared the same attitude about their inability to communicate in Spanish. Five of the participants viewed the language barrier as a major obstacle. *Cindy* shared her feelings of isolation about not knowing any Spanish when she said,

we lived in Kendall and it seemed to me that not only did I not know where I was going, but anytime I tried to talk to anybody they didn't speak English and I don't speak Spanish so that was – and I mean it still is because I haven't learned. It's very hard to work around that. (Cindy, 2, 1-4)

Later she shared this example:

but because of the language barrier, I felt even when I saw people, like if my daughter and I went to the pool during the day, nine times out of ten, any other mom and her kid at the pool were Spanish-speaking and we weren't able to talk. (Cindy, 3, 25-28)

*Tim* spoke of feeling excluded because of the language barrier:

And even when I started getting to know people, I didn't feel like I fit in because again, a huge percentage of the people that I work with or associate with all come from a Hispanic culture and they would constantly break into Spanish have little inside jokes in Spanish, things that they grew up with which definitely wasn't my background, so I have no idea what they were all laughing about. (Tim, 5, 27-31)

*Ellen* revealed her frustration when she said:

Because I don't speak the language, that's one thing that I don't like about the cultures, the language barrier in Miami-Dade, as many people speak Spanish. I'm not communicating with them or those that are bilingual. I wish I could communicate better with them in their native language. (Ellen, 5, 2-5)

The other three participants in this research study acknowledged that not knowing Spanish was a barrier; however, they viewed their lack of Spanish language skills as a

surmountable challenge rather than as a deterrent. *Gary* related this incident involving his attempt to communicate in a language that he did not know when he first lived here:

You know if it would be at the store or restaurant I would just point and try to communicate through, if it was a store, I did my best. When I was trying to get directions at one time, the person was trying to be very helpful, but it was clear That he didn't understand me and I didn't understand him. But it kind of took some time and we just laughed at one another a couple of times because it was clear he had thought he had explained and it was clear. I didn't understand. I mean, it was kind of like alright, I'm just going to move forward the best I can. (Gary, 4, 28-33)

Concerning the language barrier issue, *Greg* adopted a laissez faire approach. He compared his response to other people's reaction when he shared this:

in regards to Spanish-speaking people, and stuff like that. When I first came down here, I noticed that people were very opinionated. They were very biased. . . . People used to scream at other people, like about, when they would hear other people speaking in a foreign language. It didn't matter to me, but it seemed to bother a lot of people. Most of them, I noticed were native Miami-Dade County people that are bothered. But it didn't really bother me. (Greg, 7, 11-13; 35-40)

He related this anecdote:

I was in a Burger King and they were counting out, like how you get the little ticket, and they call your number, and they were calling it in Spanish, and I just sat there and waited and waited. Finally, the girl said, 'Number 412.' 'Oh, that's me.' But outside of that, I experienced the bias, but it didn't really affect me that

much. I would watch other people go crazy about it. They were just going insane about it. (Greg, 7, 25-31)

### **Sub-Theme: Driving Style**

According to Chen (1997) one way in which the reverse acculturation process occurs for Anglo-Americans is through indirect contact with people from cultures other than their own. One of the sub-themes of culture shock that emerged from the texts focused on the noticeable differences in driving style. Even though the act of driving a vehicle does not place a person in direct physical contact with another person, indirect contact occurs by the very fact that there is another person physically operating the other vehicle. Couple this idea with the current population statistic that Miami-Dade County, Florida is 65% Hispanic; one can assume that the participants had a fairly high chance of experiencing indirect contact with drivers of Hispanic origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). *Betsy*, who has been a flight attendant for almost twenty years, was the first participant to remark on the differences in driving style. Using her inter-national and domestic flight experience and the fact that she has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for over fifteen years as a basis for comparison, she made this observation:

You have to be aware of everybody, every thing here. It's just crazy. And going to their country where so many of our fellow Miami-Dade people are from, you understand that they don't even have . . . if it is a two lane street, they don't have the lanes painted there. It's just you go whatever you want all the time; you may see two or three stop lights in the whole city. It's just different. They weren't brought up with, 'Go to Stop. When you stop, you stay in your lane. You turn your

blinker to change your lane.’ So it was kind of social courtesy or social norms that I’m used to personal space. Going to this or that country you see, ‘Oh, they don’t have this.’ Their country’s structure is different than our country’s structure. So coping with that you just have to have an eye in the back of your head at all times driving. (Betsy, 8, 21-30)

*Joan* commented on the differences in driving styles twice in her interview. First, she reflected on how she initially felt about the drivers in Miami-Dade County, Florida when she first arrived by saying, “I don’t like the way people drive. I think people are very rude in the highways, in the cars, just not courteous. Sometimes I just wanted to leave” (Joan, 5, 34-35). Then she had this comment to say later on in her text:

the driving thing. I think if people were courteous, but it’s just never going to work because everybody goes on the road and they have their own set of rules from wherever they came from and this is where they are. And so you either put up with it or you don’t. You just drive with it. (Joan, 10, 4-6)

*Cindy* who has lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for a little over two and a half years remarked on the driving style differences several times throughout her text. Her initial comments were as follows:

People driving. I don’t know if that’s just their driving or them being rude, but like being cutoff or blaring their horn. I don’t know. I feel like even when I go to Tampa to visit family, people are nicer there. It’s just rude here. (Cindy, 1, 34-37)

These participants’ excerpts underscored their feelings of culture shock vis a vis the indirect contact experience of driving their vehicles in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

### **Sub-Theme: Lifestyle Differences**

Another source of culture shock for the participants during their first two years of living in Miami-Dade County, Florida involved differences in lifestyle. Within this sub-theme, there were three areas cited by the participants. The lifestyle issues that emerged from the data included: differences in work ethic, etiquette, and parenting. Most of the participants recalled being genuinely shocked about the differences. One participant, *Tim*, (hesitantly) gave a possible explanation for these differences. He said “. . . I also feel that a lot of times, the population here, part of it is cultural, I think I mean it is, I’m probably not the first person to say, that there is a third world aspect to this place” (Tim, 4, 29-30).

#### **Work ethic differences.**

The different approach towards work from residents of Miami-Dade County, Florida made a strong impact upon participants. They shared personal experiences as well as their impressions of work ethic practices as it contrasted with their Anglo-American values, attitudes, and behaviors towards work. For example, while she was pregnant with her first child, Betsy and her husband relocated to Miami Beach to start their own restaurant. *Betsy* admitted that starting a business was a very stressful endeavor; however, she and her husband, an immigrant from a European country, were shocked at what they perceived as a lackadaisical approach to work. She shared that friends and acquaintances in New York City had forewarned them before they moved. She shared: “People had warned us, “Oh, you’re going to do business in Miami? Be ready.” We’re like, “Be ready for what?” They were just like, “It’s just different. People don’t always show up. People

aren't always who they say they are" (Betsy, 6, 34-36). She further elaborated upon this first year experience:

With the business, then people wouldn't show up. That was very frustrating; the professionalism of people we would hire to work for us, waiters, building people. That lack of professionalism and responsibility was really upfront for us coming down here and starting a business. So that was a real eye opener. Just behavioral differences in people and just showing up and not calling any of that. That was a real rude awakening when we first got here. . . . just nobody cared to show up for days and it wasn't just one or two. It was like 50, 60, 75 percent of the people we hired for any kind of thing. That was one of the first things we kind of went through getting here. (Betsy, 5, 10-22)

Later on in her interview, Betsy remarked that her obstetrician ran his medical practice in a professional manner:

It's forever nobody would ever show up when they said. That was super frustrating as far as starting a business. We moved here, started a business, while you're pregnant. I never experienced that with my doctor. My doctor was always professional and everything. But when it came to everything else, it was like – it was just a flip of a coin if somebody is going to show up. (Betsy, 5, 30-34)

Tim's response might shed light upon Betsy's experience with work ethic differences.

*Tim* shared, "Everything here is about who you know whether it's getting somebody to come work on your house for a reasonable price. You don't generally find things as easy

if you don't know somebody" (Tim, 4, 34-36). *Gary* echoed both Betsy and Tim's responses regarding differences in work ethics:

Whereas down here, I think a lot of times you hear all sort of deals where money gets exchanged, but the item never gets built or roadways that are not getting paved, the palm trees, in a few years back when they paid for all these trees but they did not know how to get them. I mean, I'm okay if the contract goes to somebody's cousin, but I would like the cousin to actually do the work. I think Dade County in particular seems to have a lot of that and I find that annoying.  
(Gary, 2, 34-39)

### **Etiquette.**

Another emerging lifestyle difference pertained to etiquette. The perspective of many of the female participants was that there was a lack of politeness, good manners, and social greetings that they encountered while living and working in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The participants expressed surprise, annoyance, and disbelief during their interviews. Several participants also seemed perturbed that many of their friends and acquaintances generally did not respond to formal invitations or keep the plans that they had made. *Megan* lamented:

Like you make a plan or when people don't RSVP, like in this town people don't RSVP to things. You invite them somewhere, they say they're going to come, they don't show up. So you kind of have to go through that shock and awe of like no manners to just realize who is like that and who isn't. . . . People cancel things all the time and don't bother calling and where I grew up that's unheard of. Again, its



very important to have manners and write thank you notes and stick through with commitments and if you can't do something, you have to cancel it and let people know and then you try not to inconvenience people, but here I see a lot of that and I guess that I was offended. (Megan, 5, 29-39)

*Cindy* expressed similar sentiments as *Megan*:

I find, personally, that people in Miami are more rude. I find that there's not as much care, people don't care as much, I think as far as like, say making plans. I'll just give an example – you make plans with someone – where I come from, you keep your plans. And here I found that if something better comes long, then too bad for you. (Cindy, 1, 13-16)

Not greeting people was an etiquette issue that surfaced. While both *Betsy* and *Cindy* highlighted everyday interactions in places like the grocery store, post office, or church, they both eventually voiced disappointment over what was essentially a cultural lifestyle difference. *Cindy* gave this example: “I guess, I think people in the grocery store that check you out, they don't say, ‘Hi. How are you?’ They don't look you in the eye” (Cindy, 1, 28-30). *Betsy* said:

I mean a lot of people will say nobody says “Hi” to you in Miami. They'll just run you over. When I go to the grocery store or when I go to Walgreen's or I go to church or my daughter's school, I always say “Hi” to people. They will say “Hi” back. I don't think they'll be the ones to initiate it. We have a lot of different cultures here and that's just not in their cultural upbringing. (Betsy, 4, 1-5)

Reflecting on the issue of etiquette as it pertains to the differences in lifestyle, *Betsy* made this comment:

In the grocery store, in the post office, sometimes in the bank where people are more abrupt, more impersonal, less courtesy, less respect. Things like that. And again, it's just the difference. I don't mean to be here as a critic or a judge of character. I just think they are brought up differently. (Betsy, 12, 31-34)

### **Parenting styles.**

Another lifestyle difference that emerged from the texts focused on parenting styles. Several participants expressed shock about their personal experiences and observations. They attributed the style of parenting to cultural differences. For example, *Gary* had this to say:

differences in parenting and how people raise their kids and – what they expect and what they expose them to. It's very different than Texas or areas that don't have as many different cultures. For instance, if you're out late at night, it's not surprising at all to see a couple of Brazilians with young kids out that are two or three years old, out way past midnight, just that's part of the – it seems to be part of the parenting culture that if they're going out, their kids will be out. They'll deal with that. (Gary, 6, 1-6)

*Betsy* shared an incident that happened to her when her daughter was a toddler that seemed to exemplify this sub-category of lifestyle differences when she related:

When my child was probably two, we went to [Miami] Mall and they had that little play area for the kids outside of [a department store] . . . And so the kids wait in

line to ride on the dolphin. It didn't move, it was little bump off the ground maybe a foot up the ground and it had a head. All the kids just patiently waited in line and my daughter had made it up through the line and it was her turn and this little boy, three years old, she was about the same age, not much older. He was a boy about the same age and he came right up to her face when she was sitting on there and just screamed, 'Ahhh, my turn, my turn.' I was appalled. 'What am I going to do?' I said, 'Sweetie, there is a line. You need to wait in line.' 'Ahhh.' He was just throwing a massive screaming at the top of his lungs fit. And my daughter was scared and just horrified and getting off of the dolphin. He was bullying her. And his nurse, I'm guessing it was the nurse, she was dressed in all white with . . . A nurse or a nanny walked up and said, 'Just let him have his way.' And that has been my introduction to Miami. That was like that's how they operate. They just bully to get what they want. It doesn't matter. And that's just not the way I was brought up at all. . . . I was scared and appalled and my daughter was scared. The other kids were scared and it was like, he got what he wanted. I made my daughter stay on it. I said, 'You're not getting off.' I stood between them and I said, 'You ride the dolphin.' (Betsy, 12, 5-27)

To summarize, culture shock was the first major theme that emerged from the data. This theme was informed by the three sub-themes of language barrier, driving habits, and life style differences. All of the participants relocated from U.S. states in which English was the dominant language. The fact that none of them had much knowledge of Spanish proved to be either an obstacle or a challenge to be surmounted depending upon the view

of each participant. In addition to the language barrier sub-theme, the difference in driving habits emerged as a sub-theme experience also. The third sub-theme contained three separate lifestyle differences: work ethic, etiquette, and parenting styles. These sub-themes emerged to form a vivid picture of the participants' culture shock experience.

After culture shock, the next theme to emerge from the data was coping. The sub-themes that emerged were specific strategies the participants used to cope with their culture shock. Coping and its sub-themes are described in the following section.

### **Theme: Coping Strategies**

The participants' culture shock gradually diminished when they began to use coping strategies. From the textual data, the participants were focused on particular coping strategies: becoming engaged in activities, making friends, and changing their expectations. The research on coping strategies indicates that taking action or thinking through a problem seems to lessen the stressfulness of a situation (Compas, et al., 2001). Also, a person's ability or inability to cope with different situations affects a person's stress level (Lazarus, 1990). The participants in this study employed both action-oriented and cognitive reappraisal methods to cope with their culture shock. A detailed presentation of the specific strategies that they used follows next.

#### **Sub-Theme: Engaging in Activities**

Every participant became involved in various activities in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The activities differed according to the interests and preferences of each participant. Yet all of their interests brought them into either direct or indirect contact with Hispanic residents of Miami-Dade County, Florida. As stated in Chapter one,

Miami-Dade County, Florida has a multicultural population which consists of 65 % Hispanics, 15.4% Anglos (white, non-Hispanic), 18.9% Blacks (non-Hispanic), and 1.5% Asians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Due to the large percentage of Hispanics living in Miami-Dade County, Florida the participants' strategy of becoming involved with activities brought them into contact with Hispanic residents.

As a result of becoming involved in activities, two of the participants met and married spouses from Hispanic backgrounds. By venturing into this new world and participating in activities with their Hispanic companions, they began to appreciate and feel more comfortable living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. *Tim* used this approach:

Instead of hiding in my room I would go, "Say, you know what? This is what South Florida is known for, let's go out and enjoy it." So, my now wife, at that time girlfriend, we spent all our time literally, we walked all over South Florida. I mean we walked. We walked across the bridges. We walked to Coral Gables once. Sometimes we would ride our bikes. We went everywhere, but we spent a lot of time and try to take advantage of what this place has to offer. (Tim, 6, 37-41)

It should be noted that Tim's girlfriend at the time, and now his wife, is Cuban. His mother-in-law who is also Cuban lives with the family, too.

*Gary's* appreciation grew as he began to partake in cultural activities:

I really enjoyed all the various aspects of having a multicultural area. There are festivals. There is the music and artists like a man whose name I would never heard of, but I find that they're famous from whatever country that they're from. They're here. (Gary, 5, 26-29)

Other participants immersed themselves in athletic activities as a means of acclimating to life in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Greg played softball several times a week and Ellen enjoyed boating and camping with her family. *Joan* joined a bowling league at work and took bowling classes because as she said, “I tried to find some ways to meet people because there were times that I was lonely” (Joan, 8, 36-37). *Joan* revealed, “I do like meeting different people and I said I’ve enjoyed learning so much about my friends and how they’re living their lives, where they’ve come from” (Joan, 4, 45-46).

According to the participants, becoming involved in different activities was the first coping mechanism that six of the eight participants mentioned in their interviews. By participating in a work-sponsored function or simply enjoying the outdoor options that Miami-Dade County, Florida offers such as going to festivals, parks, beaches, boating, camping, walking, or bicycling they all came in contact with people from diverse backgrounds. Eventually, two of the participants married into Hispanic families. As a result of engaging in activities, the participants also began to develop friendships.

### **Sub-Theme: Making Friends**

The sub-theme of making friends was found in the texts of every single participant in the study. Several participants tried to develop friendships with people at work as well as through other means. *Megan* said:

I guess I tried to make some friends in the office. I forgot I worked a lot too, but I spend a lot of time with my husband and we try to be friendly with neighbors and go out to movies and we just attempted to be social. We had a dog. We’d walk our dog all the time and we, I mean coping-wise, I think I just tried to make friends

with some neighbors in the area to get some connection. . . . Make an extra effort with people. That was probably a coping mechanism. (Megan, 6, 23-29)

*Greg* talked about how he first started to make friends at work when he originally relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida:

I worked for an insurance company and there were a lot of young people there. It was a very close knit group and they would have company picnics, and the various events, and things like that. So, that kind of helped to jumpstart with me as far as being a social creature in Miami-Dade. (Greg, 3, 12-15)

*Tim* also began to cultivate friendships in the workplace. He revealed, “I started making more friends at the office, a lot of them were Cuban and Puerto Rican and various Hispanics. I started doing more and that’s when I started kind of saying, “You know, I actually like this.” (Tim, 1, 41-43)

Using the workplace as a springboard for initially making new friends, several participants began to venture into new territory for friendships. Like *Ellen*, some of them became “friendly with people that had more diverse background” (Ellen, 2, 40).

*Gary* shared:

I become much more aware of several different cultures. I had really no exposure to the Cuban culture before moving here. So I’ve learned a lot more about that just from radio, friends, people. I had never really paid much attention to Fidel Castro and the embargo and all that and it never really impacted me one way or the other before moving here. So that changed. I learned more not just of Cuba, but

Argentina and Brazil and Columbia and a lot more with that. I have friends now from all those places, whereas before, I didn't. (Gary, 4, 41-46)

*Megan* shared that she began to make friends not only in the workplace, but also through the community in which she lived. She said, "I think maybe once we were settled in our home and we met some neighbors and then friends of friends, but I think maybe through neighbors and kids. It's easier to make friends, but still its different" (Megan, 5, 17-19).

Several other participants made friends, but thought that it was more difficult to make friends in Miami-Dade County, Florida than in their home states. They felt that people seemed to be friendlier and easier to get to know in the places where they originally came from such as the Midwestern states and Texas. *Betsy* said, "After I've broken the ice, yes, people will be friendly. Does that make sense? I have never really had anybody break the ice, say "Hello, how are you?" first" (Betsy, 4, 22-23). *Joan* explained the difficulty of making friends in Miami-Dade County, Florida this way:

Here, people are in a hurry and it's hard to get to know people, differences. It's hard to make friends in the beginning because people are so not – they don't want to – it's hard to open up and trust somebody and plus people are so transient that they're coming and going so fast. (Joan, 2, 42-44)

As *Megan* said, "I felt like it took me a while to make some good friends and that was a hard adjustment for me personally" (Megan, 5, 1-3). All of these participants did eventually make friends, but it was not an easy task.

Cindy, the participant who had lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida the shortest period of time, had stated that the language barrier had definitely hindered her in making



friends initially. After a while she decided to use technology to help her to make friends in the community. *Cindy* told me during both the in-depth interview and the member checking process that she met other mothers from many different cultural backgrounds by using an online website. She said:

I used actually online, I used Meetup.com. They're a group for natural parenting and I guess I just started going to their meet-ups. They do like play dates and potlucks and this and that. Not only meeting them, but also experiencing new places to take my daughter. (*Cindy*, 9, 18-20)

Thus, the coping strategy of making friends seemed to be a method that all of the participants used to acculturate into living in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

### **Sub-Theme: Changing Expectations**

In analyzing the texts, a third sub-theme emerged as a coping strategy during the reverse acculturation process. In order to lessen their feelings of shock to the cultural differences that they experienced in Miami-Dade County, Florida half of the participants shared with me that they changed their expectations. *Betsy* shared how she coped:

Lowering my expectations and not being upset when somebody said something to me and I would take it . . . if this was the same person in Texas, I would find it offensive and be just shocked. And if the same person said the same thing to you here in Dade County, I can't get shocked and upset because they were brought up differently than I was brought up and most of these people who are from other countries. (*Betsy*, 9, 38-42)

With regards to etiquette issues, Megan also stated that she shifted her standards:

People cancel things all the time and don't bother calling and where I grew up that's unheard of. . . .but here I see a lot of that and I guess I was offended at first and now I'm kind of over it, like you should expect it, so my expectations are low. (Megan, 5, 35-40)

The culture shock sub-theme of a language barrier was repeated often in *Tim's* text. He started to cope with this issue by changing his expectations. He said, "at work, when the secretaries speak in Spanish, it used to drive me crazy because I used to think, 'This is the United States – What are you doing?' And then I started not really caring" (Tim, 5, 43-45).

Cindy shared her frustrations with the language barrier issue as well as asking people for driving directions when she was lost and confused. *Cindy* revealed that she lowered her expectations:

I think it did more in the beginning when I lived in [the southern part of the county] because by the time – after a few months you kind of learn your way around and I mean I pretty much probably stopped asking. You know what I mean? What's the point? (Cindy, 2, 19-21)

The participants employed different strategies as a means of coping with their culture shock. Their coping methods ranged from engaging in activities to making new friends to changing their expectations. As each participant coped in his or her unique way to their new environment, a shift began to take place within each person. Attitudes, values, and behaviors changed. As they adopted different attitudes and values and incorporated new behaviors into their thinking and way of doing things, each participant

learned to adapt to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The next section explores the emergent theme and sub-themes of adaptation.

### **Theme: Adaptation**

Adaptation, from an acculturation viewpoint, pertains to the relatively stable changes that occur in an individual as he or she responds to demands in the environment (Berry, 2006b). *Ellen* summarized her adaptation experience in the following reflection:

I've grown as an individual because of living in Miami-Dade County and adapting to the variety of cultures. I've lived here 30 years and I found myself becoming more interested in other people's culture and therefore, I think I've grown and I've learned to be aware and open for people's experiences. (Ellen, 1, 15-18)

*Cindy*, who has not lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida for as long as *Ellen*, also shared a similar reflection when she said, "So I think between the 12 and the 18 months I was really coming out of the fog and I was able to say, 'Okay, I can live here. I can like living here'" (Cindy, 9, 21-22).

### **Sub-Theme: Attitude Change**

Researchers Masgoret and Ward (2006) identified two types of adaptation. One of them, sociocultural adaptation, refers to a person's ability to negotiate or "fit into" a new cultural milieu by acquiring social skills, language abilities, values, and norms of the culture. In the following statement, *Tim* reflects this type of adaptation. He asserts, "Over time, I eventually started the things that I at first didn't like at all, I actually started to enjoy the music and the things that were different, so I guess that's how I fit" (Tim, 2, 1-

3). *Joan's* experience as a nurse in a hospital has given her the opportunity to learn, grow, and adapt. She says:

For example, just in patient care alone of being a nurse, I'm taking care now of somebody who speaks Spanish and I had to learn these people have customs, family customs, traditions, and how they want things done. And when I was up North, things were just different. . . . I had to open my eyes and not be blinded by, that there's other things that go on in other parts of the world that we're not aware of. (Joan, 2, 26-30)

In order for Tim and Joan and all of the other participants to feel as if they had adapted to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida they shifted their attitudes. Their old attitudes based upon their previous experiences and knowledge of Anglo-American culture shifted to new attitudes as they came in continual contact with Hispanic residents. *Tim* admitted, "Frankly, I'm more comfortable now that for instance my wife and my mother-in-law speak in Spanish. I'm not struggling with it anymore. I just said, "Okay, fine they have that moment" (Tim, 5, 41-42). The following excerpts from Ellen and Gary's texts exemplify this attitude change that helped them to adapt to Miami-Dade County Florida's unique cultural environment:

The more people I've gotten to talk to and got to know and learn about their experiences, specifically friends or peers of mine that are Cuban-American, I would ask them when did they come and how did they come and some of them were from baby to five years old. They were literally on boats or other experiences that they had a very shocking entrance into Miami-Dade County. Their families were

separated from them as very young children and how hard that was for them.

Parents being put in jail for political reasons or writing magazines or newspaper articles that were not acceptable and they were separated from their parents because of those reasons. It was an eye opener kind of. It's surprising to me, having taken for granted all of our fortunate freedoms of liberty and speech. Allowed me to be more sensitive and understanding what they had to live with. (Ellen, 8, 1-10)

And Gary shared:

I like the fact that it's multi-ethnic. I don't speak Spanish and I can understand a few words, but I like that that has made me more aware of some other cultures and made me a little bit more aware of some of the politics going on in other countries: Venezuela, Nicaragua. . . . I've met a lot of Argentines and Brazilians that I would not have met if I haven't come down here; not to mention from Cuba or Cuban heritage. So I have enjoyed that also. (Gary, 2, 13-17)

Changing or shifting one's attitude towards the culture and people seemed to assist the participants in adapting to living in their new environment. The predominantly Hispanic cultural milieu found in Miami-Dade County, Florida was very different than the dominant Anglo culture that the participants were exposed to during their formative years of growing up in other U.S. states. Initially some of the participants had an attitude of closed-mindedness towards the cultural differences. Once the participants shifted their attitude to a more open-minded one, then they were able to adapt to living in a predominantly U. S. Hispanic metropolitan area. It should be noted that not all parti-

cipants had a closed-minded attitude. Several participants kept an open-minded attitude from the time that they first arrived in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

### **Sub-Theme: Value Change**

Another component of the adaptation process that emerged from the data involved a shift in values. A person's belief system forms their set of values. In order for the participants' attitudes to change, their values also changed. Imbedded within the texts were accounts of how different participants adapted to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida by changing one or more of their beliefs. For instance, *Joan* realized that one way in which her values changed involved her stereotypes. She shared, "I mean, I think I've changed in the fact that I've learned to adapt to people, less stereotype maybe" (Joan, 9, 43).

As *Tim* and *Ellen* became better acquainted with people in Miami-Dade County, Florida who were from Hispanic backgrounds, they both came to the same conclusion that "really they're not different than anybody else" (Tim, 5, 37). Tim shared that his wife, his best man at his wedding, and his best friends are all Cuban. *Ellen* reached the same conclusion as Tim that people are more similar than different:

I think that was really a growth for me, not that I was sheltered, that I was scared of people from other cultures; it's just that I didn't understand and didn't know them well. I wasn't exposed to them so I was a more hesitant having moved here.

I was a lot less hesitant and accepting them as individuals for their differences, but not all that different from who I am. (Ellen, 8, 33-40)

These participants kept an open mind and allowed themselves to become acquainted with Hispanic colleagues, neighbors, and co-workers. They concluded that people have much more in common with one another than they realized.

From his prior experience of living and working in Dallas, Gary had observed that the Hispanics that he had encountered in Texas tended to hold lower income jobs. Also, English was the language that was primarily spoken. In adapting to living and working in Miami-Dade County, Florida his image of Hispanics shifted when he realized that many of the key people in the community with influential positions were Hispanic, and Spanish was spoken as often as English. *Gary* recounted this personal reflection:

One of the biggest differences from my perspective is I'm an attorney and Dallas although there was a large Hispanic population, mostly Mexican not Cuban, but for the most part they were not in the upper echelons of the business community. They, for the most part, have lower income jobs and were serving more the industry fields than in the business world. I worked in a 60 story building downtown Dallas. You got on the elevator; odds are you were going to hear English spoken in the elevator and most of the business leaders were white or black and English-speaking, primarily the language. And when I came down here, certainly not only do you hear Spanish a lot, but there is a lot of foreign leaders in the community that are active down here. (*Gary*, 1, 31-39)

In adapting to living and working in Miami-Dade County, Florida Gary not only learned to not necessarily make assumptions about people that he encountered everyday,

but he found it refreshing that others did not always make assumptions about him. *Gary* talked about this:

So I like the fact that coming from Dallas, I kind of refer to as being rather white bread. It was pretty clear cut and people would also make assumptions just because you are white that you might share similar views or thoughts and biases or prejudices or whatnot just because you are white. And, I find less of that in Dade County. I think people are not going to jump to conclusions that you fit into any particular pocket, so that I actually like. (Gary, 2, 19-23)

In summary, another component of the adaptation process involved changing one's values. The participants had continual direct and indirect contact with Hispanic residents in Miami-Dade County, Florida. As they interacted with people within the community and the workplace, they relinquished some of their former ideas and beliefs. Assumptions changed. Of significance was the realization that people are more similar than different. Rather than focusing on cultural differences between Anglo-Americans and Hispanics, some of the participants voiced the realization that we are actually very much alike.

*Ellen's* reflection captures this:

There are so many experiences that people have that some Americans, including myself, were sheltered and just didn't have a grasp of understanding of how diverse and how large the world is. In contrast, it's very small because there are so many similarities to us all if we open up and we learn and listen to others. (Ellen, 9, 1-4)



### ***Sub-Theme: Behavior Change***

The third component in the participants' adaptation process occurred after their values and attitudes shifted. After living, working, and playing in Miami-Dade County, Florida for eighteen months or more, the participants' behavior changed. Things that they originally did not like, complained about or would never have done became things that they now do. *Cindy*, who complained about the Miami-Dade County, Florida drivers throughout her interview, admitted this personal behavioral change towards the end of her interview:

I am a worst driver, seriously. I drive faster. I honk my horn more and I probably cutoff many more people than I used to and I'm not as bad as some people, but when you have to keep up, you have to keep up. (*Cindy*, 12, 35-40)

Other participants shared various ways in which they changed some of their behaviors. *Ellen* for example, said, "I think I like variety of cultures more than I ever knew I could. Like Cuban coffee once in a while and I felt very comfortable traveling to Spain because having lived in Miami for a few years. . ." (*Ellen*, 8, 21-24). *Joan* revealed, "I speak a little Spanish now. My husband's Latin" (*Joan*, 5, 1). It is important to note here that while I did not use "Latin" and "Hispanic" interchangeably, many of the participants, including *Joan*, did use the terms interchangeably. *Gary* noted that because of living in Miami-Dade County, Florida he now makes a concerted effort to be worldly informed. He said, "I don't think that I was completely world ignorant, but I pay more attention now. So that's broadened my horizon" (*Gary*, 5, 1-2).

### **Patience.**

Becoming more patient was a behavioral change cited by three of the participants. In learning to cope with the cultural differences that they experienced as they lived in Miami-Dade County, Florida some of the participants adapted by developing patience. *Betsy*, who described herself as a fairly impatient person, explained why she developed more patience:

I have changed being more patient. I'm a fairly impatient person. I've had to be more patient. . . . when somebody is what I would say sometimes rude to me or disrespectful to me, I can't react that way because they aren't operating under the same choice as I am in behavior and manners and respect. They're just often different. So I've had to be more patient and more forgiving. (*Betsy*, 10, 6-10)

*Joan* and *Ellen* echoed *Betsy's* self-awareness that they too had changed by becoming more patient. They especially remarked that they had more patience with cultural differences. *Joan* said, "I mean, I think I've changed a lot like I said as far as adapting to, like I told you, the cultures. I can't tell you I have less patience. I'm more patient" (*Joan*, 10, 2-3). *Ellen* shared, "I coped in a way by accepting these people, how different they are and feeling for them. I'm, I guess more patient or understanding" (*Ellen*, 8, 12-13).

An examination of the text revealed another method by which the participants adapted to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. This third aspect involved a change in their behavior. This change took time. *Cindy* related:

I mean I really hated living here at first. It took me a good year to 18 months to be here and I like to say I'm okay living here. So it took me a really long time to adapt, I guess. (Cindy, 2, 42-44)

Some of the participants' driving habits changed. Their tastes in food and beverage choices, travel and interest in world events also changed. Learning to be patient with people surfaced as a behavioral change for some of the participants. *Joan* summarized these shifts in behavior:

I think I've learned to get along with all kinds of people, tolerance, patience with driving is one thing, but as a person you do have that patience because when you're out, you maybe in a store and someone doesn't understand the language or you're in a hurry, so you have to be patient, you have to be calm to people. I think I've learned that along the way. (Joan, 10, 38-41)

### **The Reverse Acculturation Experience**

In conclusion, the participants hailed from many different U.S. states. As one participant said, "we were all very, very similar upbringing, very similar people, personalities" (Betsy, 11, 33-34). They all relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida. Since they had been raised in the dominant Anglo-American culture of the U.S, most of the participants experienced culture shock as they attempted to acculturate into a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area. As each participant employed different strategies for coping with the cultural differences, they achieved different degrees of adaptation. As *Joan* related, "I've changed because like I said, I've adapted to the languages, the cultures, whereas like for example, my mom comes here. . . . she never

knew anybody from anybody in parts of the world” (Joan, 9, 38-42). In reflecting on her reverse acculturation experience, *Ellen* stated:

and for me, being very Anglo and being from one little town suburb of Philadelphia, I would have never been able to broaden my experiences of meeting so many people if I hadn’t lived here and enjoyed what Miami has to offer. (Ellen, 3, 24-27)

In reflecting upon her reverse acculturation experience, *Joan* came to this conclusion about living in Miami Dade County, Florida:

I can never go back. Because when you go home, I don’t know, I guess it’s just – not the people, not naïve, it’s just that they don’t have the exposure for, like I was telling you, of the world around them like we do here. It’s just different. Like I said those people stayed there, they go to school, they raise their kids there, they never left, they come maybe on vacation and they don’t go out of their world. It’s kind of like a little shelter, but I mean some people can’t afford to go out of their world. . . I was given the opportunity I could go outside of that, outside of the comfort zone. (Joan, 9, 22-32)

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the findings on the reverse acculturation experience of Anglo-Americans who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida from other U.S. states. Each of the participants shared his or her voice about their reverse acculturation experience. Their stories were embedded with poignant thoughts, feelings, and reflections of their individual journeys of adaptation to living within a predominantly U. S. Hispanic

metropolitan area. All of the participants experienced reverse acculturation; yet their experiences were not identical. The eight participants' unique stories had some similarities as well as differences. From their collective voices, major themes emerged from the textual data. Hermeneutical phenomenological analysis uncovered the themes of culture shock, coping strategies, and adaptation. These themes were supported by sub-themes. Together, the themes and their adjourning sub-themes formed a composite picture of the participants' reverse acculturation experience.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Overview**

*Contact between culturally diverse individuals is an inescapable aspect of life in the twenty-first century.*

*Stephen Bochner, 2006*

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings. Support for existing literature and a contribution to a gap in the literature are discussed. Limitations of the study are cited. Recommendations for future research and suggestions for counseling practice are given.

#### **Summary of the Study**

##### **Purpose of the Study**

The goal of this research was to study the lived experiences of relocated Anglo-Americans to learn about the reverse acculturation and adaptation processes as well as to examine the acculturation strategies that people use as they live within a predominantly U. S. Hispanic metropolitan area. The participants' reverse acculturation experiences offered insight into this unique phenomenon. For the past forty years the literature on acculturation has been dominated by research studies on immigrants assimilating into the culture of the host country (Ben-Sira, 1997; Berry, 1980; 2001; 2005; Finch & Vega, 2003; Kosic, 2002; 2004; Lysaard, 1955; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Rodriguez & Kosloski, 1998; Sam & Berry, 1995; Ying, 1996). Other studies on acculturation have examined the experiences of international students learning to adapt to living in another country (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004; Seltiz & Cook, 1962; Smalley, 1963; Swagler & Ellis, 2003;

Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Ying, 2005). Very little research has focused on members of a dominant culture group acculturating and adapting to living in an ethnic minority group's culture within their own country. Rarely has the reverse acculturation of Anglo-Americans into a minority group's culture been studied (Chen, 1997).

### **Significance of the Study**

The U.S. has the second largest Hispanic population after Mexico. Currently, the Hispanic population in the U.S. is 46.7 million. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by the year 2042 the Hispanic population will triple in size to almost 133 million and one out of every three Americans will be Hispanic (Bernstein & Edwards, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). These statistics and projections indicate a major shift in the demographics of the U.S. away from an Anglo-American majority status and towards a Hispanic majority. The 2010 U.S. Census indicated that Florida's Hispanic population has grown by 57.4% over the last ten years while the southern region of Florida saw 263,000 Anglo-Americans leave the state (as cited in Olorunnipa, 2011).

The population of Miami-Dade County, Florida has a Hispanic majority with 65 % of the residents claiming Hispanic lineage (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). What is occurring in large metropolitan areas such as Miami-Dade County, Florida which once held an Anglo-American majority is a shift to a former minority group becoming the dominant cultural influence. According to the 2010 census report, cities such as Tampa, Florida and Orlando, Florida are rapidly duplicating Miami-Dade County, Florida's Hispanic majority status (Olorunnipa). Currently, demographers are stating that Florida's population shift from an Anglo-American majority to a Hispanic majority will impact

every aspect of society from education to politics to the economy (Olorunnipa). This demographic trend underscores the need for studies to examine the experience of reverse acculturation of Anglo-Americans into a predominantly Hispanic metropolitan area. This need for further research is especially significant given the fact that the demographics of other Florida cities are following the pattern seen in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Consequently, this study aimed to learn about Anglo-Americans' reverse acculturation experience. The data that emerged indicated that this experience was informed by particular coping mechanisms and adaptation processes. The findings of this study could add a new facet to the current acculturation literature. For example, professional counselors and therapists could gain a better understanding of the reverse acculturation experience of their clients and in turn be better equipped to deal with their clients' needs. Human resource personnel and other interested stakeholders would be better informed about their employees' adjustment and adaptation needs so that they could design workshops and programs to assist them. Other Anglo-Americans who have or will be relocating to a predominantly U.S. Hispanics metropolitan area might be interested in learning about the accounts of people who have undergone the same phenomenon. A more in-depth discussion of the study's findings and how it pertains to professional counselors can be found in the section entitled "Implications for Practice" at the end of this chapter.

### **Methodology**

Reverse acculturation is an area in which sparse research has taken place. An excellent research approach for studying topics in which very little information is known



is a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research examines issues in depth and provides a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). A wealth of detailed information about a topic can be accumulated by using a qualitative approach because greater attention can be given to the nuances, setting, complexities, context, and idiosyncrasies of a research phenomenon (Patton). With the qualitative research approach a comprehensive and encompassing picture of a particular situation or experience can be constructed (Patton).

One of the oldest qualitative approaches is phenomenology. The major objective of phenomenology is to describe the lived experiences of everyday life (Moustakas, 1990; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). One of the goals of phenomenology is to explore the meaning, structure, and essence of a lived experience for a particular phenomenon as it has been experienced by a person (Patton, 2002). Phenomenological research seeks to gain insightful descriptions of how people experience the world pre-reflexively, without classifying, or abstracting it (Van Manen, 1990). It seeks to make explicit and to obtain universal meaning from people's lived experiences (Van Manen). Methodologically, phenomenology does this by uncovering and extrapolating the essences of a phenomenon as they are lived on a daily basis (Van Manen, 1990).

In this research study hermeneutical phenomenology is the specific research approach used to analyze the data. The hermeneutical phenomenological approach aims to understand what it feels like to be in the world of another person's experiences (Van Manen). One of the strengths of using this research methodology is that a researcher gains a greater understanding of an experience while remaining true to the lived exper-

ience through interpretative means (Robertson-Malt, 1999; Van Manen, 1990). Thus, being able to understand a participant's reverse acculturation experience was extrapolated and highlighted using this methodology.

In qualitative research the recommended method of sampling is a purposeful sample in which individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under study are selected as participants (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Eight Anglo-American men and women who were born and reared in another U.S. state and who then relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida within the past two or more years participated in the study. They were recruited through flyers posted at three different locations and also through the snowballing technique. In-depth interviews were conducted and audio-taped. Observation notes and reflections were made by the researcher during and after each interview. The audio-tapes were transcribed. The transcriptions became the data for analysis. Using Van Manen's approach to hermeneutical phenomenology, specific themes and sub-themes emerged from the data.

### **Results Summary**

A composite picture of the reverse acculturation process emerged from the analysis of the data. This picture was informed by the three major themes of culture shock, coping strategies, and adaptation. These themes were supported by nine sub-themes. The first theme of culture shock occurred when participants first relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida. The participants' culture shock included: a language barrier, driving style, and lifestyle differences. The participants' culture shock began to dissipate once he or she began to use coping strategies. This second theme of using coping strategies included

engaging in activities, making friends, and changing expectations. The third major theme that emerged, adaptation, occurred when participants chose to change their attitude, behavior, and values. All of these themes and sub-themes formed an overall picture: Anglo-Americans who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida underwent a reverse acculturation experience consisting of an initial culture shock, followed by using coping strategies to achieve different degrees of adaptation to their new community.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Upon further analysis, the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the research were supported by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. A discussion follows in which the findings are related to the literature. Additionally, findings from this study begin to close the knowledge gap on discovering the specific mechanisms and strategies that people use to acculturate and adapt. An interpretation of this study's results will be integrated into the chapter discussion.

### **Theme of Culture Shock**

Traditionally, the literature on culture shock has focused on individuals' experiences of traveling or relocating to another country. Research studies on culture shock have focused on immigrants, international students, international business people, military personnel, and missionaries (Adler, 1975, Burton, et al., 2004; Lysaard, 1955; Long, 1992b; Settles, 1993; Suh & Lee, 2006; Winkelman, 1994). More recent research addressed reverse culture shock in which an individual lived abroad and experienced culture shock upon re-entry back into his native country (Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Huff, 2001). Given the recent trends and data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2008; 2009;

2010) on the changing demographics in the U.S. and in Florida in particular, this researcher believe that in certain geographic regions of the U.S., a person can experience culture shock within one's own country.

Indeed, when relocating from one geographic area of the U. S. to another U. S. region, a person can experience dramatic culture shock. This is particularly true of Miami-Dade County, Florida which has shifted from an Anglo-American majority to a Hispanic majority. The findings from this current study support this idea. The participants, all of whom were Anglo-Americans, relocated from another U.S. state to Miami-Dade County, Florida where the majority of the population, 65%, is Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). In this study every participant reported culture shock experiences as they attempted to settle into a predominantly U. S. Hispanic metropolitan area. As Adler (1975) aptly predicted over a quarter of a century ago, "One need not sojourn outside of one's own country to experience culture shock" (p. 13).

All of the participants in this study described experiencing cultural shock, that is, emotional reactions to both new cultural stimuli which seem foreign and unfamiliar as well as experiencing being unable to control and/or predict other people's behavior in the new environment and misunderstanding new cultural experiences (Adler, 1975; Bochner, 1994; Bock, 1970). However, these new cultural experiences were not minor incidents; rather, they were major events in both the emotional and socio-cultural lives of the participants. As one of the participants said, "It's been hard for me, personally. Everything is different than Ohio, everything from people and their manners to traffic" (Cindy, 1, 6-8).

Cindy's sentiments reflect the disorientation, anxiety, and confusion that the culture shock experience exudes. These uncomfortable feelings that Cindy and the other participants acknowledged, typically occur in unfamiliar cultural surroundings (Bochner, 2006). The literature on culture shock suggests that the anxiety and stress that a person feels is due to the difficulties of conducting everyday tasks in a foreign cultural environment (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). The social skills model of culture shock is a theoretical explanation of why newcomers to a particular cultural and geographic region might experience difficulties (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). It will be discussed further at the end of this section on culture shock.

One area in which the participants experienced culture shock involved their inability to communicate in Spanish. In effect, the lack of fluency in Spanish acted as a communication barrier and hindered their ability to initially acculturate into the community and the workplace. Because language is a basic means of communication in any society, an inability to negotiate and navigate in a common language is a central source of culture shock (Kosic, 2004; Smalley, 1963)

### **Interesting Finding**

An interesting finding was that not all of the participants shared the same attitude about their inability to communicate in Spanish. Five of the participants viewed the language barrier as a major obstacle and as a source of frustration. These participants expressed feelings of isolation and exclusion as exemplified by Tim who revealed:

I didn't feel like I fit in because again, a huge percentage of the people that I work with or associate with all come from a Hispanic culture and they would constantly

break into Spanish, have little inside jokes in Spanish, things that they grew up with which definitely wasn't my background. So I have no idea what they were all laughing about. (Tim, 5, 27-31)

The other three participants in this study acknowledged that their lack of Spanish proficiency was a barrier; however, they viewed their lack of language skills in Spanish as a surmountable challenge rather than as a deterrent. One participant took a *laissez faire* approach while another one kept his sense of humor when befuddled by his inability to communicate in Spanish. These very different approaches, that is, viewing the language barrier issue as either an obstacle or as a surmountable challenge, reflect the idea found in the literature that culture shock need not always be negative (Adler, 1975; Furnham, 1997). For instance, some people, especially those that tend to be sensation seekers or are experienced travelers can find culture shock to be a positive experience because they enjoy the arousing stimulation of the unfamiliar (Furnham, 1997; Ward et al., 2001). One participant, Gary, sometimes embraced the differences in culture. In general, his outlook on his culture shock experience tended to be a positive one. The following two excerpts from his interview exemplify this, "Yeah, I would say a little isolated. It was at the same time exciting to explore and learn some of the areas. I would always ride my bike a lot so I would check out various areas. . ." (Gary, 3, 22-23) and "I really enjoyed all the various aspects of having a multicultural area. There are festivals. There is the music and artists like a man whose name I would never heard of, but I find that they're famous from whatever country, that they're here" (Gary, 5, 26-29). Gary's exploration of Miami-Dade County, Florida on his bike in which he ventured into unfamiliar territory and his

willingness to attend cultural festivals and concerts of musicians from other countries indicate that he might be a sensation seeker who enjoys the stimulation of novel situations. This inclination towards sensation seeking impacts Gary's willingness to actively participate in his new community; thus, affecting his view of his culture shock experience as being a positive one.

The differences in driving style emerged as a culture shock sub-theme for many of the participants. Even though the behavioral act of driving a vehicle does not place a person in direct contact with another person, indirect contact occurs because there must be another human physically operating the other vehicle. Since the population of Miami-Dade County, Florida is 65% Hispanic as revealed in the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau report, the participants in this study have had a fairly high opportunity of experiencing indirect contact with drivers of Hispanic origins.

According to the acculturation literature as a person experiences direct and indirect contact with members of another culture, i.e., intercultural contact, changes begin to take place (Berry, 2005; 2006a; Sam & Berry, 1997; Ward et al., 2001). One of the areas substantiated by research is value change. As a person shifts his or her values, the gap between cultures begins to close (Ward, 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1996). One of the participants, Cindy, had complained vigorously about the terrible drivers that she encountered on the road in Miami-Dade County, Florida. She expressed a great deal of fear and apprehension about driving. However, towards the end of her interview she admitted that as a result of driving in this county both her feelings and habits had changed, "I am a worse driver, seriously. I drive faster. I honk my horn more and I

probably cutoff many more people then I used to . . . when you have to keep up, you have to keep up” (Cindy, 12, 35-40). Thus, some of the participants changed their driving habits perhaps because they wished to overcome their negative emotional responses about driving in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Another source of culture shock for the participants in this study involved lifestyle differences regarding work ethic, etiquette, and parenting styles. Participants expressed dismay, annoyance, and anger about how often hired workers did not show up for work or did not complete the work that they were hired to do.

Other participants expressed similar emotions of surprise, disbelief, and annoyance about the differences in social norms. According to the literature, unfamiliarity with any or all aspects of a new cultural environment may contribute to a culture shock experience. The most fundamental difficulties occur in specific episodes, social situations, and transactions (Ward, et al., 2001). Suddenly, work-related transactions such as laborers not coming to work or not completing a job became shocking cultural experiences for the participants in this study.

Additionally, a frequently cited difference by the participants in this study involved the experience of non-Anglo-American friends and acquaintances either not responding to formal invitations or not keeping the social plans that they had made. According to the cultural learning component of the Social Skills Model, some of the more salient social skill disparities often occur in cultural differences in etiquette, rules, and non-verbal communication (Ward et al., 2001). Findings from this study support this idea. Participants expressed their distress over the fact that most of the people that they



encountered did not initiate greetings. They would respond to a friendly greeting, but they would not be the ones to initiate it. An even stronger emotional reaction was expressed by participants when Hispanic friends and acquaintances did not respond to formal invitations. As Ward et al. (2001) stated, “rules surrounding invitations and how these are to be extended and accepted are highly culture-bound” (p. 54).

Moreover, several participants expressed shock about the differences in parenting styles that they had observed and experienced. “For instance,” stated Gary, “if you’re out late at night, it’s not surprising at all to see a couple of Brazilians with young kids out that are two or three years old, out way past midnight, . . . it seems to be part of the parenting culture that if they’re going out, their kids will be out. . .” (Gary, 6, 1-6). What Gary perceived as possibly irresponsible parenting behavior reveals distinct cultural differences between Anglo-American child-rearing practices and those of Hispanic cultures. While Anglo-American parenting practices center around children going to sleep at fairly early times, even if that means hiring a babysitter to care for the children while the parents go out, many Hispanic parenting practices center on having the child stay with the parent or other close relative as much as possible, even if that means the child is out late in the evening.

Although the participants’ fear and apprehension about driving emerged in a previous sub-theme, participants also viewed the driving experience as an etiquette issue. The shock and disbelief expressed by the participants in this study regarding the general lack of courtesy on the road by other drivers can be construed as a perceived breach in social rules. Participants observed and stated that frequently other drivers seemed to

either disregard the “rules of the road” or lacked knowledge about safe driving practices. Several of the participants in this study, especially one in particular who flew often to other countries due to her work, thought that the difference in driving habits might be due to the fact that many drivers in Miami-Dade County, Florida learned to drive in countries that had very different driving rules. Cultural learning theory supports the idea that cultural differences in rules can be a major source of distress for newcomers into a society (Driskill & Downs, 1995; Ward et al., 2001). This theory is supported in the words of one of the participants, “. . . the driving thing. I think if people were courteous, but it’s just never going to work because everybody goes on the road and they have their own set of rules from where ever they come from and this is where they are. And you either put up with it or you don’t” (Joan, 10, 4-6).

Furnham and Bochner’s (1986) Social Skills Model provides an excellent framework for understanding the participants’ culture shock. One aspect of the social skills model consists of the cultural learning approach which purports that a person’s difficulties and distress in a new cultural situation can be attributed to the absence or distortion of familiar environmental and social cues (Furnham & Bochner). Additionally, authors on culture shock state that people who experience culture shock often lack reference points as well as knowledge of written and unwritten social norms (Adler, 1975; Furnham, 1997). Without these social cues and points of reference, the participants in this study were operating under a different set of rules to guide their actions and to interpret the behavior of people in the new cultural environment.

### **Theme of Coping Strategies**

When participants were asked how they coped to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida they shared their specific strategies. The participants' methods for adjusting to their new life resonated with similar coping strategies. The three sub-themes that emerged from their responses included engaging in activities, making friends, and changing expectations.

Each of the participants began to use different means to mediate between their cultural shock experiences and their efforts to acculturate to living in an area which is predominantly Hispanic. Inherent in this adjustment process is acculturative stress. Essentially, stress is a temporary physical and psychological reaction to stressors. As participants went about their daily living in their new cultural environment they inevitably encountered various stressors. Researchers have identified six categories of stressors that a person could experience during their process of acculturating. They are: physical, social, cultural, functional, environmental, and biological (Ben-Sira, 1997; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Ying, 2005; Zheng & Berry, 1991). Participants in this study experienced the physical stressor of an unfamiliar environment, the social stressor of making new friends, the cultural stressors of cultural and value differences, and the functional stressors of language barrier and driving habits. People's attitudes and expectations toward the acculturation experience effects their stress level, their coping strategies, and ultimately their ability to adapt to a new cultural environment (Hovey, 1999; Williams & Berry, 1991).

In response to stressful encounters and stressors, researchers have identified several basic coping strategies (Berry, 2006b). Problem-focused coping, when a person attempts to change or solve the problem by altering the source of stress and emotion-focused coping, when a person attempts to regulate his or her emotions to reduce distress associated with problems (Kosic, 2004; Lazarus, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Both are considered to be action-oriented coping methods. The participants in this study used both types of coping strategies. Research on coping strategies indicates that active coping strategies and cognitive appraisal methods, which involve thinking through a problem, seem to lessen the stressfulness of a situation (Compas, et al., 2001).

By engaging in activities and making new friends the participants actively sought to use strategies to acculturate into their new community. Consistent with findings by De Verthelyi (1995) and Suhyun and Lee (2006) the participants in this study used cognitive appraisal methods when they changed their expectations about people. With cognitive appraisal methods, a person develops new cognitive constructs to understand and subsequently enact appropriate behaviors (Compas, et al.; Furnham, 1997). In order for the participants to shift their expectations about how they think other people ought to behave, they engaged in cognitive appraisal, that is, they changed the way they think. By using cognitive appraisal the participants were better able to cope in their new cultural environment. The participants in this study coped by engaging in activities and acquiring friends from a variety of cultural backgrounds. These action-oriented coping strategies placed the participants in direct contact with members of the new cultural community which subsequently enabled them to alter their original or hoped for expectations.

Essentially, this change in expectations was a change in their thinking; hence, they used a cognitive reprisal method. Similarly, Suhyun and Lee (2006) found that the group intervention strategies that they employed with expatriated Korean wives involved cognitive reprisal methods. These researchers assisted their participants in shifting their focus from situational factors such as language barriers and insensitive spouses to factors that they could change such as their perspectives and expectations about these situations. The findings from this study on coping strategies and the use of cognitive reprisal support the research literature.

### **Theme of Adaptation**

Adaptation, from an acculturation viewpoint, pertains to the relatively stable changes that occur in an individual as he or she responds to the demands in the environment (Berry, 2006b). As each participant employed different coping strategies, a shift in their attitudes, values, and behaviors occurred. As they adopted different attitudes, changed values, and incorporated new behaviors into their lives the participants learned to adapt to living in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area.

In order for adaptation to take place each participant had to decide to what extent he or she wished to become a part of the new cultural environment. As a noted acculturation researcher observed, not everyone becomes a member of a new society in the same manner. Some people jump in with both feet, wishing to be absorbed into a new culture rapidly, while others are more cautious, wanting to retain a clear sense of their own heritage and cultural identity (Berry, 2006a). Accordingly, each participant used different acculturation strategies to adapt. These acculturation strategies are based on a

person's attitudes toward maintaining his or her culture of origin along with the person's attitudes toward the new cultural group(s) that reside in the new environment (Berry, 2006b; Berry, Trimble & Olmedo, 1986). Acculturation strategies are composed of two major components: attitudes, that is, what a person prefers and seeks out in a new cultural environment and behaviors, that is, what a person is able to do in the new environment such as speak or read another language (Berry, 2006b).

The four acculturation strategies are: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1997; 2001; 2003; 2006b). When people use the acculturation strategy of assimilation they do not wish to maintain their original cultural identity. Instead, they prefer to interact with members of the new cultural environment and to merge into the new culture (Berry, 2001, 2006b). None of the participants in this study seemed to exhibit this particular strategy. With the acculturation strategy of integration, people are interested in both maintaining their own culture while simultaneously interacting and adopting customs and values of members of the new cultural environment (Berry). To illustrate this strategy of integration, the words of two participants capture this method, "Well, jump in with both feet and eat at waterfront places, go to cultural events here, listen occasionally to Spanish music, things like that, that you feel like you live here" (Tim, 7, 1-2). "And for the most part, I just kind of immersed myself into even if I didn't speak Spanish I was at a place that didn't like to speak English I just went ahead and did my best. . ." (Gary, 4, 20-21). A total of six of the eight participants employed the integration strategy as their main method of adapting into the cultural environment in Miami-Dade County. One of the participants seemed to use the separation

strategy which involves a person retaining his own culture and at the same time avoiding interactions with members of the new society. The textual data from the other participant seemed to indicate a preference for the acculturation strategy of marginalization. With this strategy a person shows little interest in having relationships with people from the new cultural group. Often, but not always necessarily, this lack of interest is due to negative experiences with members from the dominant cultural group (Berry, 2001, 2006b).

The participant who tended to use the marginalization acculturation strategy had experienced many instances in which she had negative interactions with various Hispanics. As a result, she leaned towards seeking out and cultivating friendships primarily with Anglo-Americans and limited her interactions with Hispanics to a minimum. The other participant who used the separation acculturation strategy did not appear to have experienced many negative encounters, but his interactions with Hispanics were limited. This seemed to be due to the fact that he lived and worked in an area of the county which was predominantly Anglo-American. Occasionally he had contact with Hispanic and other minority residents in church, but for the most part his contact with members of the dominant cultural group was minimal. Whether his minimal contact was by choice or for other factors is not known.

According to the literature on acculturation strategies, the most successful of the four methods seems to be the integration strategy (Berry, 1990; Berry, 2006b; Berry & Sam, 1997; Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006). Six out of the eight participants used the integration strategy to adapt to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The participants who employed the integration strategy developed a sense of attachment and

belongingness to their new cultural community. They also adopted positive attitudes towards different Hispanic groups. And they learned to appreciate and value living and working in a culturally diverse community. These three signs of adaptive change: developing a sense of belonging to the new community, adopting a positive attitude towards members of the dominant cultural group, and learning to appreciate and value living in a culturally different community, had been found previously to support the acculturation strategy of integration (Berry & Kalin, 1995).

Acculturation strategies have demonstrated a significant relationship with positive adaptation (Berry, 1990; Berry, 2006b; Berry & Sam, 1997; Berry, et al., 2006). Of course, adaptation to one's new cultural environment is the hoped for final outcome of the acculturation process (Berry, 2006b). Two types of adaptation exist: psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Ward, 2001). The findings from this study indicate that both types of adaptation have occurred among the majority of the participants. Psychological adaptation, which refers to a person's emotional or psychological well-being, satisfaction, and happiness, is exemplified by Ellen's sentiments, "I've grown as an individual because of living in Miami-Dade County and adapting to the variety of cultures. I've lived here 30 years and I found myself becoming more interested in other people's culture and . . . I've learned to be aware and open for people's experiences" (Ellen, 1, 15-18). Sociocultural adaptation refers to a person's ability to acquire culturally appropriate skills such as language abilities, social skills, values, norms, and perspectives needed to negotiate or "fit into" a new cultural milieu (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). Tim demonstrated sociocultural adapt-



ation when he changed his perspective on who might make acceptable potential friends. He shared, “I stopped being so closed-minded about who my friends are going to be and that’s really what I did” (Tim, 6, 25-26). These two participants as well as the other participants learned to adapt to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida by changing their attitudes, behaviors and values, which is a function of sociocultural adaptation. As a result of using sociocultural adaptation measures most of the participants expressed feelings of well-being and satisfaction, which is a function of psychological adaptation.

### **The Reverse Acculturation Process**

The process of reverse acculturation occurs when Anglo-Americans acquire values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns through direct and/or indirect contact with people from other cultural origins (Chen, 1997). Very limited research has studied this phenomenon. In one study which took place in Austin, Texas, the researcher focused on factors that influence Anglo-American adaptation into a minority group’s culture in a predominantly Hispanic environment (Chen). One of the findings from Chen’s study indicated that the rise of multiculturalism has “forced Anglo-Americans to reassess their vision of cultural diversity in the U.S.” (1997, p. 153). Given the startlingly and rapidly changing demographics in the U.S. in which it is predicted that one out of every three Americans will be Hispanic by the year 2042, this present study filled a need to learn more about an increasingly important, but little known area of research.

As in Chen’s research, the participants in this study experienced both direct and indirect contact with members of the dominant cultural group which in both cases were Hispanics; however, this study took place in a different geographical region of the U.S.,

in particular, Miami-Dade County, Florida. The findings from this research showed that Anglo-Americans who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida from another U.S. state underwent a reverse acculturation experience consisting of an initial culture shock followed by the use of coping strategies and acculturation strategies to achieve adaptation to their new community. Previous research has shown that a person's ability to adapt to a new cultural environment is affected by these influences: acculturative stress in response to culture shock experiences, coping strategies, acculturation strategies, and cultural distance, i.e., how dissimilar two cultures are in language, values, religion, foods, and so forth (Berry, 2006b; Ward et al., 2001). This researcher found that at least six of the eight participants enthusiastically embraced and accepted aspects of the Hispanic culture while the remaining two participants chose to retain much of their ethnocentric values, attitudes, and behaviors. Indeed, all of the participants in this study experienced culture shock, used coping strategies, and employed different acculturation strategies to achieve a level of adaptation to living in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Perhaps the reverse acculturation process can best be captured in the words of this participant:

I guess I've also learned that if you don't want to experience different stuff, you could easily live in an area and discover that you're not happy and that you just want to move back to what you're used to. I think if you move to an area that is different, you have to expect the differences and try to embrace or at least find parts of the differences that you like. Otherwise, you're just going to be sitting there going, 'This isn't the way it used to be? This isn't the way things were before.'

Nothing too earth shattering about that, but that's my perspective. (Gary, 5, 31-36)

## **Implications**

In closing, reverse acculturation is a process. From the findings of this study, it is a process consisting of culture shock, coping strategies, and adaptation. The question remains: is it a unique process on its own merit, or is it part of the overall general acculturation process? The current acculturation models of Berry (2006b) and Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) suggest that reverse acculturation might belong to the overall acculturation process. The findings in this present study revealed an acculturation process pattern that seemed to parallel two leading theoretical approaches of acculturation: “stress, coping and adaptation” and “cultural learning” (Berry, 2006b). The findings from this present study indicate a melding of the two acculturation theories of “stress, coping and adaptation” and “cultural learning”. This homogenization occurred as the participants experienced a “shock” regarding the unexpected cultural differences that they encountered in the initial stage of the acculturation process when they relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida. The culture shock slowly dissipated as the participants used coping strategies which helped them to learn about the new culture in which they lived and they began to shed or alter some of their cultural beliefs and practices. The participants’ use of coping and acculturation strategies assisted in their psychological, behavioral and value change which led to their adaptation to a new cultural environment.

Perhaps what makes reverse acculturation a distinct phenomenon from acculturation is its context. From a contextual point of view, reverse acculturation might best be thought of as a unique form of the acculturation process that occurs within the relocation experience to a vastly different cultural environment within one’s own country. It is

recommended that further research into this phenomenon could yield evidence that supports or refutes this proposition.

## **Recommendations**

### **Future Research**

Given the increasing changes in demographics in the U.S., additional research into the phenomenon of reverse acculturation is warranted. Very little research has studied the reverse acculturation process. Considering the U.S. Census Bureau's predictions that over the next ensuing 35 years the population of the U.S. will move away from an Anglo-American majority towards a Hispanic majority, many unanswered questions remain.

It is my recommendation that additional research be conducted in Miami-Dade County with larger groups of relocated Anglo-Americans using a mixed methods approach. This could further support the findings of this study. It could also provide empirical results that are elaborated upon by qualitative information obtained from participants. I would also suggest that this study be replicated using participants who have lived in Miami-Dade County for a shorter time span, (e.g., 2 to 7 years) to ascertain if the findings would be similar. Also, it would be interesting to see if similar findings would be found if this type of study were conducted with a different demographic group such as African-Americans or Asians who were reared in another U. S. state and who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida during their adult years. Additionally, I would recommend that more studies be conducted in other areas of Florida, such as Orlando and Tampa, both of which are currently experiencing a large increase in their Hispanic

population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). These additional studies would add to the currently limited knowledge base on the phenomenon of reverse acculturation.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Life changes such as relocating to a new geographical region are inherently stressful. Stress experienced in a new cultural environment becomes acculturative stress. The stressors experienced by people who relocate to regions in the U.S. in which a minority group is the majority certainly poises potential situations for a person to experience culture shock. How well or how poorly a person copes with acculturative stress and its accompanying stressors is an area in which professional counselors and other mental health professionals can provide assistance to clients. The strategies that the participants in this study used to cope with their acculturative stress and the acculturation strategies that they employed can give counselors ideas for assisting clients who might be experiencing reverse acculturation.

The information gained from this study can aid mental health counselors to better help clients, particularly Anglo-American clients, who have relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida. To promote successful sociocultural adaptation, counselors should inquire about the clients' expectations and preconceived ideas about life in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Also, a conversation about the clients' perceived differences and similarities in values could be beneficial because value differences are indicators of cultural distance that can lead to socio-cultural difficulties. A counselor's conversation with a client regarding his or her expectations and values in the new cultural environment can help lead to effective interventions.

Both findings from this study as well as information found in the acculturation literature would suggest that counselors might want to consider some of the following interventions to assist clients' adaptation process. In working with the client, a mental health professional would want to discuss the client's coping strategies. Culture-specific skills such as language acquisition, learning points of etiquette, and using other action-oriented strategies would be valuable interventions to assist a client with his or her sociocultural adaptation and subsequent psychological adaptation. Counselors could use cognitive appraisal interventions to help Anglo-American clients to cope with acculturation and adaptation issues. Additionally, mental health personnel in other regions of Florida or the U.S. who live in areas that are predominantly Hispanic might be interested in the information contained in this study.

### **Limitations**

Traditionally, studies such as this one and others found in the literature that involve the adaptation of people who relocate to other areas is that they have been conducted in places where multicultural societies exist. Inherent in most multicultural societies is the acceptance of cultural diversity. Therefore, people who move into culturally diverse areas would expect more acceptance and positive experiences. If a study such as this one were conducted in an area where tolerance of multiple cultures did not exist, one would expect very different findings.

Because qualitative research is subjective in nature, it is open to interpretation. Phenomenological studies in particular are based on participants' self-reported stories, experiences and perspectives. For this research study the data and findings are based on

the participants' unique reverse acculturation experiences in Miami-Dade County, Florida as told to this researcher.

Additionally, due to the nature of the research, the participants for this study were purposefully selected using criterion sampling. Using this sampling method, only people who had experienced the phenomenon were selected to participate. Therefore, the findings from this study are limited to the Anglo-American participants who live in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

### **Lessons Learned**

In closing, as a researcher, I gained insights and learned lessons from the lived experiences of my participants. When analyzed, the reverse acculturation stories further illuminated the phenomenon of reverse acculturation. A review of the literature reveals that there is a dearth of research on this topic and none of it is recent. In particular, this study adds to the sparse research on reverse acculturation. Very few studies exist that address the rapidly changing contemporary demographic scene in 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. from a predominantly Anglo-American dominated cultural environment to a predominantly Hispanic cultural environment.

I believe that it is vital to increase our understanding of the reverse acculturation process considering both the changing demographics of Florida and the U.S. as well as the projected changes in the composition of the U.S. population as forecasted by the U.S. Census Bureau. As these demographic changes continue to take place, counselors and other professionals in the helping fields will need current and relevant research to better assist them in their work. Counselors as well as other stakeholders such as human

resources personnel, educators, and policy makers can learn from this study's participants' coping strategies and adaptation processes that can help them to develop effective interventions, training programs and establish beneficial policies. Additionally, families and individuals who are about to embark on an intranational migration to a region of the U.S. which is predominantly Hispanic, might gain some benefit with their relocation, cultural encounters, and adaptation experiences from this study's findings.

As a researcher I also learned valuable information from my participants' reverse acculturation experiences. Adaptation, the hoped for final outcome of reverse acculturation, tended to occur when participants adopted an attitude of open-mindedness to new cultural experiences and people who were different than themselves. Also, when participants were willing to venture outside of their dwelling place and partake of cultural opportunities in the new community, adaptation tended to occur. Lastly, adaptation took time. In order for the participants to achieve a level of adaptation in their new cultural community they needed to be willing to invest time as they underwent to the reverse acculturation experience.

### **Significant Contribution**

A significant contribution from the findings of this present study involves a gap in the acculturation literature. According to Nguyen (2006) a missing piece in the acculturation-adaptation research is the mechanisms by which a person journeys through the acculturation process and eventually adapts to the new cultural environment. The participants' detailed descriptions of their coping strategies revealed the particular mechanisms by which they navigated the reverse acculturation process. The participants'



use of the action-coping methods of engaging in activities and making friends placed them in a position where they experienced continuous, first-hand contact with Hispanic residents in Miami-Dade County, Florida. According to the literature, a necessary ingredient for acculturation to occur is continuous, first-hand contact with members of the new cultural community (Berry, 2006a; Sam, 2006). By using the coping strategies of engaging in activities in the community and making new friends with members of the Hispanic community, the participants used problem-solving methods to cope with their culture shock.

In addition to employing action-oriented coping strategies the participants also experienced psychological change. Participants changed their cognitive construct regarding expectations of people who live and work in Miami-Dade County, Florida. When the participants moved to Miami-Dade County, Florida they brought with them their Anglo-American perspective of etiquette rules, expected work ethic, and parenting styles. Discovering that their cultural framework did not fit 100% into the predominantly Hispanic cultural environment, they rectified their cultural dissonance by changing their expectations. This change in expectations is exemplified in the words of this participant:

Lowering my expectations and not being upset when somebody said something to me and I would take it . . . if this was the same person in Texas, I would find it offensive and be just shocked. And if the same person said the same thing to you here in [Miami]-Dade County, I can't get shocked and upset because they were brought up differently than I was brought up and most of the people who are from other countries. (*Betsy*, 9, 38-42)

In conclusion, the coping strategies, acculturation strategies, and cognitive appraisal methods used by the participants in this study illustrate some of the mechanisms by which a person may eventually achieve adaptation to a new cultural environment.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study examined the phenomenon of reverse acculturation. The lived experiences of relocated Anglo-Americans and the coping mechanisms, acculturation strategies, and adaptation processes that they used to live in a predominantly U.S. Hispanic metropolitan area were studied. Using a purposeful sampling method participants who had experienced the phenomenon were selected and interviewed. The interviews became the textual data that were analyzed using a hermeneutical phenomenological approach. Three major themes and nine sub-themes emerged from the data analysis. The first theme of culture shock was supported by the sub-themes of language barrier, driving style, and lifestyle differences that the participants experienced. The next theme, coping strategies, emerged as the participants negotiated the distance between their own culture and the Hispanic culture. Coping strategies included engaging in activities, making friends, and changing expectations. Adaptation, the third major theme that emerged from the data, occurred when participants chose to change attitudes, values, and behaviors. A composite picture emerged from the findings: Anglo-Americans who relocated to Miami-Dade County, Florida underwent a reverse acculturation experience consisting of an initial culture shock, followed by using coping strategies to achieve different degrees of adaptation to their new community. The findings from this study not

only support the acculturation literature, but aided in closing the gap on the coping mechanisms that participants use to adapt to their new cultural community.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer

(Posting at a local community center)

## **Participants Needed for a Research Study**

**The purpose of this study is to learn more about people's experiences of relocating and living in Miami-Dade County.**

**Participants must:**

- **Be 21 years old or older**
- **Be Male or Female**
- **Be Anglo-American**
- **Moved to Miami-Dade County from another state**
- **Lived in Miami-Dade County at least 2 years.**
- **Have Children living at home between the ages of 3-18 years old (Note: Children are not part of the study).**
  - Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential.
  - Participants may be interviewed for up to 60 minutes.
  - A participant may withdraw from this study at any time.

If you or someone you know is interested in being a part of this study, please contact Ginny Peterson Tennant at (305) 895-9473 or by email at [ginny.pet@comcast.net](mailto:ginny.pet@comcast.net).

This research is being conducted to fulfill a doctoral degree requirement at Barry University. The supervisor of the doctoral committee is Dr. Richard Tureen. He may be contacted at (305)899-3741.

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Flyer

(Posting at a local library)

# Participants Needed for a Research Study

**The purpose of this study is to learn more about people's experiences of relocating and living in Miami-Dade County.**

### **Participants must:**

- **Be 21 years old or older**
- **Be Male or Female**
- **Be Anglo-American**
- **Moved to Miami-Dade County from another state**
- **Lived in Miami-Dade County at least 2 years.**
- **Have Children living at home between the ages of 3-18 years old (Note: Children are not part of the study).**
  - Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential.
  - Participants may be interviewed for up to 60 minutes.
  - A participant may withdraw from this study at any time.

If you or someone you know is interested in being a part of this study, please contact Ginny Peterson Tennant at (305) 895-9473 or by email at [ginny.pet@comcast.net](mailto:ginny.pet@comcast.net).

This research is being conducted to fulfill a doctoral degree requirement at Barry University. The supervisor of the doctoral committee is Dr. Richard Tureen. He may be contacted at (305)899-3741.

Appendix C

Recruitment Flyer

(Posting at researcher's church)

## **Participants Needed for a Study**

**The purpose of this study is to learn more about people's experiences of relocating and living in Miami-Dade County.**

**Participants must:**

- **Be 21 years old or older**
- **Be Male or Female**
- **Be Anglo-American**
- **Moved to Miami-Dade County from another state**
- **Lived in Miami-Dade County at least 2 years.**
- **Have Children living at home between the ages of 3-18 years old (Note: Children are not part of the study).**
  - Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential.
  - Participants may be interviewed for up to 60 minutes.
  - A participant may withdraw from this study at any time.

If you or someone you know is interested in being a part of this study, please contact Ginny Peterson Tennant at (305) 895-9473 or by email at [ginny.pet@comcast.net](mailto:ginny.pet@comcast.net).

This research is being conducted to fulfill a doctoral degree requirement at Barry University. Chairperson of the doctoral committee is Dr. Richard Tureen. He may be contacted at (305)899-3741.

## Appendix D

### Barry University

#### Informed Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. The researcher, Ginny Peterson Tennant, is a doctoral student in Barry University's Counseling Department. The title of her research project is "A Fish Out of Water: A Phenomenological Study on Reverse Acculturation of Relocated Anglo-Americans". The goal of this study is to explore and learn more about the experiences of people who have relocated to Miami-Dade County from other U.S. states. Each participant will be interviewed by the researcher using a semi-structured format. There will be approximately 7 to 10 participants.

If you choose to participate in this research study, the researcher will interview you for up to one hour and the interview will be audio-taped. If any follow-up questions are needed, e.g., clarification of information, then a short second interview of approximately half an hour will be conducted. After the researcher has read through the interview transcripts, then you will meet with the researcher to review her interpretations of your responses.

The information that you provide to the researcher will be kept in strict confidence as permitted by law. You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity. Your identity will also be kept confidential from any person that will transcribe the audio-tapes or from any peer reviewer who is assessing the research study. If any or all of the results of this study are published, only themes from the research and pseudonyms will be used. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data. All data will be shredded and properly disposed of after five years.

The risks involved in participating in this research study are minimal. It is possible that the interview might evoke feelings or memories that might be distressful. If you are experiencing any distress as a result of participating in this research study, then the researcher will refer you to a mental health agency, counselor or psychologist. Furthermore, there are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, you might experience a sense of satisfaction as a result of contributing to research and subsequently helping to increase and build a body of knowledge on reverse acculturation.

Your consent to participate in this research study is voluntary. If you wish to withdraw from this study, you may do so at any time, without any adverse effects to yourself or to your relationship with the researcher. If you choose to withdraw from this study, all of your data will be destroyed and properly disposed. If you have any questions about the study or your participation in the study, please contact the researcher, Ginny

Peterson Tennant, at (305) 895-9473 or (305) 237-1030. You may also contact the supervisor of my dissertation committee, Dr. Richard Tureen, at (305) 899-3741 or Barbara Cook, IRB coordinator at (305) 899- 3020.

I have read and understood the information presented in this consent form concerning my participation in this research study. I acknowledge that the nature and purpose of this research has been explained to me by the researcher, Ginny Peterson Tennant. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this research study.

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*Signature of Participant* *Date*

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*Researcher's Signature*

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*Date*

## Appendix E

### Interview Guide Questions

1. What has the experience of acculturating and adapting to living in Miami-Dade County been like for you?
2. Compared to the state that you used to live in, how is living in Miami-Dade County similar and different to your former place of residence?
3. In relocating and adapting to living here, what have you experienced?
4. Describe for me some of the feelings, thoughts, and emotions that you have experienced during your process of relocating here.
5. What have you liked about living and working in Miami-Dade County?
6. What have you not liked about living and working in Miami-Dade County?
7. As a result of moving and living here, how have you changed?
8. What have you learned as a result of this experience?



## Appendix F

### Telephone Protocol

Hello, my name is Ginny Peterson Tennant. I am a doctoral candidate at Barry University in Miami Shores, FL. I am conducting research on the lived experience of non-Florida natives acculturating to living and working in Miami-Dade County. You must be a native-born U.S. citizen who is at least 18 years old and was raised in another U.S. state and moved to Florida. You must be the custodial parent of school-aged children between the ages of 3-18 years. You need to be non-Hispanic and live and work in Miami-Dade County for at least 2 years.

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. You will need to read and sign a consent form which will be explained to you prior to the in-depth interview. There are no direct benefits for participating in this study, but by participating in this study you may help to increase knowledge and information in the field of acculturation research. Additionally, by participating, the research results could help counselors, therapists, and psychologists as well as educators and other interested people to better assist people who have moved to Miami-Dade County from other states and are adapting to living here.

The interview will take place at either my place of employment at 11380 NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Miami, FL 33167 or at the Brockway Memorial Library located at 10021 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Miami Shores, FL 33138 or at a location convenient to you. The interview will last approximately one hour. During the interview you will be provided with a list of the questions that I will ask. If you feel uncomfortable answering any of them, then you may decline to answer that question(s). The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed by either me or an authorized transcriber. Your identity will be protected and kept confidential. Your data will be assigned a pseudonym and stored in a locked file. If needed, a second short follow-up interview may take place to clarify and verify data.

In keeping with the standards of Barry University's Internal Review Board, all collected data will be destroyed after a period of five years. The risks involved in participating in this research study are minimal. If you happen to experience any distress as a result of participating in this study, then the researcher will refer you to a counselor or psychologist or mental health agency.

If you are interested in participating in this research study, then I'll be happy to set up an appointment for you for the interview. If you do not wish to participate in this study, then I thank you for your time and interest.

## Appendix G

### Research Participants' Demographic Information

Name of Research Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of participant: Circle one:    MALE    FEMALE

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently working outside of the home? Circle one:    YES    NO

Level of Educational Attainment:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of Children Living at Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Age and Gender of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you lived in Miami-Dade County? \_\_\_\_\_

From which U.S. state did you move when you relocated to Florida? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prior to moving to Miami-Dade County, did you speak and/or read and write a language other than English? Circle one:    YES    NO

If you did speak and/or read and write any other languages other than English, what languages are you conversant in? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H

### Memoing and Observation Field Notes Form

Participant's Name:

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Location:

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Time of Day:    MORNING                      AFTERNOON                      EVENING

Observations of Participant during the Interview:

Reflections – Impressions, Ideas, and Inferences (Written after the interview):