

Family Focus on . . .

Immigration / Migration

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Migration, separation and family survival

by Leah Schmalzbauer, Ph.D., Montana State University, schmalzb@montana.edu

Alejandra is from a small town in Mexico, where jobs are few, poverty is prevalent, and migration to the U.S. is common. In 2006, Alejandra's husband lost his job and left her with three children. She has not heard from him since. After his departure, she moved to her parents' house and tried unsuccessfully to find work. A year later Alejandra made what was the most difficult decision of her life. She would go to the United States. Without papers, Alejandra borrowed \$5,000 from an informal lending service that gives high interest loans to fund migrants' journeys north, and hired a coyote, a smuggler, to help her cross the U.S./Mexico border. After many tears, Alejandra said goodbye to her children and set out for the U.S. on November 1, 2007. She now lives in Montana, where several migrants from her home community have settled. She pieces together money by cleaning homes, but the work is unstable and she is not earning what she had expected. She talks to her children every few days, but she does not know when she will see them again.

Alejandra's story is not atypical. She is like millions of poor women around the world who have migrated in an attempt to secure their families' survival. Whereas poor women used to migrate primarily to reunite with family, they are increasingly migrating in search of wages to support their children. This trend is rooted in an increased supply of poor women in the South who cannot secure living wages. But more importantly it is fueled by the feminization of the low-wage care industry in the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East, where there is a high demand for poor women to clean our homes,

hospitals, and hotels and to care for our children. Women who cannot afford to be with their own children are migrating en masse to care for the children of others.



Leah Schmalzbauer

As capital and employment opportunities concentrate in the North, and as global inequality grows, poor families in the Global South increasingly have to decide between sinking

Women who cannot afford to be with their own children are migrating en masse to care for the children of others.

further into poverty together and sending one or more members north to find work. The result is a growing trend in families who have little choice but to divide their labor across borders. More and more it is mothers who head north.

The reality in which this choice is rooted is difficult to understand from a middle class perspective. How could a mother leave her children? Yet White middle and upper class privilege, and the access it has provided to the nuclear family, has long been out of reach to poor families, especially families of color. Now, as global economic processes penetrate deeper into family life, not only is the nuclear family out of reach, but so too is the nationally-based

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family. Despite the economic roots of most migration decisions and the problems that migration leaves in its wake, migrant mothers are often blamed for family breakdown and for the struggles of the children who stay behind. When we look at the phenomenon of migrating mothers through the lens of individual choice and responsibility, it is difficult to understand how a mother could leave, and it's easy to cast blame. However, when we place their reality in the context of global inequality and the structural constraints it presents, a much different story emerges.

This is a story of struggle and survival. It is a story of the limited choice that migrant mothers face between dire poverty and the chance of giving their children a better life. Every one of the hundreds of Latina mothers I have met in the course of almost ten years of field work has told me that they migrated out of love. Not migrating would be to fail their children. Despite the distance, they put tremendous energy into mothering from afar.

Staying in touch and long-distance intimacy

Most mothers migrating to the U.S. arrive unsure about when they will see their children again. Family by phone is how most manage their long-distance relationships. During phone calls, which happen weekly if not more often, mothers and children share happenings in their lives and lend each other support. Although separated by thousands of miles, this communication has a major impact. Children of migrants I interviewed in Honduras and El Salvador told me that even



though their mothers have been away for a long time, mothers continue to shape them as individuals, passing on important values and life lessons. They told me that their mothers tell them to “work hard” and “never give up.” Mothers stress the importance of school and tell them how important it is that they believe in themselves. Children embrace these messages and use them to structure their lives, goals and expectations. Most mothers are committed to maintaining a strong and influential presence in their children’s lives regardless of the distance. And so they work hard to nurture intimacy from afar.

“Other Mothers”: transnational care networks

While migrant mothers work to maintain connections with their children, they must put their faith in networks of family and kin to care for their children in their absence. Biological parents cannot migrate if they do not have someone with whom to leave their children. Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins terms the women who care for children when blood-mothers are absent “other-mothers.” In addition to ensuring the health and physical well-being of children, other-mothers play a key role in maintaining family unity and in easing the anxiety or emotional burdens borne by children who are separated from their parents. This role is of vital importance in transnational families.

Alejandra was able to go to the U.S. in search of work because her own mother took in her three children. She told me that knowing her children are safe and well cared for by someone who shares her values lends serenity. Her mom sends a consistent message to Alejandra’s children that she left because she loves them and wants to give them a better future. This in turn gives the children some peace in their mother’s absence.

Doña Rosa is representative of many grandmothers I have met who serve as other-mothers. She is 75 years old, and lives on the outskirts of San Pedro Sula, Honduras’ industrial capital. Three of her children have migrated to the U.S., and she has since raised five of her grandchildren. Doña Rosa also plays the role of community other-mother hosting neighborhood meals weekly for those who have been abandoned by family members in the U.S. She feels that it is her

obligation to share the money she receives from her daughters to help those who are less fortunate.

Other-mothers are the oft-invisible pillars of families who are divided by migration. They are also important support structures of global capitalism, protecting poor families from breakdown when economic inequality mandates their separation. Doña Rosa is one of millions unpaid and overlooked stewards of globalization.

Economic strategies

Love, intimacy and care networks cannot flourish without economic support. In many families in the Global South, the remittances that migrants send provide their sole source of income. Western Union offices commonly mark the center of Mexican and Central American towns, symbolizing the centrality of these economic flows to the survival of poor families. Families use remittances to buy food and medicine, to pay school fees, make house repairs, and even to support informal businesses. In the U.S. and other host societies, migrants endure great sacrifices in order to accumulate a surplus to send to their families, working in low-wage jobs with poor working conditions. They also live in cramped, rundown apartments and trailers, and skimp on food and clothing in order to send money back home.

Economic remittances are rooted in women’s commitment to mothering. Migrant mothers tell me that it is their primary responsibility to give what they can to their families. They do not expect that their giving will ever be reciprocated, but they believe that sending what they can to their children and sacrificing in order to keep them well is the “right thing to do” and the only way to give their children a better future. Dañiela, a former folklorico dancer from Honduras who now lives in Boston, told me that she has suffered abuse so she could maintain her commitment to her daughter’s future.

“I needed money for my daughter.... So I started working in the house of an American woman. It was horrible. She paid me \$100/week....And she didn’t give me food. It was hell. But my daughter is so important. For her I would have done anything...”

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Migration and the significance of transnational families

by Bahira Sherif Trask, Ph.D., University of Delaware, bstrask@udel.edu

A significant aspect of globalization is the movement of individuals both within societies and across national borders. This movement has led to new forms of transnational families, as migrants retain relationships with their home societies while also creating new relationships and identities abroad. Transnational families reflect a response to globalizing conditions that play an instrumental role in every aspect of social, economic and political life. While actual migration numbers are low in proportion to the global population, the impacts of contemporary migration are significant.

Most individuals migrate as families or in groups, and their leaving and re-settlement has crucial social, political, and economic implications for their home and receiving societies. Of specific import is the gendered nature of today's migration. Increasingly, women from the developing world are leaving

their families and communities behind as they seek new opportunities in other regions of their own societies or in other countries, sometimes very distant from their homes. Their migration is associated with significant implications for gender roles, parenting and family ideologies.

Contemporary migration, resulting from a complex interplay of globalizing forces, has refashioned today's immigration for both sending and receiving nations. In particular, migration from the developing to the industrialized world is becoming more commonplace. Moreover, while the United States, Canada, Australia, and Israel have always been "immigration" societies, contemporary receiving countries such as Japan, and certain countries in Europe and the Middle East, are struggling to incorporate large numbers of non-citizens into their societies. As a reaction

to the large-scale nature of this latest wave of migration, governments have responded by tightening laws and services to immigrants. Even in countries with long histories of immigration, such as the U.S., the rapid increase of immigrants has been met with resistance. Consequentially, immigrants are increasingly marginalized, and low-skilled immigrants have especially been excluded from the mainstream.



Bahira Sherif Trask

Demographics

While migration is not a new phenomenon, it has been growing rapidly since 1945, and particularly since the 1980s. Due to growing

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Emotional struggles

Indeed, for mothers who must live far away from their children, every day can be a struggle. Mothers express the greatest distress about trying to maintain connections with children who were very young when they left. Young children have difficulty understanding why their mothers had to leave, and they often do not remember them well. Mothers are also challenged when their children inquire about when they are coming home. Many tell me that they answer these questions untruthfully, with a version of "soon; we will be together soon." Others tell the truth, that it is too expensive or dangerous a journey. The truth-tellers bear the burden of their children's disappointment and sadness.

The homesickness and loneliness that burden migrant mothers are often coupled with anxiety over their children's health and safety. When I first met Paula, a Honduran living in Boston, I immediately sensed her depression. Her husband had lost his job and she feared she would lose hers as well. But what is most difficult, she told me, is to know that her child at home may be suffering.

Paula is so worried about her daughter's safety that she told her sister, who is caring for her there, "not to let her go outside, not even to the neighbors."

Dreams of reunification

Shared dreams of reunification help keep mothers and their children strong and connected. Where the reunion would take place is less important than the reunion itself. Yet reunification of any sort is difficult to achieve. There are political and economic barriers. On the economic and political sides, one has to be documented and have enough money and assets to qualify as a sponsor for family reunification. "Illegal" reunification is a risky option which is only available if a family is able to access sufficient funds to smuggle children across the border. Few have this privilege.

The increased militarization of the U.S.—Mexican border has made migration a more permanent endeavor than ever before. Migrants who come to the U.S. without papers literally risk life and limb to cross the border. The risk involved in the crossing

means they are more likely to settle for long periods of time, if not permanently, and will seldom risk a visit "home." It also means that mothers are unlikely to try to arrange the crossing of their children unless they can secure a legal visa, a proposition that is next to impossible for the migrant poor. This means that dreams of reunification are often just that—dreams. Still, they are the fuel and the hope that keeps mothers and children moving forward.

As globalization penetrates deeper into the daily lives of the poor in the Global South, family separation is becoming a norm. Underlying divided families is a troubling global hierarchy of motherhood. At the top of this hierarchy are mothers who can afford to be with their children. They tend to be White and middle or upper class. On the bottom are poor mothers of color in the Global South. These are mothers who have little choice but to leave their children in order to protect their survival and offer them hope for a better future. They are casualties of globalization whose stories need to be told. ■

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economic disparities within and between societies, large numbers of individuals are moving from rural to urban areas, and from developing to industrialized countries, in search of opportunities and resources. Refugee flows, the growth of global organizations, and the creation of new free trade areas are contributing specifically to a significant growth in international migration.

As of 2005, according to United Nations' estimates, approximately 191 million individuals, or 3% of the world population were living outside of their native countries. Of those, approximately two-thirds were living in industrialized countries in contrast to the developing world, where about 1.5% of the population are not native born. Currently, most global migrants come from China (35 million), India (20 million) and the Philippines (7 million). With respect to the United States, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that there are approximately 38 million foreign born individuals in the United States, constituting about 13% of the population. This is a significant increase in comparison to 1970 when approximately 4.7% of the population was foreign born.

The complex nature of contemporary migration

Migration is recognized as an economically, politically, and socially complex phenomenon. International migration produces large flows of monetary remittances from the industrialized world, and allows workers from all walks of life to find new opportunities that are usually not available in their home areas. Globalization has facilitated this process, in part, through the opening of free trade zones, and the ease of transportation and communication technologies. Globalization has also transformed the migrants' relationships with those they leave behind. Historically, migration was associated with the severing of familial, community and societal ties. However in the contemporary environment, migrants have many more options for maintaining relationships with their home communities, in contrast to even just a few years ago. Ease of travel, combined with media such as the Internet and video conferencing, allow individuals who leave their homes to stay in touch with loved ones in previously unimagined ways.

Today's migration is quite distinctive when compared to the major waves of immigration

that characterized the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One major area of difference pertains to the proportion of migration in relation to the global population. The number of individuals migrating today, while impressive with respect to numbers, is actually proportionally much lower than that at the turn of the century. Moreover, while historically, immigrants tended to be primarily men in search of wage labor, today's migrants are just as often women, and in the industrialized world, female migrants now outnumber males.

The creation of transnational families

Migration results in the emergence of what are often referred to as "transnational families." Families may live apart from one another in different geographical areas but retain a

Even in countries with long histories of immigration, such as the U.S., the rapid increase of immigrants has been met with resistance.

sense of belonging, group membership and a feeling of collective welfare. Depending on material and emotional conditions, they are able to maintain ties to one another and to reconstitute a family unit at various points in time. While transnational families are not a new phenomenon, the ease with which they are able to stay in touch with each other across large distances is unprecedented in human history.

Transnational families provide a relatively unexplored arena where scholars can begin to understand how differences between generations and genders are either magnified or diminished. It is within this sphere that one can uncover which factors contribute to the complex dynamics of familial decision-making. While families are a crucial context for understanding immigration decisions, it is deceptive to assume the unitary nature of family decisions. A strong feminist scholarship on family relationships has revealed that from an external perspective, family decisions may seem consensual, beneficial, and reciprocal. However, many families are organized along hierarchical power lines, separated by gender and generations, resulting in migration decisions that are distinctly gendered and generationally-based.

When couples or families migrate, the migration may affect familial relationships in unexpected ways. For example, traditionally-based marriage patterns may be disrupted through spousal separation, creating disputes over roles and new domestic arrangements. In particular, couples that move from the developing world to the U.S. or Europe often find themselves in situations that require a rearrangement of gender roles. These couples may attain much greater gender equality than is the norm in their home society. Moving to the West may introduce new ideas about the role of women in the family and community to immigrants who come from societies where that may not be the norm. Further, economic circumstances often necessitate that these women work outside of the home, leading to a rearrangement of roles in the domestic sphere. Women's access to wages can lead to their increased control over household decisions with respect to budgets and the division of labor. However, this is not a uniform pattern. Immigration potentially leads to shifts towards greater gender equality, but that outcome is dependent on context, economics, the couple's relationship and a multitude of other factors.

