A study of the status and social acclimation of international students' wives at Iowa State University and Ames community

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the characteristics, needs, and expectations of the international students' wives in Ames, Iowa. Participants included 89 international students' wives from twenty different countries. International students' wives enter the United States on a dependent visa status, and they experience a unique set of challenges while accompanying their husbands.

The purpose of this study was to gain some insights on how international students' wives perceive their internal and external resources at arrival, and the types of obstacles they have to overcome to achieve a successful adaptation to this transitional role. It also tested additional exploratory questions related to goals for the sojourn, occupational and homemaker role reward value, learning behaviors and type of learning activity undertaken, domestic violence and immigration status.

Results indicate a great diversity among wives. Personal variables seem to predominate over situational factors, with personality traits, and individual and couple history appearing as more defining of psychological well-being than cultural distance and racial background. Gender-role orientation and work family values were a key factor in the degree of culture-shock.

Results are addressed by discussing challenged faced by international students' wives, the role of marital relationship as well as the necessity and nature of programs offered to them during their staying in Ames, IA. Based on this data the study intends to provide some suggestions for services and programs which could further facilitate early intercultural adjustment and enhance their psychological well-being during their stay.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Within the past few years the number of international students studying in United States' universities has grown substantially (Walker, 2000). In every U.S university there are now likely to be international students and international scholar communities. International students generally live in campus dormitories or housing units near the university complex.

During Fall Semester 2008, 2,497 international students were enrolled at Iowa State University (Office of Registrar, ISU 2008). Of the 2, 497 international students attending Iowa State University (ISU), 560 international students at ISU were accompanied by their spouses, 472 women and 88 men (Table 2). ISU is located in Ames, Iowa a city of population 50,000.

Beyond the logistics of helping the students and wives with visas, and staying legally in Ames, ISU does not do very much to help international students' families to adjust and adapt to the new culture and environment during their sojourn.

International students' wives cannot access university resources, and benefits that were available to their husbands were not available to them, such as counseling and medical coverage. Their participation in various campus activities was very limited. This situation accentuates accompanying wives' perception of being outsiders and marginalized from the university community.

International students' families have very little supports groups in the community and none from ISU during their sojourn. The only two programs available for international students' wives are offered by the Friends of International Women (FIW), and YWCA Ames-ISU. Both programs assist international wives in Ames in their adjustment to U.S. culture. These groups provide a social environment through which international women can become acquainted with

Ames, learn about activities and services for themselves and their families, and practice English conversational skills. English conversation groups consist of six to ten international and U.S. women. FIW groups meet one or two times a month in members' homes. “Embracing International Spouses” is offered by the YWCA (campus organization) that has started only three years ago. Embracing International Spouses (EIS) was created for international wives by international wives. The program helps international wives integrate into the Ames and Iowa State University communities by creating a support network for international families. Neither these programs were funded by ISU.

Very little is known about the needs, obstacles of integration, and acculturation processes of wives of international students which belong to the ISU community. The one thing the wives had in common was that they all were here because of their husbands’ academic career or professional commitment to ISU. The ISU community does not expect from these wives to fulfill any special task or to achieve any positive result during their sojourn. It does not mean they were not capable or willing to do so. In many cases they were professionals in their home countries, great human resources that our community can benefit of. These women include engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, psychologists, social workers and nurses. They choose to postpone their own career opportunities and development believing this decision was for the best of their own families. Here and now, due to visa limitations or lack of opportunities to develop professionally in Ames, they stay at home as housewives and remain unemployed.

de Verthelyi (1995) in her study with 49 international spouses of graduate international students at a large university in rural Virginia states that “While some spouses adapted easily, enjoying a more relaxed life style, others found the lack of professional activity a very painful experience, one of loss of valued aspects of their identity, and a severe blow to their self-esteem" (398).

The focus of this study was on female spouses of international students since the number of male spouses was found to be significantly smaller (de Verthelyi, 1998). The purpose of this study is to identify the main needs and obstacles of integration perceived by international students' wives during their sojourn in ISU and Ames. Because there is a lack of research regarding wives of international students' cross- cultural adjustment at ISU during their sojourn, their needs and the obstacles they face, this study will make a significant contribution in identifying implications and formulate recommendations to improve their social acclimation. The voices and experiences of international student's wives are especially underrepresented in sojourners research. Wives may have been neglected in sojourners research, perhaps because of their accompanying status they hold. Given the growing number of international students and their accompanying wives for extended sojourn in the United States, research concerning their welfare and experiences of sojourner wives is very important.

Overview of the study

YWCA Ames-ISU a nonprofit campus organization at Iowa State University support a program for international students wives called Embracing International Spouses, was selected as my research site based on its objectives and target group. EIS provide me access to the wives of international students in the area.

The topic was investigated through a three stage process; first through the design and administration of a survey; and second through two series of focus groups; and third through semi-structured interviews. Eighty nine wives were surveyed. They came from twenty different countries ranging from East Asia to the Middle East, South America and South and Eastern Europe. All of them came to the U.S. as their husbands' dependents. Some come under F2 visa status which, according to federal regulations, does not allow them to work or to be enrolled as full-time students at school (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2001, http://travel.state.gov/visa;internationalstuden.html). Others come under J2 visa status, which allows them to work or pursue a degree (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2001, http://travel.state.gov/visa;internationalstuden.html).

The focus groups and the interviews conducted with international wives revealed concerns among international students' wives about their lack of professional development, cultural shock, lack of social networks, cases of domestic abuse once they arrived in Ames, and isolation. The topic of domestic violence was not included in the focus groups, interview and the survey, however some participants expressed interest in discussing this issue. The findings are included in the final study.

In most cases, according to their responses, coming to ISU and Ames changed their previous social status negatively. For many of them, the experienced loss of professional status developed into frustration and depressive-like behaviors.

1.2. Developing a Definition of International Students' Wives

International student's wives are women who come to the United States because their husbands come to study for master's or doctoral degrees in U.S. academic institutions for their own career advancement. International student's wives are prohibited from working for wages in the United States because they are considered legal dependents of their husbands who are considered temporary immigrants, coming to the U.S. to study.

When the wives of international students decide to leave their home country, the preparation that they receive for coming to the U.S. is typically not as intensive as the one that their husbands undergo. Before the husbands arrive in the U.S., they usually have been prepared for success in every aspect of their studies: English training, academic skills, and social adjustment with the new culture. However, there are generally no such requirements or resources for the wives.

As soon as they arrive in the U.S, international wives need to adjust to and prepare for their new lives. In most cases, it is radically different from places and conditions that they are familiar in their home country. Close friends with whom they can talk and share experiences are much less available. These wives have to try by themselves every possible solution for becoming comfortable in the new situation. It is difficult for the wives to learn new knowledge, skills, and attitudes when they are short of help and limited in their cultural experiences.

Wives join their husbands in order to give those husbands emotional support and to reduce the cost and difficulty of long distance communication. In the U.S., wives are also expected to help the husband take care of the house, prepare everyday meals, and raise children.

Linguistic, academic and cultural skills and other personal qualities vary greatly among wives. These characteristics influence how the wives respond to their new environments. Wives who speak English fluently tend to socialize with local American people more and seem to learn more about new cultural habits and values than those who are struggling with the language. Those who do not speak English feel more comfortable staying with other women from the same country or region of origin, because they speak their language and share the same or similar culture. Wives have to be brave, creative and independent to initiate education for themselves.

Wives usually do not have continuous financial support to pursue their education, though Iowa State University often offers women opportunities to continue learning, starting with non-degree programs and continuing to the formal degree level of education once they changed their visa status to F1.

1.3 Methods and Procedures

This study was conducted at Iowa State University.

The research process began with personal “insider knowledge”, essential for a qualitative approach (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984), resulting from the researcher’s previous status as an dependent visa holder, and previous work with international families. A naturalistic inquiry was chosen to “best unveil the nature, essences, characteristics, and meanings of phenomena as fully and completely as possible and within a particular context” (Leininger, 1992, p. 34).

The measurement of international student’ wives needs, obstacles of integration and feelings experienced during their sojourn was conducted through a three stage process, first through the design and administration of a survey, second through two series of focus groups, and third through semi- structured interviews.

The survey was completed by the wives of international students in their houses and on campus. To ensure greater understanding of the study and issues of consent, this information was presented in both written and oral form. Respondents were encouraged to seek assistance from the researcher at any time if questions arose while completing the survey.

1.3.1. Survey

Survey respondents were asked about the main needs they experienced during their sojourn in ISU and Ames. Also respondents were asked about the perceived obstacles of integration and feelings they went through during their acculturation process. Both questions were asked referring to two different stages during their sojourn: 1. when they first moved to Ames; and 2. after 1 1/2 year of living in Ames. Finally respondents were asked about their general level of satisfaction (see Appendix C-survey form). Each participant was asked to sign a consent form to ask for their agreement of participating in the study (see Appendix B -consent form).

1.3.2. Focus groups

Focus groups played a complementary role in this research giving voice to the survey respondents. The purpose to use focus group in this study was to produce data complementing the information obtained by the survey instruments, illustrating with real stories and life experiences the answers given by the respondents in the survey. The basic purpose in using focus groups was to hear wife's discussions of issues of relevance to them. Thus, it was important to set up groups where participants were likely to share common interests, and feel comfortable in expressing their views in front of the other group members. Six questions and a sub question were asked during the two focus group sessions (see Appendix D-focus group questions).

Number of participants

The typical size of a focus group was six to nine participants. This range gives scope for a large enough range of different viewpoints and opinions, while enabling all individual participants an opportunity to express their views in some detail, and we wanted the participants to develop and work through ideas for solutions.

1.3.3. Interviews

This qualitative study explores the characteristics, needs, and expectations of this specific sojourner population. Participants were wives from 20 different countries whose husbands are international graduate students at ISU. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted covering a wide range of areas, background information on life in their home countries, the process of migrating to the U.S, their perception of the role as an international student's wife, and social networks in Ames. Insights were provided regarding such pre-arrival dimensions as choice and decision making, psychological preparation, length of proposed stay, preparedness for change, degree of information about the USA, and formulation of personal project for the sojourn. Among the dimensions impacting on the early adjustment process special attention was given to English fluency, financial status, and missing family and friends.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, and two-way communication. Unlike the survey framework, where detailed questions are formulating ahead of time, semi structured interviewing started with more general questions and topics. The majority of questions were created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details.

International students' wives who travel with their husbands to the United States while they pursue academic degrees often experience the extremes of assimilation into the host culture. The purpose of this study was to address the following questions: (a) What are the processes used by international women to adapt to life in the United States, and (b) what are the barriers they encounter, as wives of students and mothers of their children, in adapting to this new life?

1.4. Demographics characteristics of participants

1.4.1. Demographic characteristics of survey respondents

The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 3. Respondents were between 23 to 54 years old. Four of them omitted their ages. They came from East Asia to the Middle East, South America and South and Eastern Europe. Even when H4 visa holders are not strictly considered wives of international students, the researcher was interested on their responses because they spent a considerable amount of time in Ames under F2 or J2 visa. The accompanying wives under H4 visa in this study have recently changed from F2 or J2 to another dependent visa because their husbands have just graduated and gotten a job at ISU.

Educational level and occupational status

Although accompanying wives did not come originally to Ames/ISU as students themselves, of the 89 subjects, 63 finished a university or postgraduate degree, 20 some college, and 6 finished high school. Currently 85% remain unemployed in Ames, and 15 % are employed.

1.4.2. Demographics characteristics of focus groups participants

The demographic characteristics of the first and second focus group are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 respectively.

Of the 23 subject who participated in the focus groups, all of them (100%) were female, and all of them held university degrees from their countries and work full-time or part-time before moving to the US. In the first focus group section the subjects (N=12) were between 23 to 33 years old. They reported being in Ames from 5 to 60 months. Of the 12 participants, 8 were under F2 visa status, and 4 under J2 visa status. Two of these participants did have work permit in the US, while ten of them did not. Five participants reported having children. Participants were from 9 countries.

In the second focus group section the subjects (N=10) were between 28 to 52 years old. They reported being in Ames from 12 to 64 months. Of the 10 participants, 6 were under F2 visa status, and 4 under J2 visa status. Four of these participants did have work permit in the US, while six of them did not. Six participants reported having kids. Participants were from 5 countries.

1.5. Definition of Terms

F1 visa. The U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act provides two non-immigrants visa categories for persons wishing to study in the United States. The "F" visa is for academic studies (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2001, http://travel.state.gov/visa;internationalstuden.html).

J1 visa. The "J" visa is for educational and cultural exchange programs designated by the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program and Designation Staff. The "J" exchange visitor program is designed to promote the interchange of persons, knowledge, and skills in the fields of education, arts, and sciences. Participants include students at all academic levels; trainees obtaining on-the-job training with firms, institutions, and agencies; teachers of primary, secondary, and specialized schools; professors coming to teach or do research at institutions of higher learning; research scholars; professional trainees in the medical and allied fields; and international visitors coming for the purpose of travel, observation, consultation, research, training, sharing, or demonstrating specialized knowledge or skills, or participating in organized people-to people programs (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2001, http://travel.state.gov/visa;exchange.html).

International students' wives (F2 and J2 visa holders). The international students' wives are defined as those who hold F2 or J2 visas issued by a U.S. Consulate to accompany a spouse who is in F1 or J1 status. Those who are married to Americans, and have either received a temporary working permit (H1B visa) or gained permanent resident status (green card) are not included in this study. International students' wives that are under F2 status may not take up paid employment while in the U.S. on F-2 visa. As an F-2 spouse they may not engage in full time study, only in a study that is recreational in nature. J2 visa holders are allowed to work and study while they are in U.S.

Full-time/part-time students. According to U.S. immigration law, fulltime students are those who take 9 credit hours whether as undergraduates or graduates (not holding a graduate assistantship job). Students are considered part-time students if they take fewer hours than 9 credit hours. During their last semester of study, however, students are allowed to take the number of credit hours needed to fulfill graduation requirements, which could be less than 9.

Immigrant and nonimmigrant visa status. Non-immigrant visa status is usually for temporary visitors to the United States who may be in the country to travel, seek medical attention, conduct business, or study. Generally, individuals with a nonimmigrant visa are not allowed to work here, but there are exceptions that allow U.S. employers to hire foreign nationals as temporary workers. Immigrant visas are for aliens who are entering the country. with the intention to make the U.S. their permanent residence.

1.6. Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Delimitations

The scope of this study is limited to one university, therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other universities, which may have different cultures and environmental conditions. For example, another university may have a larger number of international students or students from a different set of countries. It may also offer various other programs of studies.

Limitations

This study focuses only on wives of international students. Even though female students may bring their husbands to the U.S., those husbands usually play different roles in family life and their concerns are also different. To eliminate confusing results, these international students' husbands are not included in this study.

1.7. Research Questions

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How have the wives of international students experienced the cross-cultural transition from their home country to life in an American university community?

2. How motivated are they to continue their education or learning experience? How has their cross-cultural transition affected that motivation?

3. What are perceived as the main needs they face?

4. What is the impact of F1-F2 family structure on the lives of international wives and their husbands?

5. What are the obstacles found to integrate themselves in the local community?

6. What are the feelings experienced during their sojourn?

The sub-question that supports the understanding of the above research questions is:

7. Is there any difference in experience between wives who have children and those who do not?

Organization of Chapters

This thesis is divided into six chapters.

Chapter one is introductory. It covers the following topics: a profile of international students' wives, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, methods and procedures research questions, definition of terms, and finally the delimitations and limitations of the study.

Chapter two provides a review of literature and consists of four main parts: (1).The sojourners' acculturation process in the U.S, (2) The role of accompanying wives and common problems they face (3) Role of social support during the acculturation process, and finally (4) Cross-cultural adaptation.

Chapter three, four and five provides the results of this study. These chapters articulate the three main themes that emerged from the survey and the focus groups: Immigration policy and wives of international students, Learning experiences of international students' wives, and Domestic violence.

Chapter six, the last chapter constitutes a summary of key findings and limitations and the need for future research.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of topics in relation to the proposed study. The review will cover literature on sojourner adjustment in general and on wives cross-cultural adjustment in particular. Profiles of international students and wives, as well as sources of wives' acculturative stress and adjustment during their sojourn in Ames, IA will be explored.

Historical Background:

Students have traveled from one country to another for centuries, particularly in Europe. They have often faced problems: an early study in America published in 1925, listed difficulties for foreign students in the U.S over academic issues, language, housing, economic issues, their inability to become socially accepted, health and recreation, and racial prejudice (Hammer, 1992). But it was not until comparatively recently that the foreign student experience became the focus of social study (e.g. Ward *et al.*, 2001). Much of the existing literature that concerns itself with international students comes from educational psychology and the sociology of education. It tends to look at the international student in either a gender-neutral or a gender-biased manner (Kenway and Bullen, 2003).

Numbers admitted as students in the United States have steadily increased over the past decades, with approximately 624,000 students in 2008. In alphabetical order, the top six source countries of men and women students to the United States were France, Japan, Mexico, People's Republic of China, and Republic of Korea (Open Doors online http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/).

International students have attracted considerable research interest and represent one of the most intensely studied populations in the culture contact literature, wives of international students have received comparatively little attention (de Verthelyi, 1995; McNamara and Harris, 1997; van Tilburg and Vingerhoets, 1997). Several researchers have proposed reasons for the absence of spouses in the cross-cultural literature, among them their “invisibility” on university campuses due to the lack of assigned tasks or goals for their sojourn (De Verthelyi, 1995, p. 389), as well as spouses being institutionally unconnected and therefore of no direct interest to college administrators (Schwartz and Kahne, 1993). On the other hand, authors have pointed to the impact that the presence of spouses may have on the well-being of the accompanied international students, such as providing a social and emotional support system. These authors have also called for further research in this area in order to provide culturally sensitive counseling services to both international students and their families alike (Bradley, 2000; Furnham, 2004; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Pedersen, 1991; Yoon & Portman, 2004).

This chapter reviews the past literature on the topics related to cross-cultural adaptation of international students’ wives by examining :(1) the sojourners’ acculturation process in the U.S, (2) the role of accompanying wives and common problems they face (3) the role of social support during the acculturation process, (4) cross-cultural adaptation, and finally (5) women as learners.

Many studies explored the effects of cultural and value differences on sojourner adjustment (Cheng, Leong, and Geist. 1993), however very few included an analysis by gender. International female students are described as expressing more concerns about housing, climate, health, homesickness, and making friends (Rorhlich and Martin, 1991). They are also portrayed as more insecure about their academic success and self-efficacy as having greater difficulties at reentry than their male counterparts, and as suffering from more stress as a result of a “double jeopardy” for being female and international (Brabandt, Palmer, and Gramling, 1990).

2.1. Adjustment Outcomes and Marital Status

The potential for adjustment processes to be complicated among international students acculturating with spouses and family have also been noted in the literature (Oropeza, Fitzgibbon, and Baron, 1991). Yi, Lin and Kishimoto (2003) found that relationship with partners was a concern for international graduate students. Despite the complications of acculturating with a partner, the potential buffering role of familial social support has also been documented (Hayes and Lin, 1994; Pedersen, 1991). However, although the potential role of social support for students are consistently emphasized as an essential component in achieving successful adjustment outcomes, much of this research underscores the importance of establishing friendships with host nationals, the significance of spousal relationships are often de-emphasized (Hammer, 1992). For example, Olaniran (1993) studied the number of host people in international students' communication network and its role on students' experiences, but neglected to study the role of spousal relationships.

The fact that international student adjustment outcomes are, to some degree, contingent upon relationships established with domestic students (Hammer, 1992; Olaniran, 1993) can make the adjustment of married international students more complicated. Married international students who likely spend a substantial portion of social time in the company of their wives or are invested in relationship maintenance issues (de Verthelyi, 1995) may experience diminished opportunities for social interaction with both other international and domestic students. This can result in an increased social isolation among married international students, exacerbated by more general issues pertaining to cultural adjustment and homesickness. That is, international students do not typically have a comprehensive social support system comprised of extended family and close friends (Hayes and Lin, 1994; Pedersen, 1991).

Among the studies regarding international students, Church (1982) summarizes the difficulties most frequently reported during their sojourn in American universities including language difficulties, financial problems, dealing with a new educational system, changes in social status, homesickness, adjusting to social customs and norms, difficulties in making friends with host nationals, and for some students, racial discrimination.

According to the reviewed literature, sojourners experience different feelings during adaptation to the new environment. Some scholars refer in similar ways to those stages differing sometimes in the length of each stage, or naming them. Many (Oberg, 1960; Adler, 1975; Yoshikawa, 1988; Brislin, 1981) classify the sojourners' adjustment over time in three or four stages.

Scholars agree that once international students arrive in a foreign culture, there is usually a short *honeymoon phase* before the adjustment. At this stage are fascinated by the new environment, everything different is exciting and leads to tremendous feelings of satisfaction. This period is characterized by the fact that sojourners have not have to cope seriously with the demands of day-to-day life on the new culture yet. However, Yoshikawa (1988), points out that during this stage "some individuals may feel to be threatened by the lack of familiarity with the new environment".

When individuals pass the honeymoon stage, usually they experience a decline in morale. This period is characterized as *cultural shock*. Adler (1975) calls this period as *disintegration stage.* It is characterized by a hostile and aggressive attitude towards the host country. Sojourners may feel overwhelmed by cultural differences, and experience cultural shock. Sojourners become frustrated with their inability to solve problems in a familiar way. They experienced hostility due to the problems faced in their everyday life, such as language-barriers, housing, transportation, shopping and school troubles among others. There is a perception that host nationals are largely indifferent to all these troubles, they help but they do not understand their great concern over these difficulties. Even though Oberg (1960) thinks that these difficulties are genuine, he states that this criticism is not an objective appraisal by sojourners, but a disparaging one. Sojourners do not make an honest analysis of the circumstances that have been created by the host nationals, and project in the host culture their own frustration, disappointment, unhappiness or discomfort.

The third stage in the acculturation process in the new culture is marked by the sojourner’s attempt to find solution to the difficulties they experience in their life. Some scholars refer to this stage as *reintegration.* According to Yashikawa (1988), “sojourners experience identity crises, being caught in two different cultures and in the search of experience of a sense of belonging” (29).

In the fourth stage, sojourners become increasingly flexible, gaining the ability to experience new situations in a new way. In some cases, individuals begin to develop and indentify themselves with the host culture. They are fully able to accept and draw nourishment from both, cultural similarities and differences. Hence, they become independent and interdependent. Brislin (1981) points out that at this time “humor becomes evident as sojourners begin to adjust. They can laugh at the mistakes they used to make and can accept new challenges with more lightheartedness” (p. 156).

The length that each individual remains in each stage depends on different circumstances. Research emphasizes that the success in the sojourners' adaptation to the new culture depends on multiple factors as well; personal traits and skills, self-motivation to make the transition to the new culture the groups they join, perceived acceptance by host nationals, the task they want to accomplish, and the organizations in which they work or belong, among others (Oberg, 1960; Brislin, 1988). Therefore the success sojourners' adaptation in the new culture is a unique process for each of them that will depend on both factors; internal and external ones.

It is important to mention that when scholars highlight different aspects of the acculturation process in the host-culture, very few emphasize the positive or beneficial sides of it. Many emphasize culture shock as a stress reaction where psychological and physical rewards are generally uncertain and difficult to control or predict. In this view, sojourners remain anxious, confused and sometime apathetic or angry until they have had time to develop a new set of assumptions that help them to understand and predict the behavior of others (Furnham and Bochner, 1982). Others attempt to describe culture shock in terms of individuals lacking points of reference, social norms, and rule to guide their actions and understand others' behavior. However, Adler (1975) have offered an alternative view of culture shock, arguing that although it is most often associated with negative consequences it is often important for self-development and personal growth. Cultural shock is seen as transitional experience that can result in the adoption of new values, attitudes, and behavior patterns.

All in all, the acculturation process experienced by sojourners in the host country demands constant change and adaption. Thus, the basic cross-cultural adjustment process implies the reduction of uncertainty by learning which behaviors are appropriate in the new culture and which ones are not. Therefore, factors that tend to reduce the uncertainty of what to do and when to do it or what no to do in the host country culture generally facilitate adjustment, while other factors that increase the uncertainty tend to inhibit adjustment (Black and Gregersen, 1991; Church, 1982).

Even though international students' wives not often attract research, the same cannot be said about wives and husbands of businesspeople that accompany them on their international assignments (Black and Gregersen, 1991; Briodi and Chrisman, 1991; Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi and Bross, 1988, Simeon and Fujiu, 2000, Van der Zee, Ali, and Salome, 2005). Research that focuses on the adjustment of these wives has shown that the success of expatriates sent abroad for business purposes is directly related to their wives' successful adjustment.

2.2 Role of accompanying wives

Why are international wives so invisible in the intercultural literature of university programs? The only answer seems to be that 'unlike their student-husband, they are not expected to fulfill any specific task or to achieve any positive goal during their sojourn' (de Verthelyi, 1995, pg. 39). Schwartz and Kahne (1993) emphasize the "sense of being outside begins with the fact that the wife's presence is not of significant interest to college administrators. Although these women are in the community, they are not of it" (p.454). And, when describing their special needs they conclude: "The majority of the problems of newcomers are related to being outsiders, having family responsibilities, being institutionally unconnected, having their status almost exclusively determined by their spouse's career commitments, and being both transients in the community and in transition in their own lives" (p. 457).

Wives of international students reported feeling excluded from campus activities, orientations, and support services because of language difficulties, cultural differences and husbands’ time constraints (de Verthelyi, 1995). The lack of support frequently felt by the wives may also be exacerbated by an imbalance in the recipient-provider roles of social support, which can be draining. Brett and Werbel (1980) found that after domestic moves in the U.S, the wife served as the primary resource for complains and discussions about work and study.

Lo (1993) studied the adjustment of eleven international students’ wives within their first year of arrival, from 1-12 months, and found that they generally experience the following problems: identity confusion, language difficulties, homesickness and isolation, poor living conditions, culture shock (adjusting to the climate, customs of the U.S).

Ojo (1998) conducts a qualitative study, using international spouses who participated in a program called “The Spouses of International Students and Scholars Program” at the University of Montana in Missoula, Montana. The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of the adaptation of international students’ spouses to life in the U.S. The results were organized into three main perspectives that reflect the women's views in regard to living abroad.

The first perspective states that travel was necessary in order to accompany the husband. These women were least enthused to be in the U.S. initially. Women adopting the second perspective believed that travel was important to the growth of both the male scholar and the female spouse. These women usually said they enjoyed being in Missoula. Those holding the third perspective felt that travel was a novelty and could be used to promote self-learning. The women in this group proved to be the most self-sufficient and independent by the year's end.

Very few articles refer to international students’ marital status. The literature about accompanying wives in the business world (Black and Gregersen, 1991), do not describe how the accompanying wife deals with the sojourn.

It is important to mention the implication of the accompanying wives' adjustment during their husbands' sojourn in the international assignment. Adelegan and Parks (1985) view that spouses are an added stress factor and a possible interference to the student's academic success de Verthelyi (1995) points out that several spouses based their decision to accompany their husbands on the idea that their presence would help the student feel more secure and study better, and because they value the family being together during husband's sojourn (Harris and Moran, 1989; Harvey, 1985; Tung, 1981; Klinenberg and Hull, 1979).

Black and Gregersen (1991), Brisling (1981), and Klineberg and Hull (1979) argue that there is a positive relation between spouses and expatriate adjustment. That is to say that the fact of bringing an accompanying spouse to fulfill the overseas assignment, impacts the student's acculturation process and his academic accomplishment positively. It is precisely here where lies an important reason to study the acculturation process of international students' spouses. Not only because they influence positively their husbands' accomplishments, but also they have the potential to contribute greatly to the community where they live. In many cases they are highly qualified professionals who are eager to contribute somehow to the community wherein they live.

More recent studies examined contemporary marriage. Schwartz studied contemporary at-home women who are economically dependent on their husbands. They bear most to the entire domestic burden, enjoy little to no control over the financial resource, and are often overlooked in the making of big financial decisions. Additionally, as they are financially dependent on their husbands they are forced to live with them. Ultimately, this dependence, like the disregard that many traditional husbands have for their wives' sacrifices, may become a source of resentment on the part of many stay-at-home wives, leaving them less than gratified with their marriage (Schwartz, 1994).

Blood and Wolfe (1960) found that the relative recourses of the spouse, such as education, income, or occupational status, are more viable determinants of marital power relations than the normative factor that is, the husband’s authority in contemporary marriage. The resources possessed by each spouse provide “leverage” in bargaining and negotiation between spouses, and affect marital power.

A study by Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) revealed that the amount of money a spouse earns establishes relative power in any kind of relationship. As for the gender division of family work, resource theorists maintain that those members with greater resources can compel those with fewer resources to undertake the difficult work of the household (Berk, 1985). Husband’s participation in family work is highest when spouses’ incomes are similar (Scanzoni, 1979; Hood, 1983, 1986; Haas, 1993). When woman make a relatively substantial financial contribution to the family, this leads them to define their husbands’ share of housework as too low and to articulate a desire for change (Ferree, 1987; Ferree and Hall, 1996).

Noh, Wu, Speechley, and Kaspar (1992) examined two alternatives: the “double burden hypothesis” and the “power hypothesis.” The double burden hypothesis suggested that stress is attributable to role overload (household responsibilities, child-care, and employment), which eventually results in negative psychological outcomes, such as depression. The power hypothesis suggested that psychological distress is part attributable to how power is allocated in the family (e.g., decision making). Factors such as employment should enhance women’s power in the family, resulting in less psychological distress.

Feminist perspectives originate from critical theory, which emphasizes change in existing social system that oppresses subordinate groups such as women. Thus, ending oppression of women requires reformation of power structures between men and women (Heise, Alanagh, Watts, and Zwi, 1994; Kurz, 1989). Feminist perspectives aim at empowering women by encouraging them to be economically self-reliant and not to typecast themselves in their presocialized roles (Yick, 2001).

Analyzing accompanying wives' acculturation process can provide useful information to university administrators on how to improve more effectively their programs oriented to international students and their families. Wives can also be an important source of support. In her study, de Verthelyi (1995) found extreme variability and diversity in spouse reaction, but that personal variables (personality and relationship history) were more predictive than demographic variables like geography and race. Interestingly, she found gender-role orientation and work and family values the best predictors of adaptation problems. The sojourning wife has double adjustment problems the new role and the new environment clearly puts pressure on the wife. Hence, the acceptance or rejection of the homemaker role with its implications for interruption in personal career and threat to identity seemed the best predictor of happiness.

2.3 Cultural Variations

Scholars have focused on cultural variations affecting the adjustment of international students and their wives. Babiker et al. (1980) developed the concept of culture distance, which states that the more difference between the culture of an international student and spouse and his or her host country, the more adjustment problems the student will experience. Furnham and Bochner (1982, 1986) found support for the culture distance hypothesis from their studies of international students. Most research adopts Hofstede's (1980, 1991) five cultural dimensions to examine cultural similarity or difference. Hofstede initially developed four culture dimensions based on data from 40 countries: 1) Low/high power distance, which is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally, 2) Low/high uncertainty avoidance, which is .the extent to which people feel threatened by ambiguous situations and have created beliefs, 3) Individualism/collectivism, which refers to people's behaviors in individualistic cultures by which they are supposed to look after themselves and their family only, while in collectivistic cultures, people belong to in-groups or collectivities which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty, 4) masculinity/femininity, masculinity represent a cultural trait that dominant values in society are success, money, and things. Whereas femininity refers to a society that in which dominant values are caring for others and quality of life (Hofstede and Bond, 1984). Hofstede (1991) added a fifth dimension (Long-/short-term orientation) after conducting an additional international study with a survey instruments developed with Chinese employees and managers. Hofstede (1991) described the fifth dimension as characterized by persistence, ordering relationships by status and observing this order, thrift, and having a sense of shame. On the other hand, short-term orientation is characterized by personal steadiness and stability, protecting your face, respect for tradition and reciprocation of greetings.

Other than Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Hall's (1976) theory of high- versus low-context has also been utilized as a way of understanding different cultures. The concept of high-low context explains how people in a culture relate to one another, especially in social bonds, responsibility, commitment, social harmony, and communication. According to Hall (1976), a high-context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. In a low-context message, "the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" (Hall, 1976, p 79). According to Hall, most collectivism cultures are classified as high-context cultures (including much of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America) and individualism cultures are classified as low-context cultures (including North America and much of Western Europe).

Considerable intercultural communication studies (e.g., Barnlund, 1989; Chen and Starosta, 1996) warranted the expectation that East Asians (high-context culture) would report substantially less self-disclosure than Anglo-Americans (low-context culture). Kim et al. (1998) offered some preliminary empirical evidence in support of the high- versus low-context culture concept with Korean, Chinese, and American subjects. The results showed that in a high-context culture (such as China and Korea), people appear to be more socially oriented, less confrontational, and more complacent with existing ways of living.

2.4. Intercultural Adaptation

Researchers argued that friendship patterns have a significant impact on successful cross-cultural adaptation (e.g., Furnham and Bochner, 1986, Kim 1988, Olaniran, 1996). Selltiz, Christ, Havel, and Cook (1963) found that international students in the U.S. who are more actively involved with people in the host culture (Americans) are more satisfied toward the host country (the U.S.). The intercultural adaptation of international students is a complex phenomenon and often approached by communication scholars from a variety of perspectives. Some researchers have examined the structure of cross-cultural communication. For instance, over the years Kim (1988, 1995, and 2001) has developed an integrative theory of cross cultural adaptation among sojourners. She argued that personal communication, social communication, environment, predisposition are the main variables effecting cultural adaptation. Some other researchers have examined psychological, social and cultural variables affecting the adjustment of sojourners. For example, Olaniran (1996, 1999) pointed out those factors influencing social difficulties among sojourners included language, age, academic classification, cultural similarity, and friendship communication network patterns.

Furnham and Bochner (1982, 1986) studied social interaction with host country people and its influence on cross-cultural adjustment and found that most sojourners belong to three distinct social networks: First, a primary, mono-cultural network consisting of close friendships with other sojourning compatriots. The main function of the co-national network is to provide a scene in which ethnic and cultural values can be rehearsed and expressed. Second, a secondary, bi-cultural network consisting of bonds between the international student and significant host nationals such as academics, students, advisors, and government officials. The main function of this network is to facilitate instrumentally the academic and professional aspirations of the sojourner. And last, a third, multi-cultural network of friends and acquaintances. The main function of this network is to provide companionship for recreational, non-cultural and non-task orientated activities (p.173).

According to Bochner et al. (1977), the mono-cultural (co-national) bonds have vital importance to the adjustment of sojourners and should not be discouraged. In the meantime, the authors also conceded that international students should expand the bicultural bonds and the multicultural associations beyond the initial instrumental and recreational functions. Research has shown that many non-Western international students have only limited contact with people in their ethnic groups (Furnham and Alibhai, 1985).

Imahori and Lanigan’s (1989) model suggested that cognitive, motivational, and behavioral components (i.e., knowledge, attitude, and skills) are the three major components of intercultural communication competence. Cognitive components relate to general and specific information about the new culture, motivational components refer to the degree of open mindedness to the host culture and motivation to engage with it, and behavioral components include, language communication ability and empathy (Ying, 2002, p.47). According to Imahori and Lanigan (1989), the presence of intercultural communication competence will be associated with cross-cultural interpersonal relationships. Individuals with greater knowledge are more likely to develop intercultural relationships with Americans Studies (e.g., Gudykunst and Hammer, 1984; Redmond and Bunyi, 1993) have shown knowledge about the new culture enhances the confidence to approach members of the host culture and reduces the potential for intercultural misunderstanding.

2.5. Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation is defined as the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments (Kim, 2001). The adaptation process is an on-going, dynamic interaction between individuals’ internal systems and the new cultural challenges from their environment. This adaptation progresses in a process of cultural learning and intercultural transformation during which one experiences stress-adaptation-growth dynamics over time (Kim, 1988, 1995). The communication model of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 1988, 1989, 1995, 2001; Gudykunst and Kim, 2003) is a useful framework to guide studies about different ethnic individuals or sojourners adapting to a new culture in a host society. This theoretical perspective integrates multiple levels of communication into an individual’s cross-cultural adaptation process, and defines the communication involved in the intercultural transformation as reciprocal interactions among ethnic individuals, ethnic groups and the host society. Kim (1988, 1995) emphasizes four areas of cross-cultural adaptation that are connected over time, across the space, or through communication channels and human beings’ internal information processing system. The four areas are defined as follows: (1) predisposition (preparedness for change, ethnicity, and personality); (2) host communication competence (personal cognitive and affective experience and operational competence in the host society; interpersonal communication and mass communication; and social communication through multiple communication channels); (3) environment (host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength); (4) intercultural transformation (functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity).

The time relationship exists with the progress from “predisposition” to developing “host communication competence” and to the “intercultural transformation.” The space dimension explains the interactive relationship between the environment and the process of adaptation. The communication channels facilitate the process of adaptation, and the internal information process system creates the basis for one to interact with the external world and to make one’s internal change (Kim, 1995).

2.6. Women as learners

Since women’s learning experiences may vary from those of men, it is imperative to know how women gain knowledge. Do they obtain knowledge in a different manner than men do? And if so, how? What is the outcome of women’s learning? The literature review that follows is meant to provide an understanding of how women’s ways of learning may inform investigation of the learning choices of international students' wives. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986), Women's Ways of Knowing, is a well-known work about women's learning.

The authors interviewed 135 women from different social and ethnic backgrounds, 90 of whom were engaged in formal education in six academic institutions, while 45 were from family agencies ("the invisible colleges"). Analyzing the results, they group women's learning into five categories: (1). *Silence*, a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority; (2). *Received knowledge*, a perspective from which women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own; (3). *Subjective knowledge*, a perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited; (4). *Procedural knowledge*, a position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge; and (5). *Constructed knowledge*, a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing (p.15).

These categories can be situated on a continuum that describes stages in the way women gain knowledge. Most of the women interviewed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) belong to the middle category, i.e., subjective knowledge. Differences in knowledge and ways of knowing among men and women can be attributed to gender differences in general (Goldberger, et al., 1996; Harding, 1996). Gender can be defined as the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men, in a given culture or location. These roles are influenced by perceptions and expectations arising from cultural, political, environmental, economic, social, and religious factors, as well law, class, ethnicity, and individual or institutional bias. Gender attitudes and behaviors are learned and can be changed (CEDPA, 1996). Both men and women are products of a societal gender structure; hence, gender structure has to be taken into account in the discussion of learning. Harding (1996) argues that the existence of gender cultures implies a masculine culture and a feminine culture. Culture molds men's and women's experiences in different ways and draws them to different kinds of knowledge.

Solsken (1993) amplifies Harding's argument in the following manner: The analysis of how gender figures in learning does not depend upon identifying consistent patterns of differences between groups of males and females but rather tracing the patterns in [individual's] learning biographies back to sources in the system of gender relations (p. 123). Furthermore, Harding argues that gender structure may lead men and women to different ways of obtaining knowledge. Perry (1981) and Goldberger, et al., (1996) show through their respective studies that women's sense of relatedness permeates adult forms of reasoning. This insight supports a developing feminist theory of women's uniqueness (Loughlin, 1993).

Gilligan (1982) conducted an investigation on an all women sample to demonstrate that women have a different way of learning than men. She argues that in the mature stage of their psychological development, women show a tendency towards a heightened sense of relatedness by (1) negating self in favor of care for others and (2) adopting an ethics of care for both self and others. Women also come to the realization that other women both share some of their traits and have unique ones of their own.

2.7. Previous Studies of Continuing Education Among International Students' Wives

Research on the families of international students conducted by Pfau (1982) shows that many international students' wives are themselves interested in learning and/or continuing their education. Participants in adult education have always intrigued many scholars. Why are certain people more likely to participate in adult education than others?

In an attempt to explain participation, or lack of there off, Cross (1992) identifies three categories of barriers: (1) situational barriers, (2) institutional barriers, and (3) dispositional barriers. Situational barriers relate to an individual's circumstances; for example, lack of time, financial support, or family responsibility. Institutional barriers include policies, procedures, or practices that hinder adults from participating. Dispositional barriers are "attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner" (Cross, 1992). Examples of these barriers are low confidence, negative past experiences, low self-efficacy, or feeling inferior as an older student entering education. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) complement this list with another category, (4) informational barriers. Informational barriers refer to a lack of information about available learning opportunities.

There are, unfortunately, very few studies of how women from other cultures experience education in the U.S., especially wives of international students. The connection between self-directed learning and cultural background may certainly vary among nationalities. This variety may be due to different cultural patterns. Other possible explanations for these variations may be (1) differences in the economic level and previous educational experiences of the wives before they came to the U.S. and (2) differences in familiarity with the environment in the U.S. Lack of familiarity with community life in the host country is sometimes an obstacle for wives who wish to explore educational opportunities.

This discussion of women as learners is important because women as learners have not traditionally been perceived as a separate category that merits attention. They have, therefore, been largely ignored and their knowledge discounted. Knowledge about how to interpret women’s learning can contribute to a better understanding of women’s learning options and their specific experiences. This is particularly so because there is a pervasive belief that learning theories, learning settings and learning participants are not influenced by gender (Hayes and Flannery, 2000a). Women, women's thoughts, women's writings, and research specifically about women's lives and learning have been absent, subsumed, ignored, and misrepresented (Hayes and Flannery, 2000b). Although Hayes and Flannery (2000b) believe that there are many varieties of knowledge– namely artistic, religious, and scientific–they acknowledge that we live in a world that places scientific knowledge at the top of the hierarchy. There are, however, some works that illuminate other types of knowledge and ways of knowing that have been given less attention and respect, such as the cultural knowledge and the oral traditions of passing on knowledge among non-western people.

Morgan (1994), for example, writes about the learning of Australian aborigines. Moraga and Anzaldua (1983) highlight the life and learning experiences of women of color. Witherell and Nodding (1991) published a book about how women's lifestyles mold their classroom teaching and research.

Flannery and Hayes (2000a) identify key assumptions about women's learning from feminist scholarship. They are as follows: (1). Women's learning must be understood and valued in its own right, (2). Women's learning must be understood within a broader social context that should encompass the social determinants of gender roles and norms, (3). The diversity of women's lives and learning should be recognized as much as the similarities, (4). Efforts are needed to overcome the limitations that continue to be placed on women's learning opportunities and outcomes (p. xii).

Flannery and Hayes (2000b) maintain that one can reach a better understanding of women's learning if the learning is placed within the context of where they live. That means that one should take into consideration the interactions among and the dynamics of economic, political, social and cultural structures. Additionally, one should also consider the institutions that influence women's learning, as well as their participation in educational activities.

CHAPTER 3. IMMIGRATION POLICY AND DEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL WIVES

In this chapter the researcher argues that immigration policy in the U.S places international students' wives in a position of dependency. International students' wives at ISU have nonimmigrant status and are allowed to stay in the U.S on a temporary basis, they are not allowed to work or study, and have a specific purpose, to support their husbands. The immigration policy treats international wives as if they were adjuncts to their husbands (Enloe, 2001).

The experiences of international student's wives in Ames are shaped by restrictive immigration laws and regulations defining their current legal status and limiting their education and employment, and as a result forcing them into care work, which further reproduces unequal gender relations.

3.1. Gendering immigration policy

The Immigration Act (1952) in the US emphasized labor market needs and family relations. It removed overt references to "race" and included a specific "non-discrimination" clause on the grounds of "race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion or sex". The Act organizes immigration into two main categories: (i) the family class (which makes immediate family members eligible for sponsorship and requires sponsors to assume financial responsibility for their dependents), and; (ii) the independent class (whose eligibility is based upon the allocation of points for education, skills and qualifications).'

The Act has allowed a major shift in immigration patterns, significantly increasing the presence of women, helping to make their labor available to the economy. Immigration under the family class has been greater than under the independent class, and while women represent over half of all immigrants, they are more likely to enter under the family class (Boyd, 1998). A number of scholars have defined the immigration under the family class as a neutral, non-discriminatory one (Hawkins, 1991). Feminist and anti-racist scholars, however, dispute this claim. They argue that while the Act made a commitment in principle to ending racist and sexist discrimination, it did not do so in effect (Boyd, 1998).

Immigration officers tend to process the applications of women under the family class. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to be processed under the independent class as heads of households (Das Gupta, 1998). With regulations making sponsored relatives financially dependent upon their sponsors, this processing of women under the family class increases their vulnerability to increased control by sponsors (Boyd, 1998, 1992; Das Gupta, 1996). In organizing immigration into the categories of the independent and family classes, the Act organizes the gendering of immigration. The very naming of the independent class ideologically constructs it as a masculinized category.

In western patriarchal terms, men are defined as independent economic agents, as heads of households, because they are men, whereas women are defined as the dependents, as the "family," of men as respectable and loyal wives, as 'civilizing influences,’ (Enloe, 2001; MacDonald, 2000). The Act reinforces this patriarchal definition and ideologically constructs the independent class as masculine, while constructing the family class as a feminized one. The very naming of this category organizes it as a feminized class, a construction which is further reinforced by its designation as a category of “dependents”, thereby associating it with everything which is not “masculine” where men are defined as independent economic agents, women and children are defined only by their relation to these “independent” male actors-as their "dependent" family members. This distinction masculinizes the independent class as an independent, economically productive category, while feminizing the family class as one of “noneconomic,” “dependents” who must be sponsored.

Further, and most significantly, this ideological category of “dependent” is made actionable by imposing upon immigrant women a literal dependency on their sponsor through the sponsorship regulations. The Immigration Act allows women them entry in the country, but on the condition of making them dependent on sponsors, and making invisible their very "economic" contributions to the US. These ideological practices mean that men who enter under the family category are able to escape their “dependent” status because they are men.

In the capitalist economy, men are defined as workers and economic actors. Socially, they are defined as heads of households. This "maleness" of immigrant men-some of whom might be sponsored- allows them to overcome their "dependent" status once they are in the country. For sponsored women, on the other hand, their actual status as women reinforces their "dependent" status even after they enter paid work.

A number of studies demonstrate that most sponsored immigrant women enter the paid labor-force relatively soon after their arrival into the country (Das Gupta, 1996), but this reality is ignored by the Act. Nor is the unpaid labor of immigrant women which reproduces immigrant families, including future generations of workers for the "national" economy, recognized as an "economic" contribution. Thus, despite the reality that sponsored immigrant women make very tangible contributions-through their paid and unpaid labor immigration categorization renders this reality invisible.

The Act's separation of the independent and family categories also makes a ranking of the worth of these categories inevitable. This categorization ensures that in the ranking of the "value" of immigrants to the nation, the family class comes up short in capitalist terms which define individuals by their financial and "economic" worth. Applicants under the family class are ranked largely on the basis of their family relationship.

Immigration regulations also institutionalize the unequal access of sponsored immigrant women to social entitlements such as social assistance, old age security, social housing and job training programs. The gendering of immigration further defines the family class, and immigrant women, as not making economic contributions to the nation.

Scholarly research on migration has also changed considerably in the past decade, with women-centered research shifting more toward the analysis of gender. This change in focus reflects two important developments: 1. scholars have succeeded in bringing female migration out of the shadows in many disciplines; 2. migration is now viewed as a gendered phenomenon that requires more sophisticated theoretical and analytical tools than sex as a dichotomous variable.

Theoretical formulations of gender as relational, and as spatially and temporally contextual have begun to inform gendered analyses of migration (Enloe, 2001). The identification of gendered ramifications of migratory processes has meant greater attention has been paid by policymakers and scholars alike than has been done previously.

There are a number of reasons why it is important to understand the economic and social ramifications of migratory processes. Among these, gender differentiated population movements deserve particular attention because they act like a mirror for the way in which gender divisions of labor are incorporated into spatially uneven processes of economic development.

In addition, an analysis based on gender highlights the social dimensions of migration. On the other hand, these cross-border movements – whether by women/men on their own or jointly with their wives – have the potential to reconfigure gender relations and power inequalities. Migration can provide new opportunities for women and men to improve their lives, escape oppressive social relations, and support those who are left behind. But it can also expose people to new vulnerabilities as the result of their precarious legal status, abusive working conditions, and exposure to certain health risks. (UNRISD 2005). Even where migration involves economic betterment for the individual concerned obtaining a job in another country, and earning a wage that may be much higher in real terms than what was available at home—the successful migrant may be subject to deep gender, ethnic and racial discrimination in the host country.

Although the bulk of both female and male migrants occupy the lowest jobs at the destination due to their migration status and gender inequalities frequently combine with those of race/ethnicity, and of being a non-national, to make many migrant women “triply disadvantaged”, and most likely to be over-represented in marginal, unregulated, and poorly paid jobs. Traditional sex roles and stereotypical images regarding the place of women in society can influence the type of work for which migrant female labor is recruited. Women admitted as workers are generally concentrated in "female" occupations, such as domestic service or nursing (Enloe, 2001).

When women enter on the basis of labor-market skills, many are in service occupations. In countries that recruit migrant workers on a temporary basis, most women are admitted as domestic workers, which include those specializing in childcare. Qualifications may not be recognized, skills may be eroded by working in jobs that are below acquired skill levels, access to social rights may be heavily constrained, and the migrant may be subject to sexual and racial harassment.

In addition, it is important to underline the fact that developed country policies often create stratified patterns of migration, by selectively opening up their economic routes of entry and providing differential rights and entitlements according to the migrant’s apparent utility to the economy and his/her social esteem. It is important to know how women circulate differently from men, and how their modes of entry tend to be different which impacts upon their place within the labor market and access to social services. In both North America and Western Europe where ‘family reunification’ is an important mode of entry, migrant women often enter as wives and dependents of men who sponsor their admission, and they are usually less likely than men to enter on economic and humanitarian grounds.

However, the effects of gender stratification do not end there. In addition, many migrant women (regardless of their mode of entry) do engage in paid work, but like their native-born counterparts, immigrant women face a gender-stratified labor market where they frequently find themselves in the bottom strata. Also, the disengagement of many governments from the provision of social benefits has been accompanied to some extent by diminished entitlements available to all residents, and by moves towards stratified entitlements according to the legitimacy of perceived membership in the nation-state. Legal residency, gender and race all can be used as stratifying, exclusionary criteria in these circumstances. Gender, class, and race/ethnicity biased policies, regulations and practices further increase the risk to migrants’ human security and rights.

On the whole it can be said that although policies governing the different categories of migrant workers are expressed in gender-neutral terms, in reality they affect men and women differently for three principle reasons: firstly, the concentration of men and women in different migratory flows based on gender segregated labor markets; secondly gendered socio-economic power structures; and finally socio-cultural definitions of appropriate roles in the origin as well as destination countries.Currently, there are thousands of women living in the US who are denied the freedom to work, the right to live with their spouse as an equal partner, and the dignity that comes with the ability to make their own choices.

Currently, there are thousands of women residing legally in the US in F2 visa status, dependents of an F1 visa holder (Table 1.). Restrictions on the F2 visa holder are extensive. An F2 visa holder may not hold employment regardless of their background, training, or education.

Immigration policy disadvantages women. When a non-U.S. citizen is granted the permission to live and work in the U.S., their wives are often given permission to accompany their spouse, but not to work. These spouses, wives more often than husbands, find themselves completely dependent on their husbands. The problem is that they are not allowed to work, and subsequently also to pursue all the other opportunities that might be predicated on having one's own source of income.

It is expected by the INS that the F1 and J1 visa holder will provide for his or her dependents. However, the INS has no procedures in place and collects no statistical data regarding the health and well-being of dependent visa holders.While many regulations are in place to govern the relationship between the F1 and J1 visa holder and his employer, no INS regulations exist to monitor the relationship between the F1 and J1 visa holder and his/her dependent F2 and J2 visa holders.

Since the spouse is prohibited from all forms of employment at the risk of deportation, the dependent visa holder's access to food, clothing, and the other necessities of life is largely subject to the generosity of the spouse. While INS does not report visa holders by gender, inquiries confirm it is predominantly women who are in F2 and J2 status. Since INS does not report on the well being of dependent visa holders, there is no way to be certain that all are being properly provided with essential resources are being well treated while in the U.S.

3.2. Effects of Power Distance

Dependency occurs when one party controls access to necessary resources, such as money, that another individual(s) may only receive from the controlling party (Mechanic 1962). Literature suggests that when a relationship is characterized by a large power distance, the dependent party has feelings such as: unhappiness (Lindhal and Malik, 1999); depression (Byrne and Carr, 2000; Mirowsky and Ross, 1990); anxiety (Mirowsky and Ross, 1990); lack of self-esteem (deTurck and Miller, 1986); a deep sense of lack of control over one’s life by the dependent partner (Molm, 1985; Ross, 1991); feelings of entrapment in the relationship by the powerless party, especially in a domestic situation in which children are involved (Wilson and Musick, 1996). Additionally, domestic violence (Gottman and Notarius, 2000) and spousal abuse (Woelz-Stirling and Kelaher, 1998) are more likely to occur in relationships with a large power imbalance than in relationships in which power is more equitable.

3.3. Gender as “Social Construction" and Its Impact on Migration Theory.

Ongoing developments in feminist theory throughout the 1980s and 1990s further contributed to a focus on gender, rather than one based on individual decisions of men and women. Gender is seen as a core organizing principle that underlies migration and related processes, such as the adaptation to the new country, continued contact with the original country, and possible return. Most important is the view that while sex is defined as a biological outcome of chromosomal structures, *gender* is "socially constructed." In feminist theory, gender is seen as a matrix of identities, behaviors, and power relationships that are constructed by the culture of a society in accordance with sex. This means that the content of gender what constitutes the ideals, expectations, and behaviors or expressions of masculinity and femininity will vary among societies. Also, when people interact with each other, by adhering to this content or departing from it, they either reaffirm or change what is meant by gender, thus affecting social relationships at a particular time or in a particular setting. This means that gender is not immutable but also changes and, in this sense, is both socially constructed and reconstructed through time.

The feminist view of gender as a "social construction" has raised two questions that have fuelled much of the research in the study of women and migration over the last decade. The first relates to patriarchy, ‘the structural and ideological system that perpetuates the privileging of masculinity’ (Enloe, 2001) or the hierarchies of power, domination, and control men use to rule women. How does patriarchy, which gives men preferential access to the resources available in society, affect women's ability to migrate, the timing of that migration, and the final destination?

The second question focuses on the interpersonal relationships between men and women. How do women's relationships to family members, including spouses, change with migration? In other words, how is patriarchy altered or reconstituted after migration? Some studies ask if labor force participation in the host country affects women's authority within the family and their sense of control, and contributes to men assuming more responsibilities for housework and childcare. Others ask if migration of either men or women influence power relations and decision making between men and women.

Studies that examine transnational migration, where migration creates and sustains social ties and various activities between two or more countries, often focus on individuals and the interpersonal relationships among individuals.

The F2 and J2 visa holders have been over-looked. Perhaps they have been over-looked out of the fear that these women might take jobs from Americans or perhaps legislators have the idea that these women are illiterate and better off in the U.S. in any status rather than in their home country. Neither of these is true. While, if allowed to work, a woman in F2 and J2 status could take a job that might otherwise be offered to an American, she would pay taxes and contribute to the economy.

Women holding F2 and J2 visas are likely well educated, and many have held good jobs in their country before moving to the U.S. In some societies, men who are well educated have cultural roots in a caste system that would frown upon him marrying an “illiterate”. The women being over-looked by U.S. policy have the potential to be strong contributors to society. The plight of the F2 and J2 visa holders is most likely an unintended consequence of legislation to help U.S. businesses. Neither men nor women should be expected to live for years in a “free” country while prohibited from working and pursuing the opportunities of their dreams. Employers need to realize that employment policies are at the root of a successful society and that there is more at stake than the cost of coding programs, assembling components, or other transformations. How we govern and implement employment practices forms the foundation of our economic and sociological strength. As people earn and spend they fuel the cycles of a market driven economy and return wealth to their nation. By excluding thousands of educated, intelligent adults from contributing to the economy, the U.S. government is creating a sub-class of dependents and diminishing economic strength.

3.4. Students' Wives' Special Situation as Dependents

International student wives are presumed to be in a plight similar to (or even worse than) an international student's plus having the unique experience of being legally dependent. They are less prepared to come to the U.S. They may have limited previous foreign cultural experiences, limited host language ability and limited social contacts with Americans, in comparison to international students (Lo, 1993). Often their experiences may be compared to the immigrant women who are viewed as "passive followers or passive dependents" (Morokvasic, 1984; Snyder, 1987).

Snyder points out that the immigrant women who follow someone else's decision to migrate were observed to experience a higher level of depression than those who made the final decision themselves. Church (1982), based on his comprehensive review of sojourner adjustment literature, and concluded that women had more adjustment difficulties than men did. Espin's (1987) and Freidenberg, Imperiale, and Skovron's (1988) studies on the process of emigration reached the same conclusion.

International students' wives at ISU had supported (or joined) their husbands' careers and usually left their careers and families behind, and had no specific goals of their own life in the U.S. the professional aspirations of women who entered under family unification scheme are very much unknown based on the assumption that they are trailing wives and not workers (Kofman, 2003). By implicitly defining immigrant women as "dependent" and men as "independent," immigration policy place women in a "family role" rather than a "market role." They face a purely new land and new social-cultural system.

The student wives are not registered; they are not part of the university community. The university takes responsibility for the international students but not for their wives. They have no formal affiliations except their family; they are almost invisible in the public world. Besides, if you were not one of them, it would be difficult to gain access to them.

3.5. International Students' Wives Compared to Immigrant Women

The research on immigrants pointed out that proficiency in the language of the host country leads to faster and easier adaptation. Immigrant women usually stayed home or were employed for low pay and long hours of work, highly incompatible with their educational level, due to their language difficulty (Kim and Hurch, 1988; Lee and Cochran, 1988). Lo's (1993) study found that the international students' wives has undergone drastic career changes. The similarity to those of Korean and Chinese immigrant women is they have language problems and difficulty in finding a job compatible with their educational levels.

Career, language, and life. The impact of career change is a little varied between the international students' wives and the immigrant women, however. For instance, Kim and Hurch's (1988) study shows that the Korean immigrant women suffer from the high stress of double roles without any adequate preparation for their new environment. Such role management could have negative effects on the women's self confidence, health and their relationship with other family members.

The International students' spouses in Lo's (1993) study changed from career women to full- time homemakers and mothers. They were frustrated at a career abruptly altered by circumstances not of their choosing. Some of them believed by the time their English improved, everything will improve. However, it takes time to achieve language proficiency. Furthermore, there are several factors other than language that influenced their attempts to re-establish careers, such as incompatible social system, and F2 visa.

The language difficulties of International students' spouses not only limited them to unrewarding jobs but also hampered their daily communications, such as answering the phone, medical problem, rather than academic work. In addition to having no car they seldom went out by themselves. They had negative feelings about depending on their husbands both in daily routines and finance. For the sake of overcoming their deficiency, seven out of eleven informants in Lo's (1993) study spent nearly 40 hours per week in average in activities related to learning English.

Marital relations. Many researches indicate that the marital relationship influences the psychological well-being of immigrant women. Snyder's (1987) study of Mexican immigrant women emphasizes that the perception of support from their spouse through open communication and intimacy was the only type of support that eased the depression. Freidenberg, et al. (1988) point out that the marriage acts as a buffer under the stressful situation; the same thing is evident in the sojourner adjustment.

Lo's (1993) study takes for granted that the better the marital relationship of the Chinese student's spouses, the better their adjustment to life in the U.S. Yet, their marital relationships have to be re-defined. No matter how good the relationship is, a new life and environment inevitably create conflicts. Hence, for the sake of family reunion, spouses will feel that they have sacrificed some things for the husband. The husbands are usually under great pressure to maintain their study and assistantship, in addition to the new role of taking care of their spouses and children, who have become more dependent on them. Sometimes tensions would grow between them. Regrettably, often they do not have time together except for errands, such as grocery shopping. Besides, the longer the couple was separated before reunion, the more likely they would have marital problems.

Morokvasic (1984) revealed that numerous immigrant women are ambivalent about keeping the right to remain in the country, or escaping the oppressive conditions by getting them deported. Social isolation, the language barrier, and for some, discrimination and fears of deportation were major barricades stopping them from seeking help (Bauer, Rodriguez, Quiroga, and Flores-Ortizs, 2000).

CHAPTER 4. LEARNING EXPERIENCES AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' WIVES

4.1. Introduction

This study shows that many international students' wives are interested in learning and/or continuing their education. International students' wives who pursue their education during their residence in the United States need strong motivation and must be persistent in order to accomplish their learning goals, given that they face a number of obstacles. Current studies about international students focus on the students themselves, their wives and families are generally not included in the research literature. This study, however, is devoted to exploring how and to what degree the wives of international students manage to educate themselves while supporting their husbands and even raising children as well.

Based on the researcher's findings during focus groups session and interviews the difficulties that wives encountered stem in large part from the following factors: Wives are generally not as adequately prepared to be in the new environment as their husbands; Most wives, unlike their husbands, do not have ongoing financial support for their studies from government or family sources; Wives typically come to the U.S. for the express purpose of supporting their husbands' study; and, finally, There are few resources available to guide wives from different cultures with their educational experiences.

4.2. International Student's Wives as Learners.

Since the focus of this study is on international student's wives, culture is a very significant factor. Culture influences how people perceive and deal with their environment. Every individual is born into a society that is defined by unique cultural characteristic, despite the fact that those cultures are continually evolving. Culture is comprised by several elements, knowledge, values, beliefs, and attitudes of a given society (Jarvis, 1987). A cornerstone of American culture, for example, is the freedom of American women to pursue an education similar to that of men.

The connection between self-directed learning and cultural backgrounds may certainly vary among nationalities. This variability may be directly connected to different cultural patterns. Other possible explanations for these variations may be (1) differences in the economic level and previous educational experiences of the wives before they came to the U.S., and (2) differences in familiarity with the learning environment in the U.S.

Lack of familiarity with community life in the host country may pose an obstacle to wives who wish to explore educational opportunities. A wife said in the focus group section: "All I know about important information was thanks to my husband's friends and co-workers… they helped us find English classes…or options for health insurance. In the beginning I found in the laundry many fliers with information's, but they were only in English… I never read them… I find them very impersonal… I'm used to talk to people, to get information…"

Many wives may choose to socialize only with familiar cultural groups. Since many international students prefer to live in university housing which can provide more affordable rent, they look after one another, and their children play together (Ruetrakul, 1987). Cultural isolation as a part of international students' social and cultural has been documented among

African students (Cohen, 1971), Egyptian students (Hegazy, 1968), Indian students (Gandi, 1970) and Malaysian and Indonesian students (Ruetrakul, 1987). International students and their families come to the U.S primary to pursue their studies; however they also introduce their culture in the communities where they are residing.

The international students' wives during an interview session said that they accepted the fact that their husbands spent most of their time at the library or in the laboratory, while the wives were managing household affairs, raising children, and providing meals for the family. This was revealed by a wife during a focus group session "My role in my family is to support my husband in his PhD studies, and keep the family business running (I mean, be in charge of everything at home, pay bills, food, been in charge of the baby, things like that). I have to be a housewife having everything ready for my husband and baby, like food, cleaning the apartment, clothes, paying bills, medical appointments". Universities or communities in college towns may provide resources which offer different means for educating international women, including English classes, the activities of a variety of interest group organizations, and a number of non-degree training programs.

Because of the transient nature of their move, international students' wives face the additional career challenge of maintaining professional ties in their country of origin. This may include memberships in professional associations, maintaining credentials through continuing education, and staying in touch with a professional network. In order for them to maintaining such ties, considerable amounts of time and money have to be invested.

Sluzki (1979) studied the effects of moving process in both the international students and their wives and concluded that the move "was beneficial to the job situation or career of one of the members of the family-more frequently the husband- while the other one- more frequently the wife was dragged behind”. For the majority of international wives, to come to Ames under a visa with work or study restrictions, meant a significant change from an active professional life to a more traditional female role as a homemaker. Accordingly, a wife said during the interview: “In my home country I have a- a good job… My salary was higher than my husband’s…And I had a good position in my firm…. I like to work and learn… here I just do housework, and I think… I am not worthy…”

International students’ wives differ from immigrants, because their relocation is generally more temporary (i.e., they retain citizenship in their country of origin, but choose to live abroad). In today’s global economy, however, it may be difficult to draw a clear line between nonimmigrant and immigrant individuals. Many people who may appear to be immigrants (i.e., from the perspective of local employers, colleagues, neighbors, or friends), may actually be nonimmigrant’s who are maintaining significant attachments to their home countries, while expanding their career opportunities by working abroad.

With an U.S. trend toward local hires, however, many international wives are facing challenges similar to those encountered by immigrants. They are expected to master the local language and culture, especially because more and more local workers can be expected to have the competitive advantage of local knowledge and connections. One of the wives that have lived in Ames for a year, during a focus group section expressed that: “I expected to find a job related to my field (architect), but I ended up working in a soil lab at ISU. I just do it for the money, and mainly because it is an excuse to go out of the house… I’m over qualified for this job… imagines how lucky my boss is, having an architect measuring and counting seeds…”

One important barrier to learning among wives of international students is lack of English proficiency. It perhaps can be categorized as an institutional barrier, since it is the policy in U.S. higher education to use English as the official language of instruction. Another institutional barrier is the incongruity between the previous educational experiences of wives of foreign students and educational practices in the United States. For example, international learners may bring to the classroom different expectations regarding class gender composition. Learners who are used to gender segregation in their own countries will feel very uncomfortable in a mixed-gender setting (McCargar, 1993; McGroarty, 1993; Paige, 1990). McGivney (1993) adds that a common finding in participation research is that non-participants have little or no knowledge of the educational opportunities available.

Graham-Brown (1991) points out the importance of filters in determining participation in adult education. Filters can be found within the educational system itself, as well as within family and society. These filters can contribute to sustaining social hierarchy. Some of the filters include educational policies that result in the exclusion of certain groups, based on race, language, place of residence, national school entrance examinations, or social class. These filters, which are quite common in other parts of the world, especially in developing countries, may affect the readiness of international wives to participate in formal and informal education in the United States.

What are the reasons that lead wives of international students to pursue formal education?

The most common reason given by these wives for going to school was to increase their knowledge. The second reason given is their need for a certificate, diploma, or practical skills that would enable them to get a job, either here or when they returned to their home country.

Other reasons include the need to fill their time and an intrinsic interest in learning for its own sake.

Learning can take place simultaneously with socializing. This is especially true for wives who do not speak English very well and have limited contacts with people outside of their own communities. Since learning overlaps with socialization, it provides women with a break from their daily routine and a chance to share their experiences and unburden themselves when there is a need to do so. The flexible nature of informal learning provides more room for increased personal contacts, which leads to a better understanding of their experiences and the meaning of such experiences in a wider context: “Since I was involved with churches, it has been wonderful, because they offered English classes, and I had the opportunity to know more women in my same situation, and get involved in several activities”.

In the case of the wives of international students, getting together to learn something new might serve more than one need, namely the need to belong, to be loved and the need to know and understand. This is because learning often overlaps with socializing. Women might get together for Biblical or Qur’anic study, for example, but at the end of the session, refreshments will be served and the women will socialize with one another: “When I meet with other wives for Qur’anic studies I feel like I belong somewhere, I am -am not that isolated... I learn and make new friends...” a wife said during an interview.

People tend to identify with the social and cultural group to which they belong. McGivney (1993) maintains that there are, from this point of view, two types of social groups: normative reference groups, i.e., those to which people themselves belong and comparative reference groups, meaning groups to which they aspire to belong. Socializing with women who understand each other’s situation is very helpful in dealing with the trials and problems of living in a foreign country. An international student wife explained: “After six month in Ames I became a non-degree student, and starting taking English classes at DMACC. I enjoy myself a lot being a student, and I especially enjoy meeting other international wives from other countries, that are experiencing the same situation as me”.

4.3. Feminist Theories on Women and Learning

The previous paragraphs show that women’s ways of learning may be considered as unique and different from those of men in many respects. Consequently, generic theories related to adult learning will not be sufficient to explain women’s learning experiences. As stated earlier, traditional theory in adult education is perceived as ignoring women as a specific category of learners (Flannery and Hayes, 2000a, b; Gilligan, 1982; Goldberger, et al., 1996; Hugo, 2000; Solsken, 1993).

Feminist theories, on the other hand, appear to be more suitable as lenses through which women's learning can be studied (Flannery and Hayes, 2000b). Feminist theories in education may be described simply as theories about women's learning and experiences as perceived by women themselves (Flannery and Hayes, 2000b). The theories also emphasize the “gendered” nature of life experiences, including learning (Hayes, 2000; Hugo, 2000; Tisdell, 2000). Flannery and Hayes (2000b) and Tisdell (2000) have identified three categories of feminist theories that are outlined below:

Psychological Feminist Theories. These theories highlight the importance of gender-role socialization in creating social and cultural differences between men and women. The theories seek to plant seeds for more equal educational opportunities for both genders, without questioning or criticizing the inequality within the educational structure in particular and social structure in general. Although the basis of these theories is individual experiences, they contribute to the literature of adult education by revealing the marginality and invisibility of women's learning experiences. “They show us how it is possible to look at women's learning from a new perspective, one that treats women's ways of being and knowing as valuable in their own right” (Flannery and Hayes, 2000b).

Psychological feminist theories have been charged with racial and class bias because most of the earlier research was based on the experiences of white middle-class women. Another criticism is related to the fact that the theories fail to take into account the structural causes of women's oppression.

Structural Feminist Theories. Structural feminist theories look at women's learning in light of their place in the social structure. According to these theories, women’s place in society, which is influenced by factors such as gender, class, and race, determines their life experiences and also their learning. The theories help to explain how women from similar countries may have different learning experiences due to the difference in their race or their social class.

Flannery and Hayes (2000b) argue that these theories are somewhat deficient to the extent that they offer "... only limited explanations of how multiple oppressions intersect and are experienced differently in the lives of individual women” (p.13). Flannery and Hayes (2000b) also believe that the theories tend to perceive women merely as victims of social structures, rather than agents who craft their own lives.

Poststructural Feminist Theories. Although Flannery and Hayes (2000b) only use the term *poststructural* for this last category of Feminist Theories, Tisdell (2000) argues that it can be used interchangeably with *postmodern.*

Unlike structural feminist theorists, the poststructuralists or postmodern theorist argue that women can be both oppressed and privileged at the same time. Tisdell (2000) perceives race, class, and gender not only as sources of oppression, but also as possible sources of privilege. Consequently, the intersection of race, class and gender--or in Tisdell's (2000) words the exercise of "crossing [these] borders" (p.161) -- can either result in increased oppression or increased privilege. Women's "agency" constitutes the center of this theory. The position of women within the structure is continually being negotiated, hence it is possible for women to conform and deviate from the social norms at one and the same time.

Feminist theories on women contribute to a better understanding of the forces that shape the lives of women, such as gender, class, and race. Some theories merely explain how those forces can either hinder or expand women's life chances. Others go further to demonstrate that women are not passive victims of oppressive social structures; rather, they are agents who carve their own destiny in spite of all the odds that are stacked against them.

4.4. Conclusion and Discussion

Instances of participation in formal and informal education tend to overlap to a certain degree and, complicating clear separation of the two. By definition, formal education covers learning activities that are *organized* and *structured*, whether by an institution like a religious organization (church or mosque, for example), by a government agency, nonprofit organization, or by a voluntary group that sets its own norms for study. Informal learning activities, on the other hand, are self-initiated and self-directed if not purely unexpected. Examples are like individual study, autodidactic efforts or "accidental learning", where knowledge is acquired through participation in some social activity.

The line between the two is somewhat fluid and can be particularly difficult to maintain in “less individualistic” cultures–that is, in contexts where individuals more often undertake any initiative with a group (whether familial or associational) rather than strictly on their own. Although formal/informal learning among wives of international students appears to be lacking structure, it can nevertheless produce the expected results, namely changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that can possibly last for a long time.

Women who participated in focus group discussions and individual interviews reported special bonds with some of their female friends. Although they might not physically meet each other on a daily basis, some of them talked on the phone with one another every day. While doing these activities, women talked and shared their daily experiences, ultimately learning from each other. Among various issues that women discussed were various ways to increase effectiveness of spousal communication, child rearing, economic survival on a tight budget, and tips on balancing two cultures home and host culture, particularly in reference to parenting.

Some women even compare the U.S social structure to that of their home country and wondered which part of U.S culture their people can borrow to improve conditions in their countries without eroding their national identities. Women unburdened to each other and relieved themselves from homesickness or frustration caused by various factors. They shared information on the cheapest grocery stores or on which department store had special sales on a particular week. Most of the wives of international students were always eager to learn to economize from more resourceful women. Independent women learned that it was perfectly acceptable to ask for help when one needed it.

Women learned from and supported each other because they were familiar with the joy and challenges that came with being a wife and a mother, although their life experiences could be very different. Women’s learning thrives on a sense of relatedness (Hayes and Flannery, 2000a; Hayes and Flannery, 2000b). This informal learning might look insignificant from the outside, but can be very meaningful for many wives of international students. Some wives reported that their close friends filled the void left from leaving their family members back in their home countries. Indirectly, the support lent by friends of wives of international students helped lessen the emotional burden of the husbands. Instead of burdening their husband with their homesickness or their worries about their children or budget, the women could pour their hearts out to their friends or seek counsel from them. Less emotional burden on the husbands’ part often meant a less stressful household.

International student’s wives participants of the study, during the interviewing process revealed that learning for them occurs in different modes, intentionally in formal and informal setting and incidentally through informal daily life experience. Learning about daily life experience was not done incidentally. Some women purposefully called or visited their friends, who might be older, or have been staying in Ames longest, to learn from their life experiences. While the “resource person” might have learned something incidentally, she purposefully imparted her knowledge to other women.

The women in this study showed a wide interest in different kind of matters, such are religion, parenting, and related psychological issues in reference to children and marital relations. Some women took pride in the knowledge that they possessed, although it was not necessarily scientific. Other women looked up to those known as knowledgeable and sought advice from them to deal with a variety of issues or simply to satisfy their curiosity.

Women likely learn best from a sense of connectedness with other women or with various social phenomena. It is also important to bear in mind that women, as learners, rarely, if ever, receive attention as a separate category since the learning process is perceived as universal and gender-blind. New research on women as learners revealed that it is important to understand the role of culture in learning, particularly how gender roles affect women’s ability to take advantage of learning opportunities. What will result from the competing demands of being a wife and a mother on the one hand, and a student or learner on the other?

The connection between learning behavior among international wives and their cultural background may vary among nationalities. The differences may be due to their different cultural patterns and also their attitude toward education while they were in their home countries. Other possible explanations for these variations may be due to the following factors: (1) their educational experiences in their home country; (2) their intensity of learning in their home country; (3) cultural differences between their home culture and the U.S. culture (lack of familiarity with community life sometimes becomes an obstacle for wives who wish to explore educational opportunities); (4) their unique familial circumstances such as lack of financial or familial support; (5) other personal attributes, such as independence, motivation and self-esteem.

It is easier to measure the outcome of learning if the goal is stated clearly in a well formulated learning plan. This study shows that many learning activities among wives of international students are done in a seemingly unstructured manner. Women obtained knowledge from various sources either to find answers for particular problems or to satisfy their curiosity. It is not clear whether their accumulated knowledge was translated into altered behavior. None of the women in this study stated that they became a better wife, or mother or cook after receiving advice from their female friends, for example.

However, there were cases which showed that women were able to assess whether they had achieved their learning goals. Some wives who could not drive when they arrived in

Ames pointed out that they now knew how to drive. Others acknowledged that they could speak English or understand other people a little bit better after enrolling in English conversation clubs for a period of time. Women who studied very hard to increase their TOEFL and GRE scores felt that they had accomplished their goal once they were enrolled in a graduate program.

CHAPTER 5. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' WIVES

The issue of domestic violence was not included in the survey, and the focus groups, however the participants expressed interest in discussing this issue. As a consequence of the consistent emergence of this topic in the focus groups, the researcher concluded that it was important to include these findings in the final study. This chapter highlights the common experiences of international student's wives who are in abusive relationships, the legal protections and public benefits available, and practices and suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of services provided to international student's wives.

5.1. Introduction:

During the end of a focus group session the research asked the wives what kind of services you think the university and Ames community should cover for international students and their families' one of them answered counseling. The researcher asked the wife to explain what kind of counseling, and she and another wife answered domestic violence counseling. The researcher asked them why you think the wives might need that kind of services. Two other wives were encouraged by the answer from the first wives and starting talking about domestic violence in general and their cases in particular.

Little attention has been paid to international student's wives who are abused. While no specific estimates exist on their numbers, the issues they face are not only those that affect abused women who are citizens, but also a number of cultural and legal barriers to seeking safety (Narayan, 1995). The focus of this chapter is to raise awareness of both the challenges faced by battered international wives and some of the legal protections now available to them. The challenges include cultural beliefs and practices that provide rationalizations used to excuse and deny the existence of domestic violence, and barriers that confront abused wives when accessing the services provided by public and private social service programs.

Although Iowa State University and the city of Ames is a home of a great number of international students and their families, discussions about domestic violence usually do not focus on them. Domestic violence happens in every culture and anyone can be a victim. However, international students and their families have many additional specific issues related to domestic violence.

Iowa State University has organized many conferences, activities and events in order to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and place the emphasis on prevention. Still, even at the only shelter in town that serves non-English speaking people, the discourse fails to clearly frame immigrant issues connected with domestic violence. When asked about the availability of information and services for members of international community in Ames, the shelter services, blamed the cultural differences as a cause for the complete lack of information's, workshop series and services. While culture might be one of the keys in explaining violence against women, it is important to not make "culture" the scapegoat in an analysis of violence against women or to downplay the strengths of different cultures available to battered women.

The International Students' Office at ISU is unaware or intentionally ignoring the situation of domestic violence. When asked by the researcher about cases of domestic violence among international students, some of the staff members of International Students Office reported uncertainty as to the specific numbers of domestic violence incidences and did not assume responsibility to act on their behalf but rather referred any situation to the campus police or counseling center. Their responses may be reflective of the overwhelming workload placed on international students' services offices resulting from post September 11, 2001 legislation and regulations, thus altering the priority to act as advocates on behalf of internationals and their families and instead act as enforcers of immigration regulations. Although no statistical evidence currently exists justifying the need for a domestic violence protocol specific to the international students/ scholars community, it, nonetheless, is arguable the duty of any college or university international students programs office to advocate on behalf of their internationals and their families while also educating the campus population.

5.2. Feminist Standpoint on Domestic Violence

There are many different ideas within feminist theory of domestic violence, but Bograd (1999) in *Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse* has identified four common strains. These are: 1) that as the dominant class, men have differential access to material and symbolic resources and women are devalued as secondary and inferior, 2) intimate partner abuse is a predictable and common dimension of normal family life, 3) women's experiences are often defined as inferior because male domination influences all aspects of life, and 4) the feminist perspective is dedicated to advocacy for women.

The intersectional or multicultural domestic violence approach challenges gender inequality as *the* primary factor explaining domestic violence: gender inequality is neither the most important nor the only factor that is needed to understand domestic violence in the lives of marginalized women. Gender inequality is only part of their marginalized and oppressed status. In fact, argues Bograd (1999), gender inequality is modified by its intersection with other systems of power and inequality that affect the lives of battered women. And one's experience as a battered woman is *realized* only in relation to other social locations or intersectionalities in society of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and immigrant and disability status. As Bograd (1999) states: “Intersectionalities color the meaning and nature of domestic violence, how it is experienced by self and responded to by others; how personal and social consequences are reproduced, and how and whether escape and safety can be obtained” (p.274) .

In the multicultural domestic violence literature two conflicting objectives emerge: giving voice to battered women from diverse social locations and cultural backgrounds while still focusing on the structural inequalities (i.e., race, gender, class) that constrain and shape the lives of battered women, although in different ways. The first has been described as the “race/class/gender” perspective, whose focus is on multiple, interlocking oppressions of individuals and difference; the second has been described as the “structural” perspective requiring analysis and criticism of existing systems of power, privilege and access to resources (Andersen and Collins, 2001; Mann and Grimes, 2001).

A considerable amount of research has been done on domestic violence in recent years. However, research on issues concerning domestic violence in nonimmigrant communities remains limited (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Dobash et al. 1992). For example, Zlotnik (1995) has detailed the increasing number of women migrating worldwide, while Donato (1992) has examined the increasing numbers of women migrating specifically to the United States. Others have focused on the consequences of immigrant women’s labor force participation for their households (Benson, 1994; Kibria, 1994; Menjívar, 1999) and for immigrant communities. However, the link between immigration and domestic violence has only begun to emerge (eg, see Bui and Morash, 1999 on Vietnamese in the United States; Mama, 1993a, 1993b on Caribbean, Asian, and Black women in Great Britain).

According to Easteal (1994), statistical evidence pertaining to the number of immigrant women who experience domestic violence in receiving countries, like the United States and Australia, is unavailable. Large surveys that might shed light on the experiences of Latina immigrants in the United States, for instance including those using redesigned instruments; remain inconclusive (Bachman and Saltzman 1995). Latinas are usually grouped into a Hispanic category, regardless of citizenship or legal status, and measurements have not accounted for noncitizen women who experience violence.

This lack of data and research could translate into policies that neglect the situation of immigrant women in domestic violence situations. For instance, the National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women (n.d.) (chaired by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services) recently launched the Toolkit to End Violence Against Women (http://toolkit.ncjrs.org). Its efforts focus on immigrants only once, even though there are 16 chapters dedicated to various other groups in efforts to involve them in prevention and better victim services.

Though the past three decades have witnessed an explosion of research on domestic violence, the existing literature has been presented as a “one size fits all” approach. This is inadequate to the experiences and needs of diverse groups of women who are abused. Some feminist scholars advocate for a distinct epistemology that captures the reality and viewpoints of subordinate groups (Collins, 1989).

5.3. Domestic violence among international student’s wives

Little is known about the prevalence of domestic violence and its impact on international students and wives at US institutions. The problem cannot be understood without examining of the social context of their transient life in the U.S.

International students’ wives are a particularly vulnerable group of victims of domestic violence. They tend to have fewer resources, stay longer in the relationship, and sustain more severe physical and emotional consequences as a result of the abuse and the duration of the abuse than other battered women in the United States (Abraham, 2000; Anderson, 1993; Ammar, Orloff, Dutton and Hass, 2005; Ammar and Orloff, 2006; Bui, 2003; Hass, Dutton, and Orloff, 2000; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Raj and Silverman, 2002; Rodriguez, 2004; Warrier, 2002).

In particular, abusers of international wives actively use their power to control their wife’s and children’s immigration status and threats of deportation as tools that play upon victim’s fears so as to keep their abused wives and children from seeking help or from calling the police to report the abuse (American Bar Association,1994). International male students may sometimes feel threatened by the independence enjoyed by the American women and exert more control over their wives in order to uphold their cultural norms.

During a focus group session a wife said that “ since we moved to Ames, my husband accuses me of being very independent, that I never tell him where I am going, putting too much lipstick on… and always looking for a away to start schools again, trying to be more like American women”.

Abused international student’s wives are particularly vulnerable and become trapped in abusive relationships due to their limited English language skills, a lack of knowledge they have about U.S legal protections and services to help victims of domestic abuse, financial dependency upon male intimate partners and family members, isolation and lack of social support systems in the United States. They often experience discrimination and decreased social opportunities due to their minority status, acculturation difficulties, and the social disruption resulting from their experience as immigrants. Rodriguez, Nemoto and Mkandawire (2003) found that the rights of immigrant victims are often overlooked by providers who see them as “others”, i.e. not deserving the full protection of the community because of their status as outsiders.

International students’ wives that participated in the focus groups reported an increase in the incidence of abusive incidents after their immigration to the United States. Many of them reported that their husbands used threats of deportation and of not filing or withdrawing immigration papers as a power and control tactic in the abusive relationship. Majority of the participants stated that immigration status prevented them from leaving the abusive relationship. One of the international wives that participated in the first focus group session said that ‘my husband has threatened to deport me once we arrived to the United States as a form of abuse’.

In the case of possible deportation of an abuser, who is the sole source of income for the couple, the wives during focus groups sessions and interviews expressed concern about the potential loss of funds, and being unable to financially support themselves, and their children. Wives of international students’ with an F2 visa are unable to work, but those with J2 visa are eligible to work. Even with the ability to work, these wives are only able to find low-paying positions and no childcare. The reason for this is that a J2 visa holder cannot be the main source of family income. Nonimmigrant’s who are eligible to receive public assistance find it very difficult to do so due to lack of knowledge. In case of J2 visa holders, they are not permitted to receive any public assistance benefits.

Through immigration-related abuse, the abuser controls whether or not his wife attains legal immigration status in this country, whether any temporary legal immigration status she has becomes permanent, and how long it may take her to become a lawful permanent resident. Ultimately, this immigration-related abuse dramatically affects whether and the length of time it will take before she can apply to become a naturalized citizen. For international students' wives' victims, this form of power and control is particularly malicious and effective. The fear induced by immigration-related abuse makes it extremely difficult for a victim to leave her abuser, obtain a protection order, access domestic violence services, or call the police for help.

"I know that divorce is an individual choice with many personal and legal consequences. I often think about that, but as nonimmigrant obtaining a divorce without pursuing an alternative immigration status could lead to unlawful presence in the United States … It will not be possible for me for 3-10-years to reenter the United States", says a wife during an interview session.

Moreover, when immigrant victims share children in common with an abuser who is a citizen or who has legal immigration status, abusers of immigrant victims keep the immigrant mother of their children from attaining legal immigration status, and then try to raise her lack of legal immigration status in a custody case in order to win custody of the children despite his history of abuse (American Bar Association, 1994; Ammar, Orloff, Hass and Dutton, 2004; Orloff and Sullivan 2004).

One of the wives during the interviews said that her husband made her come to the United States on a visitor's or fiancé visa although they were already married - a form of immigration fraud. Another wife explained that her husband never gave her access to documents that she needs for her application for lawful immigration status.

The international wives in Ames, who were victims of domestic violence, in most of the cases did not report the abuse. Most cultures uphold the patriarchal structure which perpetuates male dominance over women. Other factors such as economic stress, alienation and cultural marginality while living way from home also lead to domestic abuse among international students. Restriction to work and high cost of living causes a lot of economic stress to many male international students who live in this country with their spouse and children. For female internationals who are already dealing with the isolation and transitory nature of their foreign stay in the U.S, the abuse in their lives remains strictly a personal problem that they can neither share nor cope with.

A wife said that. “When my husband started his graduate school he was a TA and because he is Asian his students presumed that he will be difficult to understand, so they walked out of the class as soon as they saw him. Since then he is a different man, abusive and always angry”.

Although local communities and state governments in the US have responded to the problem of wife abuse through interventions such as laws, shelters and support groups for battered women, many international students’ wives are unaware of the legal and community support system available for men and women in abusive relationships. The subject is highly personal and sensitive and few like to discuss it in public.

Respondents reported fear of further abuse by husband, loss of honor and respect for self and family, and a lack of economic and financial support in an alien country and the fear of being deported to one's home country as some of the reasons preventing them from reporting abuse and seeking help. Of the eighty three international student’s wives who responded to the survey, an overwhelming majority of them agreed on the need for campus programs against domestic violence designed particularly for international students and wives.

5.4. Barriers to Leaving and Seeking Help

A variety of barriers present themselves as wives of international students seek assistance, including family and community resistance, fear of official institutions, inability to communicate in a common language, and program design features that inhibit help seeking.

A wife said that her husband started belittling and insulting her almost daily after they moved in Ames. The third time he beat her, in December 2007, she called the police. The man was arrested on suspicion of felony spousal abuse. Until then, she said, she had feared that calling the police could lead to her deportation and separation from her daughter, who is a U.S. citizen. She worried that the police wouldn't believe her and feared that her husband would kill her for calling the authorities. In addition, as a woman from a conservative rural village, she said, she saw domestic violence as normal, something she should endure rather than complain about.

According to Erez (2000), “The overriding rationale for many international spouses staying in abusive relationships is, however, the prospect of losing their children. Many international spouses fear that deportation or loss of residency status could mean losing custody of their children”. Erez (2000) continues by pointing out that divorce proceedings in a battered woman’s country of origin may well mean loss of custody of her children to the perpetrator (p. 36).

An international wife during an interview session said that “Divorce is such a stigma in my community that a woman may never be able to remarry within her community once she has left her husband. If she does leave she is often held responsible for the end of the marriage, even if she was the victim of violence. Her family of origin may or may not accept her back, because such an act may bring disgrace to the entire family”.

Dealing with domestic abuse within different cultures can be challenging, especially if the abused wife does not have any family, friends, and university association. Often times the abused wife is at the mercy of their partner, which makes safety planning difficult. Each incident is unique and different; however the resources are the same. When staff members of the Sexual Assault Response Team (ISU police) was asked by the researcher how they deal with cases of domestic violence among the international community at ISU, they responded that one of the first steps that ISU Police initiate during a domestic abuse incident is to ensure the safety of everyone involved. It is usually during the initial response when they discover whether or not an interpreter will be needed. If so, they have resources available that will utilize. A couple of those resources include the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) at ISU and the Iowa Council for International Understanding.

Overcoming language barriers through dependence on official interpreting services may resolve only a small part of the problem. As Erez (2000) points out, “Interpreters are still not routinely available, and their professionalism may be problematic” (p. 31). For example, information needed by police officers in a domestic abuse case is sometimes gathered from the abusive partner, his extended family or the victim’s children when other interpreters are not readily available. This may lead to distortions in information and uncooperative interpreters who disagree with the woman’s actions. Similar caution needs to be applied when using community members as interpreters due to their attitude about domestic violence, lack of interpreting skills, and limited familiarity with the dialect being spoken.

A wife during an interview said that “I am afraid that anyone, particularly other students from the same country, might see me talk to the police. The officer was having trouble to understand me….. and she said that she was going to call someone…. someone from International Students Office to find someone… that could understand my language. I refused and let it go, I was afraid someone I knew might come and translate, I was afraid and ashamed of gossip”.

Intervention services may not be able to meet international wives’ needs once they overcome the obstacles in making appropriate contact. Institutional barriers include location, professional background of board or staff, and both the ethnicity and language skills of staff. Many of these programs have also failed to adequately integrate race and ethnicity into an understanding of and response to domestic violence (Kanuha, 1996).

According to one of the wives during a focus group session “Shelters are often perceived by the women from my country as being the ‘point of no return’ …breakdown of the marriage, rather than a resource for assistance in a marital crisis”.

Economic barriers are not the only ones that international wives face. International wives, unlike citizens, often may not legally work and face a constant threat of deportation by their abuser (Narayan, 1995; Abraham, 2000; Dasgupta, 1998). Abusers of international wives often use immigration-related threats to assert power and control over their spouse or intimate partner. The abuser, if he is a permanent resident, typically uses this power to threaten to have the victim deported by reporting her undocumented status to the Immigration and Naturalization Service

(INS), threatens to revoke residency sponsorship, or refuses to file necessary immigration petitions that would provide the victim with lawful status in the U.S.

As discussed above, there are numerous cultural, economic, legal and practical factors combine to prevent international wives who are battered from seeking or receiving the help they need. There is, however, increasing awareness across the United States of the unique plight faced by international wives who are battered. This awareness has led to numerous changes, especially in federal immigration laws as discussed below.

5.5. Legal Protection

The early 1990s reflected a growing recognition of the impact immigration law and procedure had on an immigrant victim of domestic violence. The first piece of legislation that recognized domestic violence as a problem experienced by immigrants dependent on their abusive citizen and lawful permanent resident wives for legal immigration status was the "battered spouse waiver" (INA §216(c)(4), 8 U.S.C. §1186a(c)(4) (2001)).

Under immigration laws, if an immigrant wife was married to a citizen for less than two years, she was granted "conditional lawful permanent residence," instead of full permanent residence (INA § 216(a)(1), 8 U.S.C.§ 1186a (2001)). In order to obtain full lawful permanent residence, the spouse must remain in the marriage for at least two years. This two-year requirement placed a heavy burden on many international wives, forcing them to remain in abusive relationships to satisfy immigration law requirements. The battered spouse waiver enabled international wives to escape their abusive marriages and obtain legal immigration status without the cooperation of their abusive partner. While this is an important step towards protecting battered immigrants, the waiver was limited and only available to certain applicants.

Congress recognized that international spouses and children were still trapped in violent relationships and deterred from taking action to protect themselves by filing protection orders or criminal charges or calling the police because of the threat or fear of deportation despite the enactment of the battered spouse waiver (House Reports, 1993). There was further bi-partisan recognition that immigration laws were part of a larger failure to address the issue of domestic violence. The House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary found that domestic battery problems are “terribly exacerbated in marriages where one spouse is not a citizen and the non-citizens’ legal status depends on his or her marriage to the abuser,” because it places control entirely in the hands of the citizen or lawful permanent resident.

Congress enacted other special immigration protections for immigrants abused by their citizen or lawful permanent resident spouses or parents in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA, 1994). VAWA contained provisions that limit the ability of the abuser to use immigration laws to threaten and control his immigrant spouse or child. VAWA provides relief by enabling battered immigrants to attain lawful permanent residence (green cards). VAWA created two forms of relief for immigrants: VAWA self-petitions and VAWA cancellation of removal (formerly called “suspension of deportation”). These provisions ensure that immigrant victims of domestic violence have access to lawful immigration status without having to depend on the cooperation or participation of their abusers.

Other forms of immigration relief available to battered immigrants include U- visas and gender-based asylum. The forms of immigration relief described below are by no means a full list of the types of relief available to abused immigrants. It is important to remember that the information provided in this section is intended to act as an introduction to immigration solutions for victims of domestic violence. It is essential for advocates working with battered immigrants to consult with an immigration expert to fully explore the range of immigration relief available to that particular individual and to determine whether certain civil or criminal actions, such as divorce or criminal conviction, could possibly affect the immigration status of a battered immigrant.

VAWA Self-Petitions

Under current immigration laws, a citizen or permanent resident spouse or parent may file an immigration petition known as a “relative petition” for certain family members so they may obtain permanent resident status in the United States (INA § 204, 8 U.S.C. § 1154(a) (2001)). The citizen or permanent resident is the Petitioner and the immigrating family member is the Beneficiary. The Petitioner solely controls this process, deciding when or whether to file this relative petition. It is within this framework that VAWA self-petitions evolved. Under VAWA (1994), rather than rely on an abusive partner or parent, the victim family member can file a VAWA self-petition and obtain permanent resident status without the knowledge of the abusive partner or parent. In order to be eligible for this form of immigration relief, the battered immigrant must generally show she is a person of good moral character (no criminal record), that she married or was formerly married to the citizen or permanent resident spouse or former spouse in good faith, and that the citizen or permanent resident subjected her to battery or extreme cruelty. (INA § 204(a), 8 U.S.C. § 1154(a) (2001)). The definition of battery or extreme cruelty is an immigration definition that includes physical or mental abuse (8 C.F.R. § 204.2(c)(vi) (2002)). Many victims of psychological abuse are eligible to apply for VAWA self-petitions. Further, under subsequent enactments to VAWA, certain battered immigrants who are divorced from their abusers, living abroad, or who married bigamist abusers who never divorced their first wife may be eligible to file VAWA self-petitions (VTVP, 2000). While this immigration provision does not provide all immigrants with access to legal immigration status, it does provide relief to those victims whom, but for the abuse, would have lawful immigration status through their spouse.

Crime Victim Visas (U Visas)

Abused immigrants who do not qualify for VAWA self-petitions may be eligible under the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (VTPA, 2000) for the newly created nonimmigrant crime victim visa, also known as the “U visa” (INA § 101(a)(15)(U), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(U) (2001)). This U visa is offered to a limited group of immigrant crime victims who have suffered substantial physical or emotional injury as a result of being subjected to specific crimes committed against them in the United States. Battered immigrants who can benefit include those abused by their boyfriends, wives and children of diplomats, work-visa holders, and students. To obtain the visa, a law enforcement official must certify that the U visa applicant has been helpful, is being helpful or is likely to be helpful to an investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. The maximum number of U visas available in any one-year is 10,000. Crimes covered include: rape, torture, trafficking, incest, domestic violence, sexual assault, abusive sexual contact; prostitution; sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation; being held hostage; peonage; involuntary servitude; slave trade; kidnapping; abduction; unlawful criminal restraint; false imprisonment; blackmail; extortion; manslaughter; murder; felonious assault; witness tampering; obstruction of justice; perjury; or attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above mentioned crimes (INA § 101(a)(15)(U)(iii), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(U)(iii) (2001)).

Under the Attorney General’s discretion, a U visa holder who has been physically present in the country for three years may apply to be a permanent resident when justified on humanitarian grounds, to ensure family unity or when it is otherwise in the public interest unless they have unreasonably refused to cooperate in an investigation or prosecution of criminal activity (INA § 245(l), 8 U.S.C. § 1255(l) (2001)).

5.6. Conclusion and Discussion

Battered international wives face many barriers to seeking and receiving assistance. The barriers are cultural, economic, practical as well as legal. The Violence Against Women Act and of 1994 and its 2000 amendments have provided immigrant battered women with new tools to achieve safety and effectively brought awareness of domestic violence in immigrant communities to the public. These legislative protections have also helped bring their abusers to justice while reducing domestic violence in their communities.

It is important that courts, legislators, government agency personnel and immigration adjudicators understand the dynamics of domestic violence that occur in relationships between international students’ wives. The research reported in this paper reemphasizes how power and control over the immigration status of an immigrant wife or partner enhances the likelihood and the severity of domestic abuse. International wives overcome significant barriers when they turn to the U.S justice, health and social services systems for help to end domestic violence. When international wives find the courage to seek help despite their abuser’s threats of deportation, language barriers, isolation, and varying levels of acculturation, U.S justice and social services systems must respond appropriately to their needs.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Summary of key findings

Being an international student's wife meant for the majority of the wives having to cope simultaneously with a double adjustment: dealing with the new environment and with their role being contingent on the student's academic commitments and career plans. But, just as there is no such thing as "the" international student because this generalization would imply that they have more in common than they really do, the results of this study indicate that there is also no such thing as "the" foreign student's wife. This diversity seems to be even greater, because in contrast to the student, whose motivation and role as a sojourner is clearly, wives' needs and expectations as well as projects for the sojourn, are very dissimilar and not prescribed by the role itself.

The importance of work and family in their value system, proved to be the most significant aspect of diversity and a key factor in the amount of the culture shock experienced. The degree of acceptance or rejection of the more traditional role as a homemaker during the stay in Ames was the most important variable affecting the well-being of the wives. While those who had already interrupted their careers to become mothers were able to see the sojourn as a time-limited experience fitting with their role definition, those who had to leave behind their professional activity felt deprived of an important aspect of their personal identities. They suffered the overload of reevaluating their present role and future project as women and as wives in this new host environment.

Initial feelings of sadness, loneliness, self-doubt, confusion, and frustration were present in their descriptions of the first year of the sojourn. And this acculturation stress was further increased for those who also had to overcome an important language barrier. When difficulties in communication were present, they entailed further dependency on the husband or others, increasing frustration and feelings of isolation. Almost all wives of international students experienced some kind of culture shock when they first arrived in Ames. Lack of English was the biggest problem among almost all of them. English inadequacy often led to isolation because foreign visitors needed to know English to reach out to people who did not share their culture. Those who enjoyed a large community of people of "their own kind" here at their new American place of residence often had individuals to guide them through the maze of a foreign culture or who would at least incorporate them into a new, friendly community away from home. In fact, an ethnic community absorbs culture shock by providing a sense of familiarity. A combination of lack of English and the inability to be self-reliant can be very overwhelming for some women.

The results are not in accordance with the feelings of extremely satisfaction usually felt by sojourners during the first period of honeymoon stage (Oberg, 1960 Adler, 1975). There is a big contrast with their husbands' new life in the host country. Husbands are immersed in a busy schedule form the very first day, and are constantly exposed to new experiences for them.

Many of the women were very young, and they needed somebody with more experience in life in general, or life in Ames in particular, to hold their hand and show them the way of the new culture. Generally the women turned to other women of their ethnic group for guidance and help. The need of ethnic community was heightened among women who lacked fluency in the English language, and hence were unable to reach out to people who were not from their ethnic group. This is because their husbands, often the only other adult in the family, by virtue of their being students, were away a lot. Husbands' unavailability during the day was the hardest challenge for the wives, especially during their first months of their stay in Ames. Daytime without their husbands was often the loneliest period for some wives of international students. How does the existence of communities based on shared culture affect learning among wives of international students? While the communities generally provided a warm, caring support system, their existence discouraged some women from venturing outside their comfort zone and from learning new things. They preferred their own kind, because they did not need to learn another language and a new culture. As a consequence, there were wives who had been in Ames for more than five years who hardly spoke English. Furthermore, due to the intensive interaction among the women, coupled with the insularity of the ethnic community, some women developed excessive curiosity about other people's business, perceived by some of their "countrywomen" as an unwelcome intrusion. Consequently many women expressed a love-hate relation with their ethnic community and its effects on learning seem very positive up to a point and sometimes negative beyond that limit.

International student's wives need to do various forms of sacrifice and adjustment. These changes are much harder for those who left their homeland willingly and found the culture of their host society incompatible with that of their own. Studies found that immigrants' personal self-esteem was primarily determined by the immigrants' accomplishments and achievements, such as speaking English, and finding a good job (Taylor and Brown, 1988; Crocker and Major, 1989; Diener, 1984; Nesdale et al., 1997; Nesdale and Mak, 2003). How can international student's wives obtain personal self-esteem in this individualism culture? It is very hard for international student's wives to obtain self-esteem as a dependant when people value individualism, accomplishments, and speaking English.

International students’ wives have no social security number, no bank account, no car, no friends, and no jobs. How can they be independent? They depend on their husbands to live legally in the states.

F1-F2 families experience greater pressure both economically and psychologically. It makes the relationship tense and hard to sustain. The issue of domestic violence was raised many times during focus groups. The social and emotional effects of emotional abuse in the form of isolation, is particularly striking in the lives of this population. Besides previously outlined issues, forces may include such issues as linguistic barriers, limited kinship and friendship systems locally, and difficulties in settlement. These external difficulties were reported by international student’s wives as contributing to their vulnerability and were later internalized in the form of emotional isolation. This isolation became an important factor in being abused. International wives are identified as very vulnerable and some abusers threaten to contact immigration if he is sponsoring her. Factors such as economic stress, alienation and cultural marginality while living way from home also lead to domestic abuse among international students.

Both international students and their wives feel great pressure in the F1-F2 family. Before their wives come to join them in the states, international students usually feel lonely and want their wives to join them as soon as possible. But after wives arrive in the United States, the students do feel happy for a while. But shortly after that, they face new problems. Their budgets are tight because they move to a bigger apartment, need to feed two persons, and other expenses are higher than the times when they lived alone.

‘My husband came to the United State in summer of 2003- says a wife during an interview. I joined him a year later. He saved $6,000 from his stipends before I came. He only earns $1,200 per month. You know how hard it is to save $6000 in a year, right? He had never gone to a movie. He had never gone to a restaurant to eat. He thought he had enough for us. So he told me to come here in 2004. But now, we have no savings in the bank. We only buy on-sale vegetables in grocery stores. We still do not have enough money to buy a car. I really worry about money. So he can graduate as soon as possible. If he gets a job, we can plan to have a baby”.

‘My husband always says I distract him from studies. He is feeling more pressure after my arrival. He always worries about his classes and research work. He started complaining about losing hair recently…’ – says a wife during one of the focus groups sessions.

International students face lots of pressure. The pressure comes from financial status as well as taking care of the partner’s psychological need to adjust to new culture. Compared to international students, international students’ wives face different kinds of pressure. Their social network is narrow. They don’t have many friends. At the same time, they experience a culture shock. It is hard for them to adapt to the new culture. They need social support from the environment. However, it is hard for them to get it in the new environment.

‘As to my husband face economic pressure. He has to pay all bills. The only source of income that we have is his stipend from the university. At the same time, he has academic pressure. He has to study hard, and work hard to meet the standards of the university. My pressure, as an F2 is more on the psychological level. I feel the pressure from the environment too. I don’t have work, friends, and communities to get supports. I feel lonely. And my English is not good. I can’t talk with neighbors and get new friends’- a wife during the interview states.

Illustrating her situation a wife said during a focus group session “I have been in the United States for 5 months. The newness of the place is vanishing. I have nothing to do but just be idle. I can’t understand the TV show. All the people in TV show laugh, but I even can’t understand why they are laughing. I miss home. I miss my books. Without reason, I was mad at my husband last night”.

Another wife states ‘The great changes of the life style have great influence on F2s. Not only we lose income, but also we have to learn everything from scratch. I had spent a long time to accustom to the life here”.

Lives are not easy for both students and their wives. Their visa types assigned them different responsibilities. The international students are the bread-winners. They need to study hard, get the stipend, and pay for all of their bills, while their wives need to accompany them and take care of them. Their pressure comes from the roles they are playing. Additionally, both of them are new to this place. The process of adaptation is also challenging.

After one year living in Ames, wives reported that their emotional situation was best described by the most positive feelings of the pair. All these negative feelings experienced when they first moved to Ames turned into more positive ones after one year living in Ames,. In general accompanying wives reported a turn closer to the following feelings, amused, hopeful, like at home, accompanied, excited, and integrated over the time.

After an initial process of stressful adaptation into the new environment, international students’ wives found by themselves different ways to surpass the initial feelings of loneliness, sadness, isolation and boredom. However, it does not mean that those feelings disappeared at all rather they are experienced at less severe now than when they first moved to Ames. This can be explained by the fact that in general, international students’ wives are eager to integrate themselves into the local community in many different ways. They are constantly looking for available opportunities to do so.

They try to change the attitudes toward the host culture, adapt to the new environment, find an effective way to deal with the new culture, know more about the local language, foods, and custom, as well as increasing contacts with local people (Winkelman, 1994 cited by Neuliep, 2003; Chaney, 2004).

International wives faced different kind of problem during their sojourn. Moving to a new culture implied only leaving behind their traditional sources of support, but also learning to cope in an unfamiliar environment. During the process of acculturation, accompanying wives confronted themselves to new barriers and problems, and they had to find new creative ways to transcend them. International students' wives at ISU found a welcoming support networks local churches, non-profit organizations in town, and mostly the help received by co nationals and sometimes by the international community in Ames. It is important to mention that none of the wives reported the university community as a source of social support. When they have problems they usually cannot access university resources, and benefits available only to their husbands.

A comprehensive list of personal needs experienced by some international students' wives was presented to the subjects in the survey instruments. Respondents were asked to check all those needs that they considered important. Also they were asked to rank their needs, beginning with the most important one.

When the participants were asked to check all the needs experienced during their sojourn, out of the 89 participants, 47 reported financial needs, 28 reported work permit, and 14 reported admission to school (ISU).

After checking all the needs experienced during their sojourn, participants were asked to rank from the whole list the three most important needs for them. Eighty respondents ranked their most important needs in first, second and third place. Out of 80 subjects, 31 ranked work permit as one of their top three needs, 22 ranked financial needs as one of their top three necessities, 16 ranked admission to schools as one of their top three needs, 12 ranked childcare as one their top three needs, and 9 ranked social support and participate actively in the community as one of their top three needs.

During focus groups session important needs were also identified. For example, a wife was describing her feelings of isolation and anxiety while discussing her own need to get admitted to a graduate program at ISU: ‘The only way out for me… from this horrible situation that I am in… just a housewife is to start school all over again, even though I already have a master degree. But it’s so difficult, not only from the financial point of view, but also due to visa issues… I have to change to F1 to become a student and it a lot of paper work… it takes a lot of time. If I would have known beforehand about this, I would have started while I was home… I have been wasting my time all these month…’

The lack of information was revealed as another important need by many wives during the focus groups. This need is associated with the lack of orientation for international students’ wives when they arrived to Ames/ISU.

Most of them reported very low levels of satisfaction in their social life and personal development in Ames. Most participants are highly educated and now remain involuntary unemployed. The results of this study show that the most important needs faced by the wives at ISU are: work permit, financial constrains, admission to ISU, and counseling.

Many survey respondents and all wives-mothers that attended the focus groups revealed a big concern regarding the lack of affordable childcare in ISU and Ames. They reported the lack of affordable childcare was a big obstacle. During a focus group session a wife-mom stated:

‘Childcare is a big issue… Here in Ames I don’t have family support, and my husband is very busy with his studies…. I have been for 8 month in waiting list for the childcare center offered by ISU. I could not find another option to leave my child for a couple of hours as I used to at home… and do send the baby in another childcare center is very expensive, it will cost us more than half of my husbands’ assistantship’.

With no English, but a financial need to work, several wives resorted to offering their services as housekeepers and baby-sitters. Although their reactions differed, some felt devastated, as did this wife: ‘I needed to work and I could only get a job cleaning and taking care of a household. I was terribly, unhappy. I was thinking what my parents would say if they see me…. They spent a lot of money for my education… and know I stay home… and do low paying jobs ‘.

Wife-mothers are constrained to housing and parenting responsibilities. They revealed that working, studying, or participating in scheduled activities is not an option for them, because they have to take care of their children, and therefore this situation affects negatively their perception for a change in their life style. They experienced being tied to their homes and their children, and there are not able to do something for their self during their staying in Ames.

In contrast the international students’ wives without children experienced in general, feelings of hope over time. After sometime in Ames they envisioned different opportunities to integrate themselves in the local community. Over the time they developed new friendship and find groups of support. Many of them are gradually engaging in community activities regularly.

Still, in the midst of all these difficulties, the majority of the wives showed great resilience in overcoming initial feelings of unhappiness. The researcher also met lots of happy wives during the study. They enjoy the lives in the states. They love their husbands and feel happy about living together. They enjoy stay at home and cook for their husbands. Many Chinese wives reported that they love to live in the United States because there is no family control policy here and they can have more than one child. Many wives have learned English and go to school. Some of them make a lot of friends and have developed their own social network.

6.2. Limitations and the Need for Further Study

The lives of F2s may be further studied with the perspectives of cross culture adaptation, family, and policy. Future study may apply longitudinal method to trace F2s and J2s adaptation process. F2s and J2s may experience different adaptation process which may contribute to cross cultural adaptation theories. The combination of cultural adaptation and family inequality may be a topic for future studies. How do immigrants or sojourners' social-cultural environment and human environment unit, such as family interact? What is the impact of this interaction on immigrants and sojourners psychologically? Meanwhile, F2s issue can be analyzed in policy framework for the purpose of policy-making. F2s can not work legally. How does this policy influence dependent wives' lives? Further studies are needed in those areas.

The U.S. experiences of international wives from different culture areas may vary. Accordingly, the result and conclusion of the study can be referred only to the women of similar backgrounds and situations, such as highly educated wives of international graduate students', wives with average marital relationships, et al.

Further research is needed to examine the career development of these women, whose careers have undergone drastic changes. A follow-up study on these wives' career development will be beneficial to the understanding of the women's situation and their dilemma as a dependent. It is also interesting to explore the adjustment process and the decisions in life incidents of metropolitan wives with marital problems. The author waits for the chance to supplement this study.

The other angle of approach is cultural influence. The wives of international students from different culture areas may confront different things resulting in different adjustment processes. Their perceptions of life in the foreign country may vary. How culture factors work on their lives, and how their home are constructed, also merit attention.

6.3. Recommendation

The first step to integrate international student's wives in the local community requires knowing their needs, feelings and obstacle of integration experienced by them during their sojourn in Ames. The acknowledgment and the adequate assessment of these barriers, and the willingness to become a supportive network for this forgotten population on campus seem to be the basic step towards facilitating their successful cross-cultural adaptation to the local community during their sojourn. Specific recommendations derived from this study include the following:

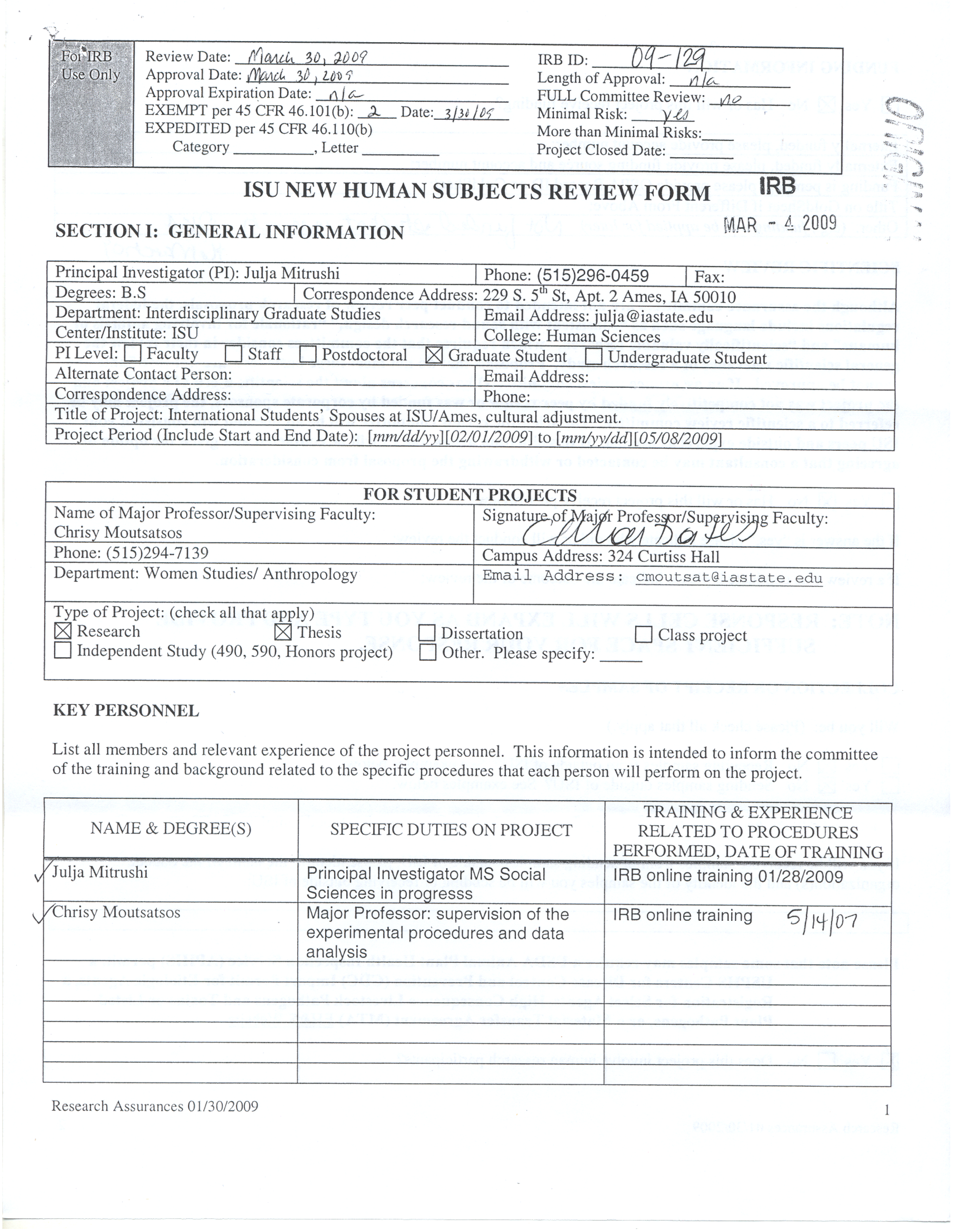
Sending detailed pre-arrival information, like for example a resource guide of Ames and Iowa State for wives about housing opportunities, ethnic-food stores, child care facilities, banking, and English classes. Access to services and programs offered by ISU and the community should also be described and explained, such the Clinic of Marriage and Family Therapy, Recreation Center, nonprofit organizations on campus and in Ames, thus encouraging participation. Information about requirements and visa restrictions to work or study needs to be clearly stated to avoid future disappointments.

Welcome Orientation for incoming international students wives every Spring and Fall semester. This early encounter will also serve as a friendly invitation to participate in different programs, and help diminish feelings of loneliness and initial culture shock. Inform the wives about programs and activities that are available off campus. Invite people from various community services to provide information, and have a chance to know about resources on campus and in the community. As many wives are unable to attend orientation with their children, it is important to offer baby-sitter services during orientation.

Offering multicultural training workshops to other local professionals who come frequently in contact with international spouses, such as English as Second Language teachers and physicians. Print brochures with information about domestic violence, counseling and shelter services in town in different language.

Enhance volunteer opportunities: According to this study, international student’s wives are eager to engage in some activity on regular basis. Since many of them are not legally eligible to work, many of them have expressed interest on volunteering in different projects and programs on campus and in the community.

APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW APPROVAL



For IRB Use Only	Review Date: March 30, 2009 Approval Date: March 30, 2009 Approval Expiration Date: n/a EXEMPT per 45 CFR 46.101(b): 2 Date: 3/30/09 EXPEDITED per 45 CFR 46.110(b) Category __________, Letter __________	IRB ID: 09-129 Length of Approval: n/a FULL Committee Review: no Minimal Risk: yes More than Minimal Risks:____ Project Closed Date: ________

ISU NEW HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM

IRB
MAR - 4 2009

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Principal Investigator (PI): Julja Mitrushi	Phone: (515)296-0459	Fax:
Degrees: B.S	Correspondence Address: 229 S. 5th St, Apt. 2 Ames, IA 50010	
Department: Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies	Email Address: julja@iastate.edu	
Center/Institute: ISU	College: Human Sciences	
PI Level: ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Postdoctoral ☒ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student		
Alternate Contact Person:	Email Address:	
Correspondence Address:	Phone:	
Title of Project: International Students' Spouses at ISU/Ames, cultural adjustment.		
Project Period (Include Start and End Date): *[mm/dd/yy]*[*02/01/2009*] to *[mm/yy/dd]*[*05/08/2009*]		

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS	
Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: Chrisy Moutsatsos	Signature of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: CMoutsatsos
Phone: (515)294-7139	Campus Address: 324 Curtiss Hall
Department: Women Studies/ Anthropology	Email Address: cmoutsat@iastate.edu

Type of Project: (check all that apply)
☒ Research ☒ Thesis ☐ Dissertation ☐ Class project
☐ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project) ☐ Other. Please specify: _____

KEY PERSONNEL

List all members and relevant experience of the project personnel. This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that each person will perform on the project.

NAME & DEGREE(S)	SPECIFIC DUTIES ON PROJECT	TRAINING & EXPERIENCE RELATED TO PROCEDURES PERFORMED, DATE OF TRAINING
✓ Julja Mitrushi	Principal Investigator MS Social Sciences in progresss	IRB online training 01/28/2009
✓ Chrisy Moutsatsos	Major Professor: supervision of the experimental procedures and data analysis	IRB online training 5/14/07

Research Assurances 01/30/2009 1

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: International students' wives at ISU

Investigators: Julja Mitrushi, MS in Social Sciences in progress,

Chrisy Moutsatsos, PhD

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to identify the main needs and obstacles perceived by the internationals students' wives during their stay in Ames. Once those barriers are identified we will attempt to find out different mechanism that the ISU and Ames communities can adopt in order to help in their process of adjustment. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a wife of an international student currently living in Ames.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will consist of taking part in one-session-focus group, and will last one hour and a half at most. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed. You will be asked to share your personal experience and opinion with other women regarding different aspect of your life as a wife of an international student. **"You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable"**

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there will be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by providing valuable information about the main needs and adjustment obstacles perceived by international students' wives

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information. To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken. Your data will be identified after the study is completed by an arbitrary identification number. All data from this study will remain anonymous and there is no way to identify the participants. Only the research team will have access to the data. We will hold the results until the statistical analysis and conclusion are completed. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study contact Julja Mitrushi, (515) 296-0459**.** If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

****

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) ____

____________________________________ ____________________

(Participant's Signature) (Date)

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

____________________________________ ____________________

(Signature of Person Obtaining (Date)

Informed Consent)

APPENDIX C. SURVEY INSTRUMET

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following questions. Check number 5 for the highest level of satisfaction, number 1 for the lowest level of satisfaction, or numbers 2,3 or 4 depending on how satisfied you are in between. (1= not at all satisfied, 2= a little satisfied, 3= fairly satisfied, 4=very satisfied, 5= extremely satisfied).

How satisfied are you with your home and family life in Ames?

Not at all satisfied	A little bit satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

How satisfied are you with your current social life in Ames?

Not at all satisfied	A little bit satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

How satisfied are you with your personal development in Ames?

Not at all satisfied	A little bit satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

The following is a list of personal needs mentioned by other international spouses in Ames. Please check all the categories that you also consider important needs for yourself.

1__ Financial needs

2__ Work permit

3__ Training about the American culture

4__ Social support

5__ Counseling services

6__ Affordable housing

9__ Participating actively in some activity

10__Self-esteem needs

11__ Affordable childcare

12__ Friendly social networks

13__ Establishing new friendships

14__ Orientation programs for spouses

7__ Admission to school

8__ Sense of belonging to the community

15__ Support groups for spouses

16__ Multicultural training workshops

Out of all these personal needs mentioned in the previous question, please indicate the 3 most important ones for yourself in order of relevance.

1st ____

2nd ____

3rd ____

The following are some of the obstacles perceived by other international spouses AFTER ONE YEAR living in Ames. Please check number 5 if the statement very definitely applies to you AFTER SIX MONTHS living in Ames, number 1 if it does not apply at all to you AFTER SIX MONTHS living in Ames, or numbers 2, 3, 4 depending how much applies in between.

	Does not apply to me				**Very definitely applies to me**
I have problems understanding and speaking English	1	2	3	4	5
I worry about my financial situation	1	2	3	4	5
I suffer from cultural shock	1	2	3	4	5
My standard of life is lower than in my home country	1	2	3	4	5
I experience discrimination	1	2	3	4	5
I have problems adjusting to American costumes and norms	1	2	3	4	5
I do not feel supported socially	1	2	3	4	5
I am not allowed to work	1	2	3	4	5

I am not allowed to study	1	2	3	4	5
	Does not apply to me				**Very definitely applies to me**
I have a hard time adapting to the American food	1	2	3	4	5
I have problems getting used to the weather	1	2	3	4	5

Are you experiencing any other obstacles not mentioned in this list?

The following are some of the feelings perceived by other international spouses AFTER ONE YEAR living in Ames. Please check what best described your feelings AFTER SIX MONTHS living in Ames.

Frustrated	1	2	3	4	5	Accomplished
Bored	1	2	3	4	5	Amused
Hopeless	1	2	3	4	5	Hopeful
Homesick	1	2	3	4	5	Like at home
Lonely	1	2	3	4	5	Accompanied
Sad	1	2	3	4	5	Happy
Indifferent	1	2	3	4	5	Surprised
Impassive	1	2	3	4	5	Excited
Isolated	1	2	3	4	5	Integrated

Are you experiencing any other feelings not mentioned in this list?

Is there anything else you want to tell us about your feelings, needs or interests in Ames?

THANK YOU

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' WIVES SURVEY

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITES

NOTE: In order to participate in the study, you have to be an international student wife and holding a F-2 or J-2 visa and you must be 18 years of age and older.

The following study is a short survey that will ask about your experiences of living in the United States. These results can be used to increase the awareness of international students' wives' experiences and to inform the work of educators, mentor, and international advisors. After informed consent has been obtained, you will be asked to voluntarily indicate the degree to which each item pertains to you. The entire study should take approximately 10-15 minutes.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to stop or refuse to participate at any time without penalty. If you ever feel uncomfortable or object to any of the questions, please discontinue your participation and contact the researcher. Although your participation in this research may not benefit you directly, your participation may contribute to the understanding of international wives' experiences in the U.S. There are no known risks involved in this study beyond those of everyday life. The answers you provide will be kept completely confidential. You will not be asked to provide your name on the inventory. Other participants in this study do not have access to the data. The obtained data will also be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. The results from this study may be published in the professional journals, thesis, or presented in a conference, but you will not be identified as an individual. Instead, results will be reported as group average.

If you have any questions about the survey or the procedures in this project, please contact Primary Researcher: Julia Mitrushi (email:julja@iastate.edu)

APPENDIX D. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

1) What are international students' wives' needs and expectations in Ames?
2) What is your personal motivation living in Ames?
3) What would you like to accomplish while living in Ames?
4) How has this community contribute to international students' wives' adaptation process?
5) What obstacles or limitations do international students' wives find in ISU and Ames?
6) What programs and/or services are needed at ISU and Ames to facilitate a satisfactory adjustment of international students' wives?
7) Which are your groups of social support here?
8) What places have you found friendly in ISU and Ames during your acculturation process?
9) Have you ever experienced discrimination here?
10) Do you participate in programs or events at ISU?
11) What do you like most and at least about living in Ames?
12) Which suggestions or advice would you give to other international students' wives who are coming to Ames?
13) As you probably know, there is an ethnic community for each international student group (for example Chinese community, Indian community). Do you have such community here in Ames? If so, can you tell me what kind or relations you have with your ethnic community?
14) Since you have been here, have you been doing any kind of learning, either at home, at somebody's house, or at school?
15) If so, what kind of learning have you been doing?
16) How did you find out about those learning facilities?
17) Did you participate in learning activities offered by such facilities?
18) Where have you been doing your learning? (at home, at somebody's house)?
19) Do you know any kind of learning facilities here in Ames?

APPENDIX E. TABLES

Table 1. F2 and J2 visa holders in the US.

Year	Number of People in F2 Visa Status	Number of People in J2 Visa Status
2008	42,708	47,012

Data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service .2008 Statistical Yearbook.

Table 2.International Students' Wives at Iowa State University. Fall Semester 2008 (N=472)

Country	**Number**	**Country**	**Number**
Albania	1	Nepal	8
Argentina	3	Netherlands	2
Bangladesh	1	Nigeria	3
Brazil	6	Pakistan	3
Canada	6	Peru	1
Chile	1	Philippines	3
China	190	Poland	1
Colombia	3	Romania	3
Costa Rica	2	Russia	3
Egypt	11	Rwanda	1
Finland	1	Saudi Arabia	1
France	5	Serbia	1
Germany	1	South Korea	85
Ghana	4	Sri Lanka	4
Guatemala	1	Sweden	1
Hungary	2	Syria	1
India	40	Taiwan	19
Iran	1	Thailand	1
Israel	2	Turkey	10
Japan	2	Uganda	3
Jordan	8	Ukraine	2
Kazakhstan	1	Uruguay	5
Kenya	4	Uzbekistan	1
Kuwait	1	Venezuela	2
Malaysia	9	Vietnam	5
Mexico	8	Total	560

Source: International Students and Scholars Office, Iowa State University

Table 3. Survey respondents' demographic characteristics (N=89)

		Number
		89
Age (years)	23	5
	24	7
	26	7
	27	8
	28	10
	29	12
	30	7
	31	6
	32	6
	33	3
	35	4
	36	6
	39	5
	46	2
	52	1
Months living in Ames	1	21
	13	27
	25	11
	37	19
	49	5
	61	6
Children	YES	22
	NO	67
Continent of origin	Asia	52
	Europe	13
	Latin America	24

Table 4. Focus Group 1: Participants' demographics (N=12)

		Number
		12
Age (years)	23	2
	24	1
	28	2
	30	3
	32	2
	33	2
Months living in Ames	5	2
	6	1
	18	3
	24	2
	56	2
	60	2
Children	YES	5
	NO	7
Visa Status	F2	8
	J2	4
Work Permit	Yes	2
	No	10

Table 5. Focus Group 2: Participants' demographics (N=10)

		Number
		10
Age (years)	28	1
	29	1
	35	3
	39	3
	46	2
	52	1
Months living in Ames	12	2
	24	1
	36	3
	48	2
	60	2
Children	YES	6
	NO	4
Visa Status	F2	6
	J2	4
Work Permit	Yes	6
	No	4

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