Contemporary transnational families provide a window for identifying personal agency as an important aspect of family formation and the maintenance process. In any analysis, however, it is critical to acknowledge that individual agency is constrained by access to resources and power hierarchies. In examining migrant choices with respect to family creation, meaning, and cohesion, both agency and context stand out as critical factors. Individual family members may employ diverse strategies to consciously maintain, extend or limit familial and community relationships.

Migrants and those family members who remain in the home area are caught in a constantly shifting set of relationships. Their sense of unity and identity is continually being negotiated and reformulated through the movement of the various family members and the social conditions within which they are interacting. This constant flux points to transnational families as "imagined communities" with various members of the same family envisioning their families quite

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The effects of immigration on families

by Amelia Rose, Director, Comprehensive Counseling Services, Inc., West Palm Beach Florida, drair02@yahoo.com

Over the years, the immigration issue and its impact on the U.S. economy have always resulted in relentless debate regardless of which side of the fence one finds oneself. However, while much has been written about the impact of immigration on the economy, far less has been reported about its real life impact on the families themselves. When immigration/migration is viewed from a family perspective, we realize that the factors impacting families are equally important and may have more far-reaching effects on families than just economic matters.

This article will focus on two aspects of migration: the psychological impact of extended separation on children when left behind by mothers who migrate, and the social impact of migration on children who become invisible to entire social systems after their mothers migrate. What is interesting to note is that some of these migration

issues tend to create havoc in the lives of families whether they arrived legally or illegally in the United States.

First allow me first to clarify two terms which appear in this article. They have been used interchangeably in many immigration debates over the years. The first is the term “migrant,” which denotes an individual who is sometimes viewed as a wanderer or a person who moves from one country to another to harvest seasonal crops. The second term, “immigrant,” denotes an individual who comes to a new country with the intent of settling there permanently. Notwithstanding this obvious difference in definitions, there comes a time when some migrants decide to assume the status of an immigrant. It is at this point that friction arises.

The inferences in the article are representative of two primary ethnic groups—Hispanic and Caribbean. The latest Pew Hispanic Center’s report shows these two groups to represent

the highest (57%) and second to lowest percent (4%) of undocumented individuals in the United States. I chose to base my discussions around their life experiences because they represent the majority of the families in the region of the country where I serve as a consultant in an agency which serves these families.



Amelia Rose

As one considers the effects of immigration on families, the first issue that comes to mind is that of separation—the separation of mothers from their minor children, the separation from her own parents and the separation of the children from their extended family.

The effects of separation seem consistent despite the multiplicity of reasons mothers

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differently depending on their sense of belonging, family history, and current conditions. This social fluidity leads to a constant negotiation of roles and relationships throughout a family member’s life cycle.

For transnational families, migration also involves some form of loss: loss of place, loss of relationships, and loss of a sense of belonging that may never be reclaimed in the same manner, even upon return. Transnational families provide a locus for understanding which relationships and bonds remain important and which ones diminish in significance over time.

Transnational mothering

A critical aspect of the new wave of global migration pertains to the significance of female labor. As employment opportunities have opened up, an increasing number of women are migrating in order to take advantage of these prospects. In the process, many of these women leave their families and specifically their children behind in their home areas. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as “transnational mothering.”

Women who undertake labor migration usually do so in order to provide a better life for their children and loved ones. Commonly, these women take on low-paying menial jobs where they risk exploitation. Yet, they do so because of limited opportunities in their home areas. Women who “mother” across distances have to defend their choices in environments that advocate intensive mothering and close physical proximity to children. They nevertheless decide to seek employment in other places for the collective good of their families. Whether this transient migration is beneficial or detrimental to the development of these women’s children has become a controversial issue both in the receiving as well as their home societies. Nevertheless, the growing phenomenon of transnational mothering suggests that families are fundamentally adept at transforming themselves and adapting to new conditions.

Concluding thoughts

Contemporary global migration differs substantively from the same phenomenon even just 50 years ago. An extensive number

of modern migrants are transnational: they remain in frequent touch with their families of origin and others in their home communities through regular visitations and ever more available and cheaper communication technologies like the Internet. They also systematically exchange ideas, money, and new concepts about individuality, families, work and the like between their host and home societies. Simultaneously, contemporary migrants are bonding with others like themselves, sometimes based on geographic proximity, but today also over extensive distances. Through these multiple connections and influences, they are able to pick and choose among new hybrid identities. Importantly, contemporary migrants provide us with a unique opportunity to better understand family meanings, conceptualizations and processes. As we move deeper into the 21st century, transnational families provide insight into how gender roles, parenting, development, generational hierarchies, and relationship formation are transformed based on the interaction of personal, social, economic and political factors. ■

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give for migrating to another country. By far the most commonly reported reason given by these mothers is their desire to provide a better life and a better future for their family; this translates to finding employment to provide financially for the needs of their children much better than they could in their home country. The second reason mothers give is that they wish to enhance their children's educational potential. The third and less frequently reported reason a small group of mothers give for migrating is to escape abusive spouses or harsh punishment from the governments in their respective countries. All of these reasons are consistent with previous immigration reports by organizations such as UNICEF and United Nations.

Having legally emigrated from the Caribbean to the United States over thirty years ago myself, I vividly recall the emotional pain I experienced as a young adult being separated by what appeared at the time to be a wide gulf. I left behind my five-year-old child, my parents and my siblings for the first time. Everyone knew the reason for my migration as it was well-intentioned, planned and executed. However, nothing and no one prepared me for the sense of isolation and abandonment I felt, even though I was the one who left. I cried for months and could not be consoled by new friends nor would I be pacified by the array of native meals intricately displayed for my viewing pleasure. I can only, even these many years later, imagine the plight of minor children left behind by their mothers. The Save the Children organization conducted a study of 1200 households in Sri Lanka in 2006. Some of the results were consistent with some of my experiences as a young adult. The study revealed that children under five years of age are more likely to exhibit behaviors such as increased temper tantrums, loss of appetite and weight loss; children between the ages of 6 and 17 years of age reported intense feelings of loneliness and sadness.

While much of the emphasis is placed on the effects of immigration/migration on the children, most of the mothers I work with at my consulting agency have lamented continuously about leaving their children in their home country. Again, this holds true regardless of all the reasons they provide for having done so. Very few mothers have understood how much their leaving may have undermined

their child's emotional development or disrupted the attachment process. For these mothers they had done their due diligence; they placed their children with others whom they thought would be loving caregivers. What these mothers did not anticipate or could not have guaranteed was the fact that not all caregivers would be responsive to their children's needs despite the financial support the mothers provided from a distance.

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Some mothers told painful stories of child abuse, including sexual and physical. They also learned through the grapevine that some children were being neglected. At times these children were not only victims of the crimes committed against them, but they were being re-victimized by their own caregiver or other non-relatives. The mothers in these cases spoke of their overwhelming feelings of helplessness...wanting to rescue their children, but fearing if they left their new country they may never be able to return. Those of us who have also walked this road before know too well the emotional and physical struggles encountered by families who operate in two countries and the state of "limbo" this experience presents.

For the children, the effects of the extended separation from their mothers continue to have far-reaching consequences for them. Strong attachments with loving caregivers are rarely formed during the most crucial period of their development and any resulting abuse and neglect which some experience only complicates matters for them as they transition into adulthood. Many find themselves unable to develop and maintain stable intimate relationships. When these children rejoin their mothers and new families, some mothers describe a feeling of estrangement. For the first time they are faced with a new reality and are perplexed because they cannot understand why their sacrifice did not translate into loving relationships with their children.

But the emotional saga does not end there. There is another painful and emotionally costly situation in immigration—that of the

death of a loved one and not being able to get closure or pay last respects. Very few events can be more heart-wrenching or emotionally excruciating than for a loving mother to sever ties with her child abruptly; that is until that mother gets the news that a child left behind has died. This scenario also extends to the loss of that mother's parents too. For some, the loss is so painful that they relinquish their dream of a better future, return home, sometimes severing ties with their American-born children and new family.

Finally, the dream of a "better life" that many mothers struggle to realize is often a nightmare for both her and the children she leaves behind. In some cultures children are already invisible, but when their mothers migrate, some become "twice invisible." When a mother is in the home it lends a sense of financial security for children although at an early age many have no concept of financial deprivation. Mothers also try to introduce their children to social systems. Children are sent to school even if those same mothers never went to school themselves. The children utilize some health care services, however, sporadic or limited in scope. Many children attend religious services, where many eventually learn to read for the first time. Some mothers also do everything possible to protect their children from what they label "bad company."

Unfortunately, when these mothers migrate, their children are forgotten by the very social systems they once utilized. What is obvious is that there seems to be no tracking mechanisms to identify and ensure that these children receive continuous basic care. Some turn to the most unlikely places to maintain a sense of belonging. Others begin to assume adult roles and responsibilities at an early age. Before long they are put at risk of repeating the migration cycle of their mothers. A 2006 State of the World reports cites a similar dilemma for children in developing countries; it states that exclusion from essential services and goods such as adequate food, health care and schooling clearly affects children's ability to participate in their communities and societies in both the present and the future.

I am afraid that if the immigration debate does not move from a political one to a psychosocial one, and become more familial in its scope, we are destined to perpetuate these problems again and again. ■

Global mothers and the caregiving vacuum

by Eva E. Sandis, Ph.D., International Council of Psychologists, Professor Emerita, Fordham University, sandis@fordham.edu

This article focuses on the experiences of “transnational families”—families in which some members remain at home in the country of origin, while other family members live in the country of destination. The pattern of geographically split families is not new, either in the United States or elsewhere. For example, it was typical of Chinese migrants who came to the U.S.—and elsewhere—in the 19th century. What *is* new is: 1) the rapid spread of these transnational households globally, due to the globalization of migration during the last few decades, and 2) the growth of one specific type of transnational household—one in which it is the mothers who leave their families, or members of their families, behind—as a result of the global trend of the feminization of migration.

The number of transnational mothers worldwide is not known, but it is clear that parent-child separation is common among many transnational families. In the case of transnational mothers, while they may have children with them, a sizeable part of their parenting responsibilities is for children not physically residing with them. This is true of the Latina mothers studied in two locations—Los Angeles and New Jersey—many of whom have at least one child back home.

Data Sources

The data are based on the work of two sociologists who have spent a great deal of time with migrant mothers and fathers to learn how their families fare in the wake of their decision to migrate. One of these researchers is Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, a sociologist at the University of Southern California, who, together with Ernestine Avila, has devoted herself to learning about the experiences of Latina mothers from Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala who are domestic workers in Los Angeles. Another researcher is Joanna Dreby, a sociologist at Kent State University in Ohio, who has immersed herself in the Mexican immigrant community in central New Jersey around New Brunswick to compare the experiences of Mexican mothers and fathers from the regions of Puebla, Guerrero and Oaxaca who migrated to the United States in order to improve the lives of their families.

What are the emotional consequences for family members—especially mothers—living apart from their children while they work abroad? What kinds of child care arrangements do they have for their children? How often are they in touch with their children and in which ways? How do they and their children feel about their experiences of separation? How does all this compare with the experiences of transnational fathers?

From an employer’s perspective, the best live-in domestic worker is one without daily family obligations of her own.

In the New Jersey community, three types of Mexican transnational families predominate; fathers migrating while wives and children remain in Mexico; couples residing abroad with minor children in Mexico; and single mothers leaving children behind when they migrate. There were no situations, in this instance, of married migrant mothers leaving a husband and children in Mexico.

However, Annie Phizacklea, a British sociologist who spent time with transnational mothers from India living in London, reported the existence of such situations.

Among the transnational families around New Brunswick, the *behavior* of transnational mothers and transnational fathers is very similar when they parent from a distance. Both mothers and fathers use regular phone contact with their children as the primary means of managing relationships with their children from abroad. Both send gifts and financially support their children through remittances. Both mothers *and* fathers view the maternal grandmother to be the best substitute for parental care (even in cases where the parents are divorced).

However, the *rationales* behind the behavior of the mothers and the fathers differ radically, and these differences are culturally motivated. That is to say, they are the result of gender ideology, of culturally-based role definitions for mothers and for fathers.

Mexican fathers are expected to be economic providers for their families, and transnational fathers are judged—and judge themselves—by their success in meeting this expectation. Mexican mothers are expected to be nurturing caregivers of their children, and transnational mothers are judged—and judge themselves—by their success in meeting this expectation. The mothers therefore have to meet a huge cultural challenge—how to “square” leaving their children behind and still be considered, and consider themselves, “good mothers.”

The transnational mothers in Los Angeles must cope with the same cultural challenge. They have to replace deeply held beliefs (that biological mothers should raise their own children) with new definitions of motherhood. They have to redefine motherhood to accommodate the temporal and spatial separations. While transnational mothers are not the only mothers who have to cope with temporal and spatial separations, their caring circuits span much wider stretches of geography and time.

So these transnational mothers improvise. Instead of replacing “caregiving” with “breadwinning” definitions of motherhood, they *expand the definition* to include breadwinning—an activity that they realize may require long term physical separation. They do it to show that they are still caregiving for their children. As one mother put it, “I’m here; but I’m there.”

Many of the mechanisms these transnational mothers use to validate the continuity of their caregiving function to their children abroad are the same ones used by the mothers in the New Brunswick Latino community, namely, entrusting the children to the care of their own, biological mothers, or, if that is not possible, to a sister or a “co-madre.” They make frequent telephone calls in which they inquire how the children are doing in school, give them advice, and maintain emotional intimacy with them. And they send money and gifts to their children, as well as to those taking care of them. Nevertheless, there remains tremendous uncertainty as to

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Temporary migration and the family: The case of international students

by Rosemary W. Eustace, Ph.D., RN, CFLE, Wright State University, rosemary.eustace@wright.edu

International students: Who are they?

According to U.S. immigration laws, an international student is a student who is enrolled at an institution of higher education in the United States who is not a U.S. citizen; an immigrant (permanent resident/ green card holder) or a refugee. This student may hold either an F (student), J (exchange visitor) or M (vocational training) visa. In the last decade we have seen an increased influx of international students in the United States. Recent estimates from the Institute of International Education (IIE) indicate an in-

crease by 7% to a record high of 63,805 international students in the year 2007/2008. In addition, the data also shows an increased new student enrollment by 10% in fall 2007.

These statistics are impressive to supporters of international education in that they reflect the continued positive contributions of international students to the American intellectual and innovative community, cross-cultural education, local economy and foreign policy. Consistent with these trends, however, is also the actual need among scholars to understand the students' adaptation patterns and experi-

ences in their new environment in order to facilitate positive outcomes in international education. Students, scholars and university personnel agree that for most international students, adapting to a new culture—also known as the process of acculturation—is a difficult experience.



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what constitutes “good mothering,” and transnational mothers have to cope with this cultural challenge and with defending their own choices.

A second challenge posed by transnational motherhood is a political one. As Hondagneu-Sotelo points out, the phenomenon of transnational motherhood must be seen in the context of global market developments over several decades, such as labor demand for domestic workers in the industrialized countries, and a labor supply, due to job scarcities, in Latin American and other developing countries. The new arrangement constitutes a radical break of gendered spatial and temporal boundaries of family and work as mothers institute separations of space and time for their children and husbands. It also incorporates migrants into a labor market that does not recognize family rights. Restrictionist immigration policies treat workers as isolated individuals and not as workers with families and family needs (such as educational and health services for children).

From an employer's perspective, the best live-in domestic worker is one without daily family obligations of her own. In fact, as the employment agencies in Los Angeles made clear, minimal family and mothering obligations are an informal job placement criterion for live-in workers. Another political consequence of these policies is that they

externalize the cost of labor, or in other words, the developing societies pay for the nurturance, schooling, and training of the next generation of workers, who are then employed in the industrialized nations. Hondagneu-Sotelo calls this whole process a contradictory one—contradictory in the sense that on the one hand, there is a permeability of national borders exemplified by the maintenance of family ties and, on the other hand, the impermeability of national borders as exemplified by families unable to be together with their children due to restrictionist policies.

The recent Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMDs) (in Brussels, Belgium in 2007 and Manila, Philippines in 2008) made it clear that these policies are being embraced as governments seek to manage migration. In search of measures to reduce the burgeoning growth of illegal migration due to restrictionist immigration policies, the pro-

posed solution was a push for temporary worker programs—programs which externalize the costs of labor and at the same time turn a blind eye to the family rights of migrant workers. Civil Society groups and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) attending the Manila GFMD had a chance to offer more migrant-friendly alternatives at the Civil Society sessions preceding the Governmental meetings. But the focus of the Civil Society Day session on fostering more opportunities for legal migration was entirely on the benefits of temporary labor migration programs (TLMPs). For those interested in advocacy on migrants' rights, particularly those of transnational mothers, addressing these cultural and political challenges would seem to be a necessary starting point.

This article draws on the author's presentation at a workshop organized by the NGO Committee on Migration during the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. ■

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Students usually deal with a complex list of migration stressors. Some identified in the literature include language and academic challenges, racial discrimination and prejudice, isolation/alienation, financial challenges, cultural differences, and political and re-entry issues. Moreover, the research evidence indicates that the stress induced by these acculturative changes may put students at a greater risk for negative outcomes that may include severe somatic and psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression and hostility, loss of appetite, poor sleep patterns and substance abuse. However, some scholars agree that the impact is not experienced equally among all international students. In his 1997 article “*Immigration, acculturation and adaptation*,” John Berry, a cross-cultural psychologist, asserted that there are usually variations among migrant individuals or groups with some acculturating individuals becoming overwhelmed by the challenges while others seize the challenges as an opportunity. He argues that other sociocultural, economic and demographic factors prior to and during acculturation may account for the variations. Berry maintains that because international students are temporarily in contact with the host country, they are less likely to have permanent social support and thus may experience more mental health problems than those who are permanently settled and established, such as the immigrants and refugees. Overall, the evidence clearly indicates that international students—just like other migrating groups such as immigrants, expatriates, visitors and refugees—are both a vulnerable and resilient population that warrants further scholarly attention. One gap that is obvious, however, is the lack of adequate cross-cultural literature on the role of the family in the international students’ academic and social adjustment.

The primary purpose of international study is to enable the individual international students to obtain a higher education successfully while residing in their host country. Therefore, it is not surprising that universities and colleges prefer an individual-based approach over a family-based approach when working with international students. But families are crucial in understanding the international students’ adjustment process. Although the available evidence on the

effect of some family variables (e.g. marital status, family status and family social support) on the students’ adjustment is inconclusive, some studies indicate promising practical applications that deserve attention. There are a number of reasons that support the need to include family-based models in the international students’ adjustment literature. First there is no doubt that international students are one in a constellation of family members which includes children, parents and extended family. However, actual estimates of the number of international students’ families residing in the United States are yet to be determined. Secondly, international study, in many cases, impacts the student’s family structure, functioning, and roles as



well as values, especially among couples and families with children. In addition to these reasons, the following questions elucidate why it is important to include families:

Considering the role of family ties in the students’ country of origin or other places, specifically for those who are single and living alone during their international study, what roles do family members have on the student’s socio-cultural, economic and academic adjustment? What is the role of technology (e.g. internet, cell phones) in fulfilling some of these functions?

Regarding the student’s global breadwinner role of providing financial support for families abroad; how does this role play out and what impact does it have on the student’s adjustment process?

With married students who have dependents (spouse and children) abroad; how do these families deal with the constant struggle of fulfilling the basic family functions (i.e.

affection, socialization, reproduction, economic, and health care) from a distance? How do they deal with the acculturation challenges as a family? Studies have shown that accompanying spouses are crucial to the student’s adjustment process. In addition to their responsibilities of caring and supporting their children—and the scholar—they are also faced with the same challenges of acculturation. How does this affect the student’s marital quality and satisfaction? Anecdotal evidence indicates reports of domestic violence among some couples. Moreover, how does the family visa type impact the students’ acculturation experiences? According to the immigration laws and regulations, the spouse (F-2) of an F-1 student is not allowed to apply for work permission while in the U.S. The spouse (J-2) of a J-1 visa, however, may apply for permission to be employed for as long he or she can demonstrate a need for supplemental support for self or children. What about spouses who were employed prior to acculturation? How are they affected and how do they affect the acculturation process? How do they deal with the role strains of being a stay at home mom or dad? For those who are working during international study, how do they handle the issues of balancing work and family and how does this impact their academic study?

What is the role of the students’ and families’ perceived gender roles, childrearing practices and values; are these issues a problem to the students? Research evidence shows that students who come from countries that hold more collectivistic values tend to experience more acculturative difficulties than those from countries that hold individualist values. In addition, how does the stage of family development influence the student’s and family adaptation? Do children and their family acculturate at the same rate? Research among immigrants’ families shows that children acculturate much faster than their parents in terms of language acquisition and values; is this also true for international students, given their parents’ educational levels?

How do social support systems impact the adjustment processes, especially during stressful times? Research shows that family support can be beneficial as well as a stressor

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and is not always the primary source for many students. For instance, empirical and anecdotal evidence shows that students are reluctant to seek family support from their home countries because they do not want their families to worry about them. As a result, students utilize other support systems such as their immediate dependents, co-nationals, friends in the host country, community, religious places, international student centers, student organizations and department/faculty advisers. For a majority of the students, these sources fulfill different roles. For example, co-nationals meet their needs for social interaction and provide a sense of belonging. Hosting national friends and host families, on the other hand, meet their cultural and language needs.

What are the implications of these issues for family scholars and practitioners? It is evident that promoting family-centered programs is paramount for international students' adjustment. It is important to recognize that the students and their families have strengths, concerns, emotions and aspirations beyond academics. A family life

educator who possesses the appropriate training in family theory, research, assessment and evaluation may be helpful in developing and implementing family-based intervention programs for international students. The ultimate goal of any international student family-based programs should be geared towards enriching and improving the quality of the student and family life. This can be achieved through various strategies that maximize the student and family functioning. The following three levels of prevention can be useful in explaining and designing these programs. These levels are:

Primary prevention: Health promotion and prevention programs should be the primary goal. For example, when dealing with financial stressors, programs that offer information about money and time management as well as balancing academics, work and family may be useful. In addition, programs that provide cross-cultural skills and social support programs should be emphasized. Faith-based programs implemented in partnership with university ministries have been very resourceful. These programs assist

students and their families in adjusting to their new environment through student-host country interactions as well as offering tangible support. Other examples include English and support programs for spouses, homestay programs or host family programs. These programs offer opportunities for cultural exchange and additional sources of support, information and friendships beyond the college years. Other family programs that could be useful include marital education, parenting education, family violence and abuse prevention programs, and nutrition education programs. Student organizations should be part of the primary prevention efforts.

Secondary prevention: Programs at this level should be targeted towards early problem detection and management. Screening of potential risk behaviors should be con-

Overall, the evidence clearly indicates that international students—just like other migrating groups such as immigrants, expatriates, visitors and refugees—are both a vulnerable and resilient population that warrants further scholarly attention.

ducted and students referred to appropriate providers for further evaluation and management such as family therapy.

Tertiary prevention: Family programs at this level should maximize families' well-being through the provision of support, counseling (family therapy) and preventive care for those whose families deal with partner separation, divorce or departure by choice.

It is recommended that family scholars and other professionals who work with international students evaluate the existing as well as the new programs to determine their effectiveness. This step is important in determining the best evidence practice for cross-cultural adjustment among international students and their families. In addition, more research is needed to understand how widespread the acculturation challenges are and how to promote resilience and encourage help-seeking behaviors among the students and their families. ■

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An unintended consequence of U.S. “family reunification” immigration policy: keeping families apart

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Globally, there is an increase in migration of people across borders. Everett Lee’s classical theory on migration attempts to explain the reasons. It refers to push and pull factors—economic, political, cultural, or environmental—that either forcefully push or pull people into migration. Push factors are usually negative and include few economic opportunities, political fear and persecution, or natural disasters. Pull factors are usually positive such as job opportunities, political and/or religious freedom, and generally better living conditions. But this explanation has been criticized as being inadequate.

Much of the movement of people is in the direction from the global south to the global north. Most of the migrants are from Mexico, China, India, and the Philippines and the United States is the destination for many of these migrants. Mexico is the largest source of immigrants in the United States.

Currently, United States immigration policy offers two ways for migrants to enter the country legally: permanent (immigrant) admission or temporary (nonimmigrant) admission. Migrants eligible for permanent admission include immediate family members of U.S. citizens and workers with specific job skills. Temporary admission is granted to migrants who seek entry to the United States for a limited time and for a specific purpose.

There are several goals of U.S. immigration policies. I will discuss only the two that are relevant for this article. The first goal is to reunify families by reuniting migrants who already have family members living in the United States. The second is to admit workers in occupations with a strong demand for labor.

In order to achieve these goals, several categories of permanent admission have been established. The first category is the immediate relatives—parents, spouses, and

unmarried children under 21 years of age—of U.S. citizens who are admitted without annual numerical limitations. In addition, U.S. citizens may sponsor other relatives under a family preference program with annual numerical limitations. The second category is workers with certain jobs skills with five employment-based preference categories who are admitted with numerical limitations.

There is a backlog, or waitlist, that numbers in the millions. According to the Immigration Policy Center the backlog is a five to seven, and possibly 20 year wait time before an immigrant can be legally reunified with his or her family.

Another group of migrants in the United States is unauthorized aliens. These are people who entered the U.S. without proper documentation or who remained in the U.S. past the limits of their visas. There are consequences to being an unlawful alien in violation of U.S. immigration laws. An alien, if found in violation of the laws, can be offered the choice to depart voluntarily or be removed from the country and penalized.

Mexican migration to the United States began at the turn of the 20th century. Historically, Mexican migrants were male, seasonal agricultural workers, who entered the United States, labored, and then returned to Mexico in the winter. According to the Mexican Migration Program (MMP) at Princeton University and the University of Guadalajara, 67 % of all Mexican migrants to the United States between 1965 and 1985 were male. And, of the 28 million who entered, 23.4 returned to Mexico. This circular migration was the dominant pattern of Mexican migration from the 1900s until the 1980s.

Since the mid-1980s, the pattern of Mexican migration has changed. Mexican migrants are increasingly bringing their families with them or creating families while in the United States. Also, the migrants are increasingly less likely to return to Mexico. According to the MMP, the share of migrants likely to return to Mexico after five years in the United States declined from 86 % in 1990 to 40 % in 1998.



Michele Kelly

There are some issues that have contributed to this change: U.S. immigration policy has annual numerical restrictions with preferences for family reunification and skill-based migrants; and, since the 1990s, the escalation of U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s enforcement activities, particularly along the border.

Family reunification is one of the goals of U.S. immigration policy. It permits a family member who lives in the United States as a citizen to sponsor family members. The immediate relatives of U.S. citizens—parents, spouses, and unmarried children—are automatically eligible to immigrate upon approval of their application. All other family members are eligible to immigrate based on their placement in a preference system.

There is a backlog, a waitlist, that numbers in the millions. According to the Immigration Policy Center the backlog is a five to seven, and possibly a 20 year wait time before an immigrant can be legally reunified with his or her family. Families face a long wait time and separation. Consequently, many family members choose to join their relatives in the United States as unauthorized aliens.

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There are limits to the number of skills-based visas issued annually as well. Historically, the U.S. labor market has relied on seasonal agricultural workers and there continues to be a tremendous need for workers to do the jobs that native-born Americans will not perform. But, the government's preference is for educated, skilled, and wealthy workers. As a result of this contradiction, the needs of the U.S. labor market remain unmet. Mexico, on the other hand, continues to lack a sufficient number of jobs that allow a decent standard of living. Thus it has workers who could meet our needs.

Despite the wait lists and restrictions, many Mexicans cross the 1,952-mile land border — the largest in the world between an industrialized and a developing country — as unauthorized aliens. As U.S. Customs and Border Protection escalated its enforcement activities, particularly along the border in the 1990s, many migrants became concerned with the increased risk of apprehension in moving back and forth across the border and so chose to bring their families with them and settle. Or, the unauthorized aliens decide to settle and create families in the United States. Both of these situations are examples of the growing tendency of unauthorized aliens to settle in the country.

Families endure numerous consequences for being unauthorized. They face higher rates of poverty and thus have greater difficulty in providing for their family's basic necessities: shelter, food, clothing, medical and dental care. Unauthorized alien children are eligible for elementary and secondary public education but are at risk for poor educational attainment. When children do succeed and complete high school, the graduates do not qualify for in-state tuition at public universities. Unauthorized alien families are not eligible for public assistance. They are only eligible for immunizations, emergency medical care, and public services such as law enforcement, fire services, rescue and disaster-related emergency relief.

One of the most devastating consequences of being unauthorized is being apprehended by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. In the 1990s ICE was mandated to increase its enforcement activities. In an effort to apprehend as many unauthorized

workers as possible at a time, ICE has engaged in numerous workplace raids. Once apprehended, the workers are arrested, immediately detained, and placed in deportation proceedings. If the family is of mixed-status, that is, some members, such as the children, are American citizens, then the family is separated. If both parents are unauthorized and the children are American citizens then the children may be placed in substitute care. Between 2005 and 2007, 13,000 American children had one or both parents deported. However, if all members of the family are unauthorized, then all members of the family are detained. Families are detained at one of two immigration-detention facilities: the T. Hutto Residential Center in Texas and the Berks County Family Residential Center in Pennsylvania. At the end of 2006, some 14,000 people including families and children, were in custody for immigration law violations.

In conclusion, one of the goals of U.S. immigration policy is to reunify families. But, in attempting to achieve this goal, one of the unintended consequences is that families are kept separated for intolerably long periods of time. And, in the enforcement of immigration policies, families are separated.

Families want to be together. Families should be together. Because when they are together, these families contribute tremendously to the U.S. economy. Approximately 96% of unauthorized aliens are in the labor force. In a landmark report published in 1997, the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences concluded that, on average, immigrants generate public revenue that exceeds their public costs over time—approximately \$80,000 more in taxes than they receive in federal, state, and local benefits over their lifetime. The same conclusion was reached by the Council of Economic Advisers in their report to the Executive Office of the President.

It is thought by many that President Barack Obama will soon propose a comprehensive immigration reform package. This is an opportunity for us, as family policy professionals, to address his policy proposals. Therefore, it is recommended that we study his proposals. A Family Impact Analysis should be conducted on the President's policy proposals to examine whether the goals could result in positive or negative outcomes for migrant families. Then, based upon the results of the analysis, we should support those policies that support migrant families. ■

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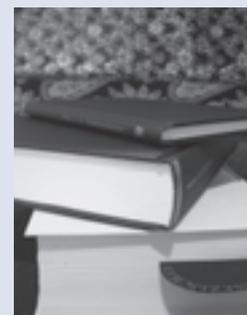
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Immigration research: new conceptual framework for new realities

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The current issue of *NCFR Report* is a welcome invitation to update what we are learning from immigration research and to think about the similarities and differences between movement within and movement across national borders. Cross-national movement often begins with moves within the home country and, in historical perspective, certain groups of “new immigrants” (particularly individuals and families from Mexico, but also from countries such as the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Panama and Liberia) are confronted by borders that have shifted over time as a result of changing economic and political circumstances. The thoughts expressed in this article are informed by our readings, our own empirical work and, inevitably, our varied experiences as newcomers to this country.

In their 2001 book entitled *Children of Immigration*, Carola Suárez-Orozco and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco call immigration the most important social movement of our time. In the past ten years in the U.S., there has been a growing research, policy, and practice focus on the foreign-born, their numbers, participation in the employment sector, uptake of services and public resources, and on their short and medium-term outcomes across a number of indicators such as postnatal outcomes, school adjustment and achievement, income and participation in the workforce. In spite of the recent burst in theoretical and empirical activity, we still have an incomplete understanding of the experience of people who move to the United States and the manner in which they shape their lives to succeed and to care for their children. The lived experiences of new immigrants and the emerging findings from a number of fields including family studies, sociology, psychology, and anthropology using both qualitative and quantitative approaches suggest that our conceptual models and studies could be strengthened by a re-examination of the following questions: What is immigration and how does it impact families? Why does acculturation matter?

What do we understand about the factors that influence immigrant family life? What are the structural conditions that influence immigrants as individuals, families, and groups?

What is immigration?

Much of the public and academic discourse in the U.S. casts immigration as a discrete event that thrusts individuals and families into new social, cultural, political, and economic realities. This immigration narrative is one of leaving close family and friends, moving from one set of cultural norms, traditions, and expectations to another, and abandoning a clearly established place in society with acculturation and assimilation into American life as the culmination of the immigrant experience. However, immigration is not a discrete event with a single outcome, but rather a process. It begins with conditions and hopes that first take shape in the home country, that prompt individuals to leave what is familiar. It continues far beyond arrival in the United States as they adjust to new people, social relations, expectations and norms, and economic and political realities. Drawing from the divorce literature, this new perspective of immigration implies that the conditions and processes that underlie the movement experience have far greater influence on adult and child outcomes over time than the actual fact of moving.

Why does acculturation matter?

Many studies of immigration have emphasized how individuals and families integrate the culture of the receiving country. Yet, conversations with immigrants suggest that the primary motivation for moving is not acculturation but rather survival, economic security and safety while maintaining a sense of self. In fact, most newcomers are quite comfortable with their cultures of origin and may not want to take on “mainstream” norms. Therefore, it is not uncommon for adults who find themselves in a foreign country to recreate networks of family and friends among people who are like them. And parents may send their chil-

dren back home for exposure to the home culture, or to protect them from unwanted influences such as early sexual activity and racial or ethnic discrimination in the United States. At the same time it is clear that certain instrumental competencies or personal resources that are valued in the United States (such as English language proficiency, high educational achievement, transferable skills, and financial capital) make it easier to navigate mainstream culture. Acculturation therefore is not a single destination or outcome; instead certain aspects of acculturation directly or indirectly influence how, when, and in what manner newcomers to this country are able to interact with and engage their new places of life. And, rather than resulting in a single or a hyphenated American identity, these processes may result in multiple and fluid identities and affiliations across time, circumstance, lifecycle stage and generation.

What external factors influence immigrant family structure and process?

Immigrants in the U.S. have the same hopes and expectations for themselves and their families as the native-born. They want to secure resources in order to meet their basic needs, provide a secure and affective base

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in which to develop and maintain primary relations and raise children, realize their hopes and dreams, and find ways to participate meaningfully in their broader social and cultural environment. However, immigrants define their goals and organize their lives within an opportunity and constraint structure that may be different from that of native-born Americans. For example, individuals within the same family do not always enjoy the same legal status, and family separation is a fairly common feature of the immigrant experience. Fathers or mothers who obtain permission to work in the United States leave ahead of their spouses and children in order to secure a financial and legal status for the rest of the family. American-born children are left with family or friends to pursue their education while parents without documentation return to their home country. Although undoubtedly challenging, these separations and reunifications may have different meanings and therefore different consequences for immigrants than for citizens. Observed differences in family structure and family process have to be understood in light of external constraints and opportunities.

Furthermore, a closer examination of the lived experience of immigrant families suggests a need to redefine our conceptualization of family relations and family support. Our models and measures tend to focus on immediate family or household relations or different forms of support provided by extended family in the United States. Yet, technological advances over the past twenty years have transformed the ease and cost of international communication. International travel has become faster and more affordable compared to the 1980s, and close contact with family and friends can now be maintained through a variety of internet-based and satellite-based services such as land and cell phones, email and instant messaging, Skype, and Facebook. These technologies provide new opportunities for close contact and the sharing of everyday experiences and important life events and transitions such as birthdays, marriages, births and deaths. However, beyond a discussion on remittances, we often fail to examine the manner in which relationships with people at home are maintained, transformed or severed and how these new forms of social interaction and support influence the immigrant experience.

What are the structural conditions influencing the new immigrant experience?

The social, legal, and economic climate of the host country, and the expectations, representations of, and fears about newcomer populations can impact the immigrant experience. Today, 12% of the U.S. population is foreign-born and, for the first time in the history of the United States, the majority of new immigrants represent racial and ethnic minority groups who are identifiable on the basis of appearance. This demographic shift is taking place in a context where stratification by race and ethnicity continues to be a powerful determinant of social position, and of exposure to racism, discrimination, and marginalization. In this sense, the immigrant experience is somewhat similar to that of native-born ethnic and racial minority groups.

The social, legal, and economic climate of the host country, and the expectations, representations of, and fears about newcomer populations can impact the immigrant experience.

However, two important but often overlooked factors distinguish the experience of ethnic and racial minority immigrants and contribute to their exclusion from “mainstream” life. First, they do not have the rights and therefore protections of citizens in a country where individual rights are believed to be conferred and upheld by the Constitution. Second, there is an underlying sentiment that (with the exception of children) low-income immigrants from so-called “developing countries” do not “deserve” public support or attention, which has led to restricted access to certain public services or benefits such as unemployment insurance, Social Security, and Medicare even when they make contributions as governed by the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). As a result, many immigrants are invisible, both by choice and circumstance, and devise their own ways to make a living, contribute to their places of life, deal with unexpected events such as loss of employment and illness, and maintain a sense of dignity.

Finally, “new” immigrants represent a much broader range of skills than earlier waves,

and they are entering a very different economic climate than those who arrived in the early to mid 1990s. But this movement is taking place in an economic context where the labor market is much more polarized than in the early 20th century, both in terms of the skills required and the wages offered. Immigrants are entering the lower echelons of this economic “hourglass” with fewer chances for success and upward mobility.

Conclusion

There is a need for new conceptual models and more studies that take into account the structural conditions that create different ecologies and opportunities; study that focuses on the processes by which ethnic immigrant families and children “make it” in the United States. The challenges encountered in research with immigrant families mirror some of the concerns in research with U.S. born ethnic and racial minority families, which are echoed by researchers such as Vonnie McLoyd, Cynthia Garcia Coll, and Velma Murry McBride. These include a tendency to examine and compare racial and ethnic groups, such as immigrants and the native-born, without determining the cultural and environmental factors that might explain these differences. At the same time, research on immigration presents some unique challenges. First, it is clear that immigration is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon that needs to be re-conceptualized if we are to understand the wide range of immigrant experiences. Furthermore, acculturation is not a single destination or outcome, even though certain aspects of acculturation may influence the manner in which newcomers interact with their new places of life. And a shift in focus from acculturation to outcomes such as well-being, competence, and self-efficacy would allow us to explore the myriad social, cultural, status and family role adjustments that are made by newcomers. Across home, work, school, and neighborhood and community contexts they secure a living, reconfigure family and social relations, redefine their place in society, and care for their children and families. Finally, immigration research might be better informed through an understanding of why people think, feel, and act the way they do; how newcomers give meaning to their experiences and the manner in which they define success or failure. ■

Through the lens of cultural equivalence: changing the discourse on immigrants, culture, race and ethnicity among family scholars

by Allison Gibbons, PhD, CFLE, Assistant Professor of Family and Child Studies, McNeese State University, agibbons@mcneese.edu

Immigration into the United States (U.S.) is an on-going movement. Since 1902, the U.S. Census Bureau's figures count immigrants consistently as 10 to 13% of the population. New arrivals generate U.S.-born progeny; Child Health USA reports that 20% of all children since 2006 have at least one foreign-born parent. U.S. migration is not one-way. According to Transitions Abroad, a web-based portal, 6.6 million Americans (non-military) now live in other countries; they migrate out of the U.S. for the same reasons that foreigners migrate into the U.S. – economic and creative opportunity, adventure, learning another language or seeking cross-cultural education.

This author is a foreign-born scholar from Trinidad & Tobago in the Caribbean. I challenge the old assumptions that immigrants are a homogeneous group coming to the U.S. for economic reasons alone, fixed forever at the lower end of society. Illegal immigration must be examined differently from legal immigration. Issues of race, ethnicity and nationality need to be disentangled, starting in the halls of academia.

Universities are populated with growing percentages of foreign-born students and faculty, or close kin to immigrants who arrived after 1950. Prior to 1950, most immigrants were European. Data from the Census Bureau reveal post-1950 groups comprise more Hispanics, Asians, and Blacks from Africa and the Caribbean. There is also a constant influx of international students. The Institute of International Education reported in 2006 that there were 564,766 international students in U.S. universities with 150,000 new enrollments every year. The presence of foreign students and faculty is cited as a boon to cultural enrichment on campuses. The number of foreign-born faculty on the tenure-track is currently estimated at 20%, one-third of whom earned their degrees in the U.S. A 2005 article by

Akbar Marvasti in the *Journal of Economic Issues* commented on the rapid demographic shift in the general population and the student-faculty population. He raised the question whether academic institutions are ready for the new face of America. This is my question as well.

A Bit of History

The United States is a country of immigrants, but the negative tone about “other peoples” emerged when the native population was described by early adventurers as “savage Indians.” The idea of being a dominant superior culture was embraced by the new

A lot more effort needs to be put into preparing writers, editors, researchers and teachers to develop cultural competence and sensitivity.

citizens of European origin. Consequently, freed slaves were denied full citizenship and the “Indians” were shifted to the margins. Following the gains of the Civil Rights movement, new immigrants entered from the world beyond Europe, but race-defined pathology was already institutionalized based on theories of scholars such as Stanley Hall, an American psychologist who posited that “lower races” were in a state of adolescence. He claimed there was a scientific basis for race segregation, and the ensuing Immigration Restriction Act of 1924 imposed quotas on the so-called “less intelligent nations.” Thomas Teo in his 2008 work on Race and Psychology saw this Act as seminal to scientific racism.

Scientific Racism in Family Life Textbooks

University instructors of “non-ethnic” backgrounds may well gloss over the cultural statements found in textbooks. Instructors examine a new text for content, readability,

student-friendliness and relevance. Some may check the facts. Nevertheless, the accuracy or sensitivity of cultural statements may never be questioned. As a university instructor who comes from an “ethnic” and immigrant background, I examine a text with the additional questions in mind. My university cites global awareness among its objectives. The task is not simply an intellectual pursuit. Cultural bias in textbooks assaults the sensibilities of persons who are perceived as the inferior “other.”

Included among the courses that I teach are: Sexuality, Child & Adolescent Development, and Family Crises. During the past three years, I have analyzed a minimum of 50 textbooks. I seek texts that are written with cultural integrity; this covers both cultural competence and cultural sensitivity. The subject of sexuality serves as an example here. All the texts that I examined included a section on “Race and Sexuality” or “Ethnicity and Sexuality” seeking to underscore differences in sexual behavior among ethnic groups. The three groups usually highlighted are African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans / Pacific Islanders (the last two usually thrown into the same group). This may seem like a standard approach, but it condones stereotyping simply by singling out a select few groups. Sexual stereotyping by race blocks progressive scholarly analyses of sexual behaviors that cut across race, ethnic groups, regions and nations.

For my class on adolescence, I examined one of the texts which represented a cross-section of the cultural landscape. The authors used a case-study approach. Storytelling is a very engaging style to keep the attention of



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undergraduates. Yet the text falls into the cultural hierarchy trap. The authors introduce each case with a short profile. A synopsis of the introductions read like this (names have been changed): Pedro is a Latino young man whose parents came from Central America ... Paul is a young black man who is living with his mother and sister ... Joan is a Native American female who was abandoned by her father and abused by her uncles... Mary is a first-generation Asian American who is growing up in middle-class suburbia... Anne is a twin and works hard at being a girl ... Michael traces his personal journey from being an awkward young boy to self-possessed young man ... John is a college senior who conforms to expectations and longs to be a “regular” kid. It is not difficult to tell that Anne, Michael and John are White teenagers. The authors saw no need to indicate their ethnicity or color, so ingrained is the notion of cultural hierarchy. There are two ways to correct this ignominy: either describe all the teenagers ethnically, including Anne, Michael and John (for example, John is a young man of German American heritage) or omit the ethnic descriptions altogether, and let the stories tell themselves. The change is subtle yet powerful demonstration of cultural equivalence.

Texts in multicultural counseling tend to be one dimensional in approach. Authors write from the perspective that the counselor is White and the counselees are non-White. The focus of the texts is on counseling individuals of “other” cultural backgrounds. There is little thought given to the reality that several counselors-in-training or the University students taking the class and using the text will be members of the “other” groups, and that many of their counselees will be White. A lot more effort needs to be put into preparing writers, editors, researchers and teachers to develop cultural competence and sensitivity.

Research

Cultural equivalence is a term used in social research to ensure that concepts are not “lost in translation.” The spirit of cultural equivalence is needed in family research. Many writers use phrases which refer to behavior of immigrants becoming more consistent with the dominant culture or with the “White American norm” thus reinforcing

the idea of inherent deviance of non-White immigrants. Such an approach conjures up ghosts of Arthur Jensen and his dogma of bio-evolutionary inferiority. Some scholars of White ancestry cannot seem to shake that belief. On the flip side, Black American researchers are pressed into constantly defending the Black population and sometimes over-claiming behaviors as being specifically Black. This approach inadvertently supports the notion that only White Americans belong to mainstream America.

S.J. Gould in his 1996 work, *The Mismeasure of Man*, analyzed the role of psychologists who laid the foundation for scientific racism. Within the United States, it is almost sacrilegious to omit race as a research variable. Thomas Teo challenges the repeated singling out of the same three to five races. Teo argues that current advances in genetic analyses have shown that the variation within traditionally conceptualized races is much larger than between them, and that if race is going to be used as a variable, instead of three to five races, one should assume several thousand populations that are changing. Research hypotheses involving non-White immigrants will always be affected by questions of population validities and observer effects such as bias, contamination and cultural incompetence. Tainted conclusions make their way into textbooks. Research on race in America has its relevance; the society needs the research sector to keep tabs on racial inequities. Anthropologists will continue to contribute descriptive data on variations in groups around the world. None of this removes the responsibility of university communities to eliminate bias from scholarly work that produces or utilizes data based on race and ethnic hierarchy.

New Perspectives

The focus should shift to the many other central variables. Technology and its impact on family life is an urgent issue. All nationalities are struggling with the questions of

same-sex unions. Religion cuts across all cultural barriers. The largest and most conservative wing of Episcopalians worldwide is located in Africa. Black or White religious conservatives share the same views; immigrants spread themselves across all religions. The PEW Forum on Religion & Public Life reported in 2008 that 44% of Americans have rejected the faith of their childhood. Immigrants who arrived as Roman Catholics are being drawn into fundamentalism in as many numbers as native born Catholics. The perception of who is Jewish has changed. Alysia Stanton was ordained in 2009 as the first black female Rabbi and was contracted to lead a traditional Jewish congregation in Greenville, North Carolina. Her new congregation is not Black, although, according to the San Francisco-based Institute for Jewish and Community Research, 20% of American Jewry is now non-Caucasian. There are 5.2 million Jews in the U.S. and 6 million Muslims; Middle Eastern and Arab Muslims represent the smallest subset. Most immigrant Muslims arrive from South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean with a fast growing membership of African Americans and a few Whites.

Family scholars must revive and emphasize the importance of qualitative research to generate new hypotheses. Scholars should not keep recycling old assumptions and hypotheses about immigrant families, race and ethnicity, and set out to prove them correct using miniscule quantitative statistical analyses.

Early family scholars (new Ph.D.s) should be encouraged to seek teaching contracts in foreign universities. There are also many foreign-born scholars at U.S. universities. A spirited exchange of ideas about immigrants will contribute greatly to an academic climate of mutual respect. Family scholars should read outside the narrow confines of their perceived discipline or their academic comfort zone. Readings should include eminent studies on scientific racism, books on other religions, marriage practices and cultural celebrations. Textbook authors need to be aware that the instructors or students targeted as consumers of the text might have a totally different perspective based on first-hand involvement and membership in the cultural group relegated to inferior status in their scholarly discourse. ■



Eastern European immigrant families' adaptation to the United States

by Mihaela Robila, Ph.D., CFLE, Queens College, City University of New York, Mihaela.Robila@qc.cuny.edu

Immigration to the United States has experienced a significant increase in the last decades, with the foreign-born population growing from 19.8 million in 1990 (7.9% of population) to 38.4 million in 2007 (13.5% of the U.S. population.) While the growth of Asian and Latin American immigrants has been a central issue in immigration, the rapid growth of Eastern European immigrants has received insufficient attention. Following large waves in the first part of the last century, East European immigration was limited during Communism, with small waves of Russian Jewish refugees escaping religious persecution. The number of Eastern European immigrants increased greatly after the fall of Communism in 1989, providing new opportunities to better our understanding of this group and the whole immigrant population. Currently, about 10% of legal immigrants coming to the United States are from Eastern Europe, representing about 70% of all contemporary European immigrants coming to the United States.

There is a wide variation of socioeconomic development among Eastern European countries. For example, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in 2007 varied from \$27,300 in Slovenia, \$24,400 in Czech Republic, \$14,600 in Russia, \$11,100 in Romania, to \$3,800 in Montenegro, and \$2,200 in Moldova. (U.S. GDP per capita is \$46,000). In the process of democratization and transition to a market economy, a large number of people in Eastern Europe were displaced from their secure living arrangements, many of them losing their previously stable jobs in the state-owned industries when these closed due to their inefficiency (e.g., unemployment rates are 19% in Serbia and 12.8 % in Poland). Eastern Europe has been an area with major population movements, determined mainly by opening the borders with the West but also by the economic difficulties of the post-Communist transition.

The research on contemporary Eastern European (EE) immigration is very limited.

Most of the literature on EE immigrants in the United States refers to the early waves at the turn of the last century. During those times, the majority of Eastern Europeans coming to the U.S. were peasants and thus they were among the poorest "ethnic" groups entering the country. While suffering from poverty and overpopulation, many peasants also experienced religious and cultural oppression, sometimes through violence. This is different from the contemporary immigration from Eastern Europe. The new EE immigrants include a higher proportion of professionals, are much more diverse and are coming mainly from urban areas.

While there is a broad awareness of economic struggles for Mexican immigrants, there is little public awareness of the struggles that immigrants from some of the EE countries experience.

A significant indicator of immigrants' adaptation to a new society is the ability to secure a job, and consequently the ability to secure an income that would be enough for their family. Data on several Eastern European countries from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau Special Tabulations (STP-159) – Summary File 3 indicate a wide diversity in terms of income among Eastern European immigrants in the United States, from those from Bosnia Herzegovina (\$12,513), Albania (\$14,055), and Moldova (\$16,500), to those with the highest incomes coming from Hungary (\$34,624), Latvia (\$30,364), Croatia (\$29,464), and Slovenia (\$28,746). The lower income levels for people coming from some of these countries (e.g., Albania, Bosnia / Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, Belarus) could also be due to the fact that the immigrants also had to deal with not just moving stressors but conflictual situations in their country of origin. The poverty rates of the immigrants coming from these countries are similar to those of people coming from

Mexico. While there is a broad awareness of economic struggles for Mexican immigrants, there is little public awareness of the struggles that immigrants from some of the EE countries experience.



Mihaela Robila

In order to better understand Eastern European immigrants' adaptation, they need to be examined among other immigrant groups, such as Asian and Hispanic immigrants. These comparisons elucidate the specific dynamics of adaptation and make possible the identification of which groups are more in need of services and are most underserved.

Research using the data from the Social and Economic Supplement (March Supplement) of the Current Population Survey (CPS) indicates several significant differences in economic achievement among Eastern European, Asian and Hispanic immigrants. Results indicate that there is a wide diversity in household incomes among these groups, EE immigrants being somewhat in the middle, between Hispanic and Asian immigrants. All of the EE immigrants reported incomes lower than the Asian immigrants. Eastern Europeans' levels of education are relatively high, similar with those of Asian immigrants, while their income levels are relatively low, closer to those of Hispanic immigrants. Eastern Europeans register the largest discrepancy between their educational achievement and economic outcomes. For Asian and Hispanic immigrants there is more congruence between education and economic development. This could be due to the different immigration history from these regions. While emigration from Asia has been a continuous process, the emigration from Eastern Europe has been significantly diminished during the Communist period, after World War II and until late 1980s. This

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From immigrant to transnational families: expanding the conversation in family studies

by Meg Wilkes Karraker, PhD, University of St. Thomas, mwkarraker@stthomas.edu

According to the United Nations, 3% (175 million) of the earth's people live outside the nation into which they were born. The reasons for leaving their country of origin encompass each of the major social institutions. Some leave to pursue educational or economic opportunity. Others are fleeing political or religious oppression. Still others are deceived or coerced into leaving, perhaps with the promise of employment or marriage, then forced into slavery or sexual bondage.

Writing of the experience of 19th century Irish immigrants, Peter McCorry evokes the intense grief so many immigrants throughout history must have felt as they "looked for the last time on the graves of parents and children, gazed tenderly and affectionately on the well-remembered spots of their childhood," knowing they would never return and may, in fact, never again have contact with loved ones left behind. Today, by far the most frequent category of immigrants legally admitted to the United States is immediate relatives "children, spouses, siblings, or grandparents" of U.S. citizens. In recent years, approximately three-quarters of documented (legal) immigrants entered the U.S. through family channels. In fact, official immigration policies in the U.S. and most other nations reflect a strong family unification agenda. However, in practice, backlogs in processing applications and immigrant visa quotas often mean that the lag time between application and reunification can be extreme (as much as two decades or even longer in the U.S.) Such delays create significant material and social hardships for family members who remain living alone or as

single parents while awaiting family reunification. Such delays also create a multiplicity of places one family may call "home."

Migrant families today do not simply leave, reunite and settle. Their members come and go, and come and go again. Some family scholars are already studying families who make these frequent movements through both documented ("legal") and undocumented ("illegal") channels multiple times, back and

... I encourage family scholars to shift from blanket use of the term "immigrant families" except when explicitly accurate to the term "transnational" families.

forth across borders. For example, Joanna Dreby has interviewed not only the adult parents who had migrated from Mexico to the U.S., but also their children often in the care of extended family in the sending country. Her research reveals a sophisticated web of caretaking, economics, and repeated travels back and forth across borders for not only the parents but also, sometimes the children, of migrant families. Morten Ender, a member of the sociology faculty at the United States Military Academy at West Point and himself a self-described "Army Brat," has studied the lives of the half million American children living in military families, many of whom will spend a significant portion of their childhood living abroad. His research indicates that life for children of parents in the military and other "global nomads" (e.g.

employed in international business, the diplomatic corps, or missionary service) is associated with positive as well as some negative outcomes.

In general, immigrant families are more likely to be poor and their family members (particularly children) are disproportionately at risk. For example, while immigrants have high employment rates, they are more likely to receive low wages and receive fewer government supports for their labor, especially in the face of changes in federal welfare and immigration laws. In the United States, policy shifts including the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and deep and broad changes to federal welfare and immigration laws in 1996, coupled with further restrictions in certain individual states, have restricted immigrants' access to public assistance, education, medical care, and other services in the U.S. and other countries. Furthermore, the political and social debates involving undocumented migrants from the southern hemisphere to the United States are paralleled by debates in Europe as the European Union tries to enforce stricter controls on border crossings of member nations.

But the story of immigration can also be one of astounding resiliency and even spectacular achievement, across but also within generations. Sometimes, as in the case of Hmong who immigrated to the United States and settled in Minnesota, dramatic upward mobility in educational and economic fortunes has occurred even before the second generation comes of age (some of whom were born in their parents' homeland or in the camps en route from Southeast Asia). Also missing from most discussions of migrants and their families is the situation of students, workers,



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situation determined the fact that many of the emigrants from Eastern Europe are recent immigrants, residing in the U.S. for about 15 years, while those from Asia have longer periods of residence, and longer residence in the U.S. is associated with higher incomes.

More research with Eastern European immigrant families is recommended to shed light on their adaptation patterns to the United States. Promoting an understanding of EE immigrants in particular, and the immigrant population as a whole, will contribute to multiculturalism by increasing the acceptance of cultural diversity. ■

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A forgotten generation in U.S. history: Korean immigrants 1953-1965

by Linda Park, MSSW, MSMHR, Doctoral Candidate, University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Human Ecology, Human Development and Family Studies, lsark@wisc.edu

Social and historical contexts affect the experiences of any immigrant group coming into the United States. Immigrants who entered the U.S. prior to the passage of the historic Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 had to establish their own communities and felt that assimilation was necessary to survive in America. Immigrants who entered the U.S. after 1965 had options to enter into already established ethnic communities enabling them to retain more of their cultural practices rather than fully assimilate. This article tells the story of a small group of Koreans, often overlooked in history, who immigrated to the U.S. between 1953-1965. Embedded in the story are examples of how these immigrants struggled to balance cultural preservation

and assimilation for their families, and how the lives for this group have changed today.¹

Historical Overview of Korean Immigration

Although Koreans have been in the U.S. since 1903, not much is known about them. There were three very distinct waves of Korean immigration. The first wave (1903-1924) arrived in Hawaii as sugar plantation laborers and “picture brides”, along with a small number of students and expatriates. There were about 8,000 Koreans when the Asian Exclusion Act was passed in 1924.³ The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service documented 14,027 Koreans as part of the second Korean immigration wave between the early 1950s until 1965. Three separate groups comprised this second

wave: 5,300 Korean adoptee children, 6,400 Korean War brides, and about 2,300 Korean students seeking higher education. The third wave of Korean immigrants (1965-present) is part of the *new immigrant*



Linda Park

group who entered the U.S. after the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act which ended discriminatory quotas, lifted the Asian Exclusion Act, and established a family reunification amendment. This act, pivotal to increasing Asian immigration, had an overwhelming impact on Korean

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and others who enter a country with legally drawn papers, some or many with every intention of returning to their country of origin once their education or work experience is complete (whether they do or not). Those students and workers may travel back and forth multiple times, depending on academic calendars, work requirements, and other seasonal schedules. Also often lost in discussions of immigration is the fact that many undocumented make multiple crossings, depending on employment and other circumstances, as well as family demands in the country of origin.

How do these daughters and sons, husbands and wives, “make sense” of their separations and cross-border family intimacy? Family scholars have a critical place in discussions about the challenges and achievements or families on the move. However, the blanket term “immigrant” is sometimes inaccurate and often limiting to the family scholar seeking to understand and serve families whose members may be moving across borders. Would some other term better reflect the reality of these families and their members?

In my book *Global Families*, I argue that “[i]n the twenty-first century, economic, political, cultural, and other social forces trespass national, regional, and other borders in ways unanticipated even a few decades ago.” Families face such global forces as transnational employment, international violence, worldwide cultures, and supranational policies. In doing so, migration “stretches” family structures. More inclusive concepts would extend family scholars’ vision of the challenges facing these families, as well as their achievements.

Family studies needs to better reflect 21st century “some would say post-modern” twists

on identity, as spouses, children, and other kin, as well as whole families may routinely call different nations “home.” In this global age, families exist in social fields that cross not only geographic, but also cultural, economic, political and other borders. Again, as I contend in *Global Families*, families today often “span borders, as those family members act, decide, feel, and express identities across social networks that traverse two (or more) societies, often simultaneously.” I encourage family scholars to shift from blanket use of the term “immigrant families” except when explicitly accurate to the term “transnational” families. ■

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immigration. According to U.S. Census data, approximately 30,000 Koreans entered the U.S. every year from 1972 through 1987.

The social and historical contexts under which the second wave of Korean immigrants migrated to the U.S. differ dramatically from the first and third waves of Korean immigrants. The 1940 U.S. Census documented fewer than 2,000 Koreans living in mainland U.S. outside of Hawaii⁴, highlighting the virtually non-existent Korean communities for this second wave of Korean immigrants. According to multiple sources, the lives of those 2,300 Korean students are the least known about; in fact, they are a *forgotten generation*, lost in history.⁵ This story recaps the 50 years of living in America for this cohort of Korean immigrants, who are now adults in their 70s and 80s. Understanding the story of this cohort broadens our understanding of how social and historical contexts impact immigrant groups living and raising their children in the U.S.

Forming Korean American communities from scratch

This section gives a snapshot of the social and historical contexts at the time when this cohort of Korean immigrants first arrived in the U.S. as students. The Korean students who came to the U.S. between 1953 and 1965 were survivors of the Japanese occupation in Korea, World War II and the Korean War. They left a war-torn South Korea with dreams to study in America and intentions of eventually returning to Korea. While some did return, others did not.⁶ They got married, got jobs, got citizenship, and decided to raise a family in the U.S.

For that small number of Koreans scattered across the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s, friendships with other Koreans were difficult to forge. Some interview participants remembered their parents describe how they found other Koreans. For example, because the Korean communities in the entire U.S. were so small, one creative but common practice was to look in local area phone books for Korean last names like Kim, Park, Lee, and call, saying, "I'm Korean. Are you Korean?" One participant lightheartedly commented: "I know my parents knew every single Korean family within a 20 mile radius. But there were only three of us or something, you know." Another common practice was

to gather at dinner parties. This participant remembered: "There was this distinct collection of people. Maybe 8-10 couples and kids and for a while they would do this thing where there was a party at each of the person's houses and they rotated." For many of these Korean immigrant families, these friendships formed through affinity and propinquity became a type of extended family in a new host country where there were very few Koreans. Some Koreans who were able to find a Korean church within one hour's driving distance would attend church at the community there.

However, balancing assimilation with cultural preservation was difficult for this cohort who only knew how to be Korean.

Struggle to balance assimilation and preserve culture

Korean immigrants of this second wave, just as many European immigrants who came to the U.S. before them, faced enormous pressure to assimilate and become "American." Their children were born during a time of Asian exclusion in U.S. history and during a time of the prevailing assimilation model. Rooted in this model was the need to fit into American society and have a strong command of the English language. The "English only" emphasis was supported by research in linguistics, psychology, and pediatrics which claimed that teaching children more than one language would confuse them and make them cognitively slower in their development. As one participant remembered, "My parents were really very conscious not to speak Korean around me. They explained it to me later that they thought if they had exposed me to two languages, it would be confusing for me and I wouldn't really have the mastery of one over the other."

These are the challenges that Korean immigrant parents faced. Korean parents, who wanted their American-born children to succeed, encouraged assimilation through English usage and experiencing American culture in everyday living.⁷ To quote another participant, "I think my parents didn't push us to learn the Korean language. They spoke to us in English. They wanted us to assimilate."

During this time, many Korean families lived in predominantly White homogenous neighborhoods where there were only one or two Korean (or Asian) families. Some parents made efforts to be "American" for the sake of their children. Mothers learned to cook American food and entertain non-Korean friends. This was seen as an important way to be part of the American society.

However, balancing assimilation with cultural preservation was difficult for this cohort who only knew how to be Korean. Generally, immigrant parents raise children in the cultural traditions and values they are familiar with from their homelands. In this way, some elements of culture are preserved. However, more than specific traditions, it was the values Korean people practice that were imparted to the children. One participant stated, "It was more the value set of how we view elders, how we relate to each other as brother and sister, how we relate to our parents, and how we relate to community." These values were rooted in Confucianism.⁸

Within this Confucianism framework, filial piety and education were two of the more highly stressed virtues for the Korean families of this second wave. Filial piety is defined as one's moral duty and obligation to respect, support, and serve one's parents. Examples are to listen obediently to the parents without talking back; to support parents in their old age; and to become successful in life for their parents. Theoretically, this means no arguing, smoking, or drinking alcohol in front of the parents. One participant recalled: "Mostly I think of the way we treat and respect those who are older than you. That's big! That respect and the way you don't even ask questions, you just do. I always thought it was very Korean that you don't talk back. You're just spoken to and you are not to be heard from." Regarding education, Confucius was a strong advocate for education as a means to succeed in life. For Korean parents, education is everything, especially for their children. Another participant commented: "So there would be reminders of things uniquely Korean. I think, perhaps the other thing that is less tangible in terms of being outwardly Korean, was the Confucian tradition that they lived. So that involved hard work and an extraordinary emphasis on education. Education to them was everything!"

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Families without homes: casualties of the hurricanes

by Charles L. Cole, Ph.D., CFLE, LMFT, The University of Louisiana at Monroe, drcharlescole4mft@gmail.com

A special category of migrants are the involuntary migrants who escape dangers such as war, natural disasters, and other emergencies that force rapid movement from one location to another. For most of these individuals and families, migration is initially a temporary solution; they hope to return to their homes when the danger subsides. This article will examine how a family that experienced the forced migration of multiple major storms coped with the stress and strain of the process.

For the last few years, families along the Gulf Coast have lived in fear of hurricanes. For some, it means evacuating with family pets and little more than a change of clothes. These families flee from danger when ordered. Some of these families have been hit by multiple hurricanes in the span of only three years. In this brief article I will chronicle the experience of one family that I worked with that was forced to live in a shelter for three months before being able to return to

what remained of their home. This trip to a shelter in north-east Louisiana was the third time they had been evacuated and relocated. I had worked briefly with them during their first

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Aging immigrants today

Interestingly, because education was the driving force that brought this second wave of Korean immigrants to America, they were in a unique position to facilitate the assimilation process for their children by speaking English to them. However, beginning in 1970, the racial and ethnic demographics of the U.S. shifted into a more multicultural and multiethnic America. Today it is easier to maintain cultural heritage because of the many ethnic enclaves. Now there are ethnic grocery stores, restaurants, and media outlets like ethnic TV and newspapers. So after more than 50 years, this second wave of Korean immigrants who had entered an America that

was a White-dominant society, now live in an America that has over 1.5 million Koreans/Korean Americans. How are these parents faring now that their children have grown up, moved out and have their own lives?

For many, those friendships made back in the 1950 and 1960s still exist. But as one participant remarked, "It's not like they hang out or anything. These are 50 year relationships." During the children's developmental years, Korean parents actively socialized with both White friends and their Korean friends. However, one participant noted: "You know, definitely they had some White close friends but what's interesting is that they are not in touch with their close

White friends but they're still in touch with their Korean friends because that's where their community is."

It seems important to note that no matter where you live, ethnic communities remain important and vital for the immigrant first generation, as it has become for this forgotten generation. One participant commented, "After we were all pretty much gone, I feel like their friends are exclusively Korean. It's sort of like, once they didn't have to, now that my dad's retired, they didn't have the need to mingle with non-Korean society. They don't bother anymore."

So we can see how changes in social and historical contexts impact how immigrants adapt and accommodate the familiar with the new. Although there was virtually no Korean community outside of Hawaii, for some Korean students, life in America offered better opportunities. However, there was no way for Koreans to anticipate what a future American society would be like for their children without a Korean community. So they raised their children as best they could under the circumstances. No one could imagine that a change in immigration policy would have such a profound impact on Korean immigration. Today, the social and historical contexts for this specific cohort, now in their golden years, have changed significantly; they do not have to substitute what's familiar and Korean to them with something else in order to be American. ■

¹ Quotes and stories for this article are from interviews with the adult children (born in the U.S. between 1953 and 1965) of this immigrant cohort and part of a dissertation project.

² A common early 20th century practice for immigrant laborers, picture brides were women matched with a groom using photos and family recommendations.

³ This figure is compared to an estimated 225,000 Chinese and 72,000 Japanese immigrants in 1924.

⁴ The census does not record a Korean category in 1950 and 1960. "Korean" reappears in the 1970 census.

⁵ Often times, only the first and third wave of Korean immigrants are recognized in history.

⁶ There is no accurate data on how many students returned to Korea and how many actually remained in the U.S. and eventually became citizens.

⁷ Information on the adult children of this immigrant cohort will be presented in an upcoming dissertation.

⁸ Confucianism comes from the teachings of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, who had a powerful cultural influence in East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea). Because the legacy and teachings of Confucianism was so entrenched in Korean society, especially since the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910), it is said that the pervasiveness of and adherence to Confucian values is more extreme in Korea than in China. This became known as Korean Confucianism. In short, Confucian values accentuate hierarchy in social relationships, which ideally leads to "harmony" within families and ultimately, society.

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evacuation when they came to the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) family therapy clinic for help with PTSD, depression, and anxiety of multiple family members. I followed-up with the family after they returned home for nearly a year, placing monthly phone calls to check on their progress in trying to put their lives back together. When they returned to northeast Louisiana for the third time with the evacuation for Hurricane Gustav, they immediately contacted me to resume treatment to help them through the crises. The names of members of the family have been altered to protect their identity. The stories they share in this narrative—on living in limbo without a home or even the knowledge of whether they would even have a home to return to—are similar to the dozens of families we worked with in the marriage and family therapy clinic while they were living in shelters. For many families, including the “Brown” family whose lives I will chronicle, living through multiple evacuations was a life-altering experience they will never forget.

Meet the Brown Family

George Brown is 47 years old and worked as a store clerk in a small family owned business in the New Orleans area. His parents, brothers and sisters, and both sets of grandparents were lifelong residents of the 9th Ward. George is a high school graduate and has taken some business courses through a community college. His younger brother, James, managed and owned the store. When the first hurricane hit the Louisiana coast in 2005, everyone in George’s family lost their homes, and the business was destroyed. George moved his wife, Janelle, their six children (Michael, 21; Justin, 19; Sally, 18; the twins, Marcus and Susan, age 16; and Tracy, 13), along with the family pet, (a very active puppy named Cottonball), as far north as they could travel on two tanks of gasoline. The family drove in two cars loaded to the brim, one pulling a small utility trailer with as much as it could hold. George’s brother James refused to leave his home and stayed behind to protect the homes of family members and the family business.

Janelle’s parents were evacuated to Houston with her sister and brother-in-law. Her grandparents left for Atlanta to stay with Janelle’s younger brother in a small apartment. Her older brother was living in the Chicago area

and he became home base coordinator for Janelle’s family trying to keep communication open between each of the scattered elements.

George’s family was less organized in keeping family communications open. For over a week, he heard nothing from James or his parents. He was only able to stay in contact with one sister and did not even know where his grandparents were during the first two weeks of the separation. His grandfather, 91, needed special medical care and was airlifted out of a retirement home, but his grandmother, 87, was left behind.

With this background, it is easy to imagine how worried and confused each of them was during this time of danger and uncertainty. Janelle described it as “...a living hell not

...but it was realizing that all of their pictures and keepsakes were destroyed and lost forever that really hurt the most.

even knowing if family members were alive or dead. We were all worried sick and could not do one thing that really helped anybody. The anxiety was getting so bad that after about three days of hearing nothing from James, we began to imagine the worst. We knew the hurricane had taken a direct hit on the area where James was last known to be when we left the New Orleans area. We could not imagine anyone living through that. I was worried about my own parents and grandparents too, but at least I could talk with them on the phone and knew they were out of harm’s way. But for James, Granny and Pops we didn’t know anything really, and what we saw on TV only made it even more real of how desperate things were in New Orleans.”

Initial Reactions to Shelter Life

George described the first week since the evacuation as a “... bad dream that I kept hoping hadn’t really happened...I think I was numb most of that time. I couldn’t believe it was really happening to me. It must have been a movie or a news story about somebody else’s family.” For George, the only way he could manage the day-to-day uncertainty was to deny it was really happening to him.

Janelle was calmer on the outside, keeping the family organized with daily needs like

eating and trying to get as much information as she could about what was going on. Janelle said, “I stayed on the phone checking with various members of my family several times a day and trying to get updates on what was known about George’s family members.” Janelle goes on, “I knew I had to keep it together or the kids and George would have really lost it.” Oldest son, Michael, described his mom during this time as “...the rock of ages that helped us keep our spirits up.” But underneath, Janelle was really hurting too! Janelle reported she had slept fewer than three hours for the past several days. “I stayed vigilant so I wouldn’t miss anything happening. I was worried about the safety of us in the shelter too. My youngest, Tracy, was nearly raped by a man the first day we were in the shelter. And Susan keeps wandering off, and I can’t keep up with where all of the kids are. I’ve asked George and Michael to help me keep an eye on things but they really aren’t much help.”

The strain began to build in the shelter. Marcus had already gotten in trouble with the police and “we’ve only been here a week,” reports Sally. “It wasn’t his fault; he was trying to protect Tracy from her attacker. Our family has been put on notice that one more incident of any kind from any member of our family and we will be asked to leave the shelter. I don’t know how much more we can take.” Susan comments, “... and all of us are getting really stinky and need the privacy of our own home so we can take showers without worrying about someone attacking us or stealing everything we have.”

Janelle tells the family therapist “we came to the family therapy clinic to get help for Tracy. She was having trouble sleeping and eating and living in fear of being attacked again.” After coming to the family therapy clinic twice, Sally reported, “...the whole family is really on edge; we live in fear every minute of every day and no one can talk about it.” Marcus adds he never really appreciated having a normal life like they had enjoyed before the hurricane turned their lives upside down. Marcus said “...all I really worried about before all this started was playing football, and keeping my girl happy; she gets jealous when I talk to other girls. All that seems so long ago now. I can

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hardly believe life was really easy then. But now it is miserable all the time. We don't even have a home."

George didn't speak during the first session with the family therapist. He sat on the couch and stared straight ahead. Janelle had been the family organizer who had arranged for them to come for therapy. Like others in the family, George was still in shock. Being homeless, having family members still in harm's way, and living with the continual anxiety of not knowing the whereabouts of several members of his family were taking a toll. Susan wanted to have the family go the animal shelter to check on Cottonball every day, but most days it didn't happen. Susan was angry about not being able to check on the family pet.

Later Reactions to the First Shelter Stay

When the family finally got word that James was alive and had been moved by a rescue team to higher ground, they were relieved. James was living in the Louisiana Superdome with hundreds of others that had either refused evacuation or who didn't get out in time. But after learning how horrible his situation was in the Dome, George said, "we actually felt fortunate to have a little better place to be. We were dry and all six of the kids were with us."

It had been more than a month and no one knew where Granny was, or even if she had gotten out. Michael had spent hours at the local library using the computer to search for information about his grandparents. Michael had located a few members of the family but no word on either Granny or Pops came up in any of his searches. Everyone in the family was beginning to give up hope that either would be found.

Then after nearly two months in the shelter, Michael learned that the airlifted patients had been taken to a care center in San Antonio. A few days later, he located his great grandfather's name. No one knew where George had taken his family, so the authorities didn't know how to contact him about Pops.

Nearly two more weeks after learning that Pops was okay, George got a notification that Granny had died, and that she was never evacuated from the care center in New Orleans. Discovering that Granny had died alone without any of her family with her—essentially abandoned by everyone with

the authority to help her—caused George and Janelle and the kids to feel guilty and angry. Even though the Brown family knew this pattern was all too familiar for hundreds of other families, it seemed like a personal blow; they had been robbed of a loved one who had raised George. At this stage the family began to experience the "if only" scenarios and replay the situation in their minds, wondering how Granny could have been left behind and not evacuated when Pops was.

Post Shelter Reactions to the First Hurricane

When the family was allowed to return to see the damage, they experienced a new level of shock and despair by seeing the ruined homes in the 9th Ward. George said that seeing their house still standing with most of the structure still there gave them some hope. But after several days of trying to clean it up, Janelle said it began to sink in that all of the carpets, furniture, and interior walls were ruined. But it was realizing that all of their pictures and keepsakes were destroyed and lost forever that really hurt the most. Janelle said, "We really lost virtually everything we had. George's job was gone forever, our home was uninhabitable and really needed to be totally rebuilt...but that was just stuff that we could walk away from. But losing the pictures and keepsakes that had been treasured memories was a blow; we'll never be able to replace them." She continued, "It was the combination of Granny dying, losing our treasures, and having the family scattered in so many directions that made the reality of it all come through for me. George on the other hand kept hanging on to the illusion of repairing the home and moving back to where we were before. But I knew it would never happen!"

Michael said "I tried to hold on to hope of us getting it back to where we were before... but after about six months of trying to reorganize our lives and constant setbacks it was hard to keep the faith." Susan added that "watching Dad try so hard to clean up the mess and having all the setbacks just tugged at my heart. I honestly don't know how he kept going and trying when we all knew it was hopeless—everyone but Dad knew we'd never be able to live in that house again. But Dad wouldn't give up."

**Post Shelter Reactions to the Second and Third Hurricane**

Janelle noted she was getting frustrated that George was not accepting the inevitable; that their family would never be the same again. "We needed to start over and walk away from the heap of trash that had been our home. I wanted to move away from New Orleans then and there, but George would have none of that." Michael added that it wasn't until Gustav that Dad admitted we'd never be able to go back and start over in New Orleans.

In this period of resignation to the cumulative losses, the family experienced a further splintering when Michael announced he was leaving and moving to California to join a friend and look for work. "We had already lost one child, our oldest, George Jr., to a drive-by shooting a year before Katrina hit. And now having Michael leaving was too much for me to take," Janelle tells George. "I don't want to stand in his way, and I know we have nothing to offer him here in Louisiana, but it is really killing me to see him moving away. I'm afraid the other kids will leave soon too. We don't even have a home for them anymore."

In the months since my last contact with the Brown family, I have wondered how they are doing. I have lost contact; their phone is no longer in service. I don't even know whether they are still in Louisiana. Their time in northeast Louisiana was temporary, and they viewed the migration as hopefully temporary with the goal of returning to their home in south Louisiana. And then I realize that this pattern of migration in a time of emergency has been an indelible life-altering experience for not only the Brown family but for millions of other families that I have never met. It has put into motion a shift in their lives that has literally scattered families across several states. The continuity and home they had known is no more, and the memories of the years as a family are marred with losses that keep piling up and grieving that seems to never end. I think of the Browns from time to time and must acknowledge that in my role as their family therapist, I was changed too. Their pain was real; their story was compelling, and I continue to care even though my professional role and work with them is over. ■

The legacy of war and survival stories in immigration: one person's experience

by Sothy Eng, M.S., ABD, sothy.eng@ttu.edu & Jacki Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., Texas Tech University

There has long been an interest in the role of stories in family identity and development. Stories can serve multiple purposes, including “meaning making” from specific events, conveying information about family history and revealing values and life lessons. According to Elizabeth Stone, there are common categories of family stories. One such category is survival stories. These stories can be a way to share specific events and general life strategies. And I (Sothy) would like to share my personal experiences growing up in a “war-surviving family” and how it impacts my own immigration experience.

I think positively about my life—and that I can always better myself—and all of this is inspired by my war-surviving parents. I would like to share how my father managed to escape execution and how his survival skills and stories made my journey possible. My journey began from a very small village in a rural area along the Mekong River. People in this area are extremely poor. Poverty in Cambodia is not the same as poverty in



Sothy's father, Long Eng

America. Most people in my village (during both my childhood and now) can hardly earn a dollar a day. Hunger is commonplace.

In the mid-1970s, Cambodia experienced a genocidal war led by Pol Pot. During the war, approximately 1.7 million people were executed and many were brutally tortured. Educated individuals were particularly targeted for execution. During the war, formal education was eradicated and literacy education was abolished. After the war, hundreds of thousands of people immigrated to several developed countries (including the U.S.) in

I noticed the way my father shared the stories, many of which were about his ability to survive the war with his intelligence and quick-wittedness.

the early 1980s. My parents thought it was lucky enough that they remained alive; they did not want to move anywhere. So they remained in Cambodia where they raised me and my brother and sister. Sadly, four of my older brothers and sisters and all of my grandparents and some of my other close relatives were killed in the war. So I am a “left over,” a survivor, and the only one on whom my parents place great expectations.

During my childhood, my father often told us about his experiences during the war and how he was able to survive. Almost every evening after dinner, we would sit outside of the house with candlelight (there was no electricity in that rural area at that time) and talk with each other. Sometimes, he got several neighbors to come over after dinner time to share their war experiences. The most common topics were the difficulties and life-threatening events they had endured.

I noticed the way my father shared the stories, many of which were about his ability to survive the war with his intelligence and quick-wittedness. Before the war, my father was a high school graduate. Due to his extra

training, he worked in the government office as a journalist. Because he was considered to be an educated person, he was the type who was targeted for execution. There were several times that he was stopped by soldiers and could



Sothy Eng

have been executed if he had admitted that he was a journalist. In order to survive, my father quickly created a lie and said that he was a taxi driver and that he was illiterate. Thus, my father's lie saved his life and made it possible for my family to survive. In addition, he showed us the practical value of education when he explained how he was able to find food while many others had almost nothing. He was able to make good relationships with some of the Khmer Rouge kitchen workers, and that was why he always had something for his family to eat. My father also told my mother to hide all of the keepsakes such as their wedding photo albums and jewelry because those things may have exposed their educational level and wealth before the war. My father also warned his young nephew who lived with him not to speak Chinese at any time.

Although my father's generation was focused primarily on survival, some still had dreams for their children. My father might not have been able to openly pursue education, but he wanted me to have a chance at a good education. He even “changed my birthday” so that I could start school early. Now I have two birthdays, a real one and an academic one, both of which are celebrated. His consideration extended even to giving me a name, Sothy, which means “a well-educated person.” He and his stories really inspired me to think positively about life. In any life circumstance, I always know that there is a way to solve problems.

Getting an education has been a journey, literally. I walked to school when I was in

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Immigration's many faces

by Dr. Richard Glotzer, Professor and Director, Center for Family Studies, The University of Akron, glotzer@uakron.edu

That the Obama family claims as home the neighborhood of my childhood prompts these musings on immigration. Chicago's Hyde Park, surrounded by poverty on three sides and Lake Michigan on the fourth, remains an interesting if security-conscious community. In enduring the well-intended albeit naïve and racially-tinged urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s, the neighborhood lost much of its cultural scene. Bookstores, restaurants, modest rents and easy shopping were swept away as the city and the University of Chicago sought to stabilize the neighborhood.

Urban planners have learned from experience. Chicago's south side urban renewal is in a new phase as once elegant neighborhoods, beset by gang and drug violence, are slowly being revitalized. Renewal experts are now inclined to recognize that a balanced agenda of priorities, needs and rights—however messy—produces better results than unilateral action. For years, the owners of Hyde Park's expensive new townhouses and condominiums feared deserted streets and the lack of

social amenities. A few of the neighborhood's institutions did persist, too quirky and beloved to pass into history. One such eatery, *Valois*, even received a scholarly treatment in Michael Duneier's *Slims Table: Race, Respectability and Masculinity* (1992).

Hyde Park accommodated immigrants and diversity long before our current national realities took shape. As a child in Hyde Park, I did not fully realize the unique quality of my environment. Ten years after World War II, we had many Japanese American children in our school. There were a few Middle Eastern and Latino kids, and many African Americans, reflecting a broad spectrum of socio-economic status. The neighborhood also had a German Jewish Refugee community. I saw my first death camp tattoos as a child—shown not to frighten, but to educate. Our refugee pediatrician served with the American army in the war. Yet on those rare occasions when we needed a specialist, his referral always came with the reassurance that... "*He was the best in Germany.*"

Length of residency, whether measured by years, decades, generations or legal designation (refugee, green-card, citizen etc.), does not seem to affect our interest in immigration and identity. Family origins are an important part of self in the United States.

Language, culture, and ethnicity, already multidimensional phenomena, achieve further complexity through the assimilative process. Even for those eager to cast off their origins, contexts become layered and past selves become intertwined with the process of becoming. Almost every family can find immigration surprises.

My father was a product of Czarist Russia, coming through Ellis Island at age four in 1912, speaking Yiddish, Russian and some Polish. His assimilative coming of age was attending the Black Sox Trial in 1921—until a policeman escorted him and my uncle Al from the premises. The trial concerned the allegation that several players on the Chicago White Sox team had "thrown" the World Series in exchange for cash payments. The Series outcome was, in turn, tied to a betting scheme. Apparently this was not considered a suitable venue for kids to learn about the judicial system. His long life was typical of many immigrants; attuned to his various cultural identities, his ethnicity and languages were filtered and fine-tuned through public school and the neighborhood—Chicago's northwest side enclave of Humboldt Park. The area remains a rough and tumble vehicle of assimilation, serving Latino and newly arrived African Americans, as it once did successively for Germans, Scandinavians and Eastern Europeans.

A voracious reader, my father Fred Earl Glotzer, a multilingual "all American" guy (with no accent detectable in Chicago), followed the time-honored pattern of European immigrants in allowing his children glimpses of his ethnic world but not the



Richard Glotzer

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elementary and secondary school (about 5 km or 3 miles). When I went to high school, my transportation was upgraded to a bicycle for a one way distance of 15 km (or 9 miles). When it rained too hard to pedal a bike on muddy roads, I carried my bike to and from school. Because college is only available in the capital city Phnom Penh, I had to move to the city. With all of the difficulties that I and other people in the village experienced, I could still manage to come to the university to study psychology. Among all members in my family generations, I am the first one to come to college. Through my readings, I identified a U.S. faculty member, Dr. Miriam Mulsow, who had research interests similar to mine. She provided long-distance mentorship, and I was eventually able to come to the U.S. to pursue a doctoral degree in family studies at Texas Tech University.

Although many war-surviving parents may tell stories differently to their children, my father told his stories in an inspirational way

to help us to think positively about life and how to use one's intelligence to ward off problems. My father's skills in making connections for his survival are reflected in my own ability to use networking skills to achieve things in my life. For example, the fact that I was able to go to the university and pay my living was made possible by a supportive cousin who asked me to work as a night guard at the nonprofit organization at which he worked. Not only did this job help me survive my whole university life, but also I was able to make a lot of connections with different people. I came to Texas Tech because I connected with a faculty member at the university. This connection then helped me come to the U.S. for my Master's and later my Ph.D. degree. Of course, I would not be here if my father and mother had not endured through the war, but it is also possible that I would not soon be Dr. Sothy Eng if my father had not used his survival stories to inspire, motivate and teach me crucial life lessons. ■

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linguistic tools to traverse it. Instruction countered assimilation and deprived adults of a practical means of conversing in our presence while we remained clueless, stuck with our Pidgin Yiddish. Through EllisIsland.Com my brothers and I found that Fred (Fritz to old friends) was born Ephraim Mendel Glotzer, a fact he never shared with us.

The trials and tribulations of names is an old and on-going immigration saga. Region, custom and current events have often influenced spellings and pronunciations. Thus the venerable southern surname *Taliaferro*, was decreed to be pronounced *Tolliver* by colonists seeking simplification. *Mainwaring* became *Mannering* and *Dubois* has morphed into a variety of spellings and pronunciations. The immigrant intoning forlornly in Yiddish to an immigration officer, “sein fergussein” (always forgotten), instantly became *Sean Fergusson*, changing both his name and ethnicity.

My mother, Romana Ruffina Fierro, was born in Terlingua, Texas, near the Mexican border. The Fierros’ hometown goes by the improbable name of Delicias, in the state of Chihuahua. Migrating those 80 miles dramatically changed the family’s intergenerational trajectory, if not its immediate fortunes. (The words themselves come from the Latin; *Migro*, to change conditions or residence; *immigro*, to move into.) A scholarship girl at several southwestern Methodist boarding schools, my mother came to the University of Chicago for graduate work where she met my father. My parents’ early mixed marriage kept them in Hyde Park, where they were relatively free of the prejudices of the early 1940s.

In her childhood, my mother’s family settled in El Paso close to extended family in adjoining Juarez, across the border. For countless families like ours, the border is culturally disingenuous while remaining a harsh political and economic reality. The drug wars have rendered Juarez’s once vibrant open air markets deserted. Normally outgoing and friendly *Juarenos* yearn for normalcy. Thus far neither Mexico nor the United States have been willing to address the tinderbox of structural issues behind the present situation. Symptoms are treated as causes and national honor and xenophobia are used to stifle awkward questions.

Traditional ways of viewing immigration issues are outdated because of the ease of travel, communication, and a more recent awareness within immigrant communities that they are entitled to basic civil rights. The “sink or swim” approach to learning English, augmented by an enclave of home language, remains the experience of many immigrants. Still, it is possible to live within some communities and not need English or more than a rudimentary assimilation. Much depends on the size and influence of the immigrant

As a child in Hyde Park, I did not fully realize the unique quality of my environment.

group and the political investment government has in them. Thus the second generation of Vietnamese boat people, like the first few waves of Cubans, became part of a political statement about democracy and capitalism. While the sacrifice and work ethic of these groups cannot be minimized, they received more support than others who were simply escaping poverty.

Immigrants do not always seek permanent residency. Lower costs for travel create circular migration; maintaining family continuities and establishing remittances are an important economic factor that even governments cannot ignore. Bangladesh’s five million migrant workers, spread over Asia, the Middle East and Europe, remit approximately 10 billion dollars to their families annually. Labor is the country’s chief export and source of foreign exchange. For Mexico, remittances are the second largest source of foreign exchange behind oil. Nearly two billion dollars a year is sent home from Mexico’s approximately six million workers in the United States.

Over half of migratory workers in the world are women. As a young man I worked in a psychiatric facility served by many excellent Filipino nurses. A tightly knit social group, they all worked two full time jobs and sent most of their earnings home. Remittances paid for homes, school fees, and the needs of extended families. Their remittances, in the billions annually, reduce poverty and contribute to the fifteen billion dollars remitted to the Philippines annually by nurses, skilled construction personnel, and other workers.

Their hopes are for successfully launched children and a retirement free from want. Their struggles are a lesson in the meaning of real sacrifice.

One of the most interesting developments in immigration is in the area of language. Periodically counties or municipalities place initiatives before the public to make English the official language of this or that place. But English has long benefited from the adoption of words from other languages – even Chaucer’s English would not satisfy the purity test, having adopted thousands of words from French. Words have found their way into common English usage from many languages over time. The British experience in India has yielded some interesting additions.

Words from colonial India include *Bungalow*, a type of house with overhanging porches favored by the British in the province of *Bangalore*. *POSH* commonly means a place or setting of high quality or extravagance. *POSH* is actually an acronym, noted on British ships for important business travelers, colonial families and civil servants going to and from the tropics; it stands for *portside out, starboard home*. This configuration, like the deep porches of the bungalow, was protection from the sun.

Borrowing and redefining goes on continually aided by travel and the exponential growth of the internet and other mass communications. There are growing numbers of variants of English including *World English*. Immigration and migration have generated unique forms of language such as Chinglish, Hinglish and Spanglish, which rely on the bilingual fluency of the speakers. Mid-sentence code switching is remarkable: it takes into account the multiple word meanings and colloquialisms. Pidgin languages are less common for immigrants in the United States. Typically such languages are jerry-rigged systems with limited English vocabulary. First developed by the speakers of indigenous languages for dealing with the colonial authorities, word placement, repetition and intonation, can be remarkably nuanced. Language, like food, is an important means through which immigrants can influence a host culture.

That the Obamas chose to reside in Hyde Park is good news for advocates of urban

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Bridging two cultures: endeavors of Asian Indian immigration

by Nirisha K. Garimella, Ph.D., Adjunct Instructor, Department of Family Sciences, Texas Woman's University, nkgarimella@gmail.com

Traditional Asian Indian values

To understand Asian Indians (Indians henceforth) in the U.S., it helps to have a picture of Indians in India. India is a land of diverse religions, cultures, beliefs and systems of living. In many parts of the country, the traditional joint or extended family system still prevails. In this system, besides the biological parents, the child's grandparents and various other relatives living together in a single household are responsible for raising the child. However, with increased urbanization, nuclear families have become common. The mother's role is predominantly that of childrearing, while the father's is that of breadwinning. Even in nuclear families, the whole community, rather than just the individual family, is involved in raising the child. The whole family and the elders in particular have the obligation and duty of imparting social and religious values, culture and tradition in the child. Indian culture values conformity and collective thinking rather than individualism. Even with the advent of Western media, increased presence of multinational companies and the rise in the number of women in the workforce, arranged marriages are still popular and divorces are considered a stigma even now. The family often makes decisions regarding education and employment of the children, financial matters, health care, and other major areas.

Profile of Indians in the United States

Indians have been immigrating to the United States since the beginning of the 20th century. Many of the recent arriving Indians come for either higher education or employment. According to a U.S. Census report in 2000, nearly 64% of Indians have earned a bachelor's degree. Nearly 80% of Indian men and 54% of Indian women living in the U.S. are part of the U.S. labor force. Close to 60% of Indians are in professional or managerial positions, when compared to nearly 34% of all workers. Indian men and women have the highest median income in the U.S. of all ethnic groups.

Due to the British *Raj* (rule) in India, the British system of education is inherent in the

Indian structure, and English is one of the official languages of the country. Often Indians immigrating to the U.S. are fluent in English and are well aware of Western culture. Close to 80% of Indians in the U.S. speak very good English in their households. Their language skills combined with their educational proficiency aid them tremendously as they encounter and adjust to the Western culture.

Adjustment of immigrants entering a new culture

Moving to a new country entails modifications in food, dress, socialization, and daily habits, to name a few. Researchers on immigrants have found that adjustment to a new culture, though dynamic and long-term, does not significantly change the values and attitudes of people.

One of the earliest works in the area of assimilation was by Milton Gordon in the 1960s. His theoretical perspectives on assimilation were based on three ideologies. The Anglo-conformity viewpoint assumes that the immigrants desired to emulate and replace their culture with the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. The "melting pot" ideology postulated a blending of cultures in order to create a brand new culture. While the Anglo-conformity and melting pot perspectives emphasize a replacement of home culture for the immigrants, a cultural pluralism ideology highlights the maintenance of separate sub-cultures.

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life—and diversity in general. Their presence sends a signal. Being part of a diverse community implies curiosity, tolerance, and openness to others. Public anonymity and privacy remain part of most urban landscapes; individuals and families may elect to be part of the ebb and flow of such communities or elect to ignore them. Sometimes communities change and diversity comes knocking. Chicanos in Lexington, Nebraska; Somalis in Kansas City; Hmong in Minneapolis; and other immigrant groups in widely-diverse



Hari, Jay and Nirishi Garimella

From a cultural pluralistic perspective, ethnicity of immigrants always prevails. Immigration researchers have found that recent immigrants to the U.S. strive to preserve their cultural heritage rather than adopting the American lifestyle. This lends itself to the cultural pluralism rather than the melting pot ideology.

Eating habits, style of clothing, changes in interaction with spouse and level of independence are some issues immigrants face. Immigrants go through a feeling of being lost and believe that they attract unnecessary attention due to their ethnicity. In an attempt to camouflage this difference and bridge the gap, they make changes in their lifestyle. According to Brit Oppendal, Espen Roysamb, and David Lackland Sam, acculturation is a developmental process towards adaptation and gaining competence within more than

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settings challenge our comfort zones, identities and the economic order. The large influxes of immigrant populations bring new challenges, yet as a nation we have a fairly good track record of working through the acculturation of newcomers. If from a global perspective, we are less than admirable stewards of our economy, we remain expansive and welcoming in our human relations.

Mr. President, we'll see you around the neighborhood. ■

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one cultural setting. All immigrants do not adapt the same way to their new environment. Different modes of acculturation have been proposed by researchers: one in which the individual remains allied to the values of the culture of origin (separation); another one in which the individual becomes overly Westernized and rejects the ancestral ways (assimilation); or one in which the individual attempts to integrate aspects of both cultures that he or she feels are most amenable to the development of self-esteem and self-identity (integration); and individual does not value either culture (marginalization).

Adjustments of Indian immigrants

One aspect of adjustment that Indian immigrants must make is to balance the Indian and American values. Cultural balancing (acculturation) is vital at an individual level and a relational level. Acculturation to the U.S. is not static. Adjustments are ongoing and multi-directional. Different individuals in the family may have varied levels of interaction with the “mainstream” culture. These adjustments vary between the genders. Research has suggested that women have a more balanced adjustment because their traditional roles dictate that they make swift and proper adjustments.

Adjustment of gender roles is one aspect of immigrant adjustment. As women strive for higher education, employment, and independence, immigrant couples seem to be becoming more egalitarian. Research found that Indian husbands in the U.S. helped their working wives in household tasks, but remained the authority figure in the house. Possible problems in this area are due to a different pace of acculturation and adjustment between the wife and husband.

As part of my doctoral research last year, I conducted a qualitative study to understand the acculturation process of Indian immigrants. Part of the interviews of these immigrants focused on the balancing of the Indian and Western cultures. All of the participants were married, but in most cases, only one spouse was interviewed. Some views on the balancing of the two cultures were (as expressed by women):

“I rate myself as 5 [1 being very Indian and 10 being Westernized as defined by the participants]. I am on the [dotted] line. If required on an American basis, I can step

my foot on that side. If I am required on an Indian level, I can put my step there. My husband [works] with American people only. All the customers are American customers. At home he is more Indianized, at work he is more Westernized.”

“Maybe I would have started out being 2 or 3 [more Indian] and now I am a 5. Probably I will go to 6 or 7. I don’t think I will end up all the way towards a 10 [completely Westernized]. I don’t think I am going to stay all the way close to it.”

Parenting is another area in which balancing of the two cultures becomes vital for most Indian families. Researchers have noted that Indian couples tend to be more Westernized prior to the arrival of children into their lives. Having children changes their lifestyle, with

Indian culture values conformity
and collective thinking
rather than individualism.

a tendency thereafter toward greater emphasis on Indian traditions and culture. Many strategies are employed in maintaining Indian traditions. According to Parmatma Saran, performing rituals, going to temples, celebrating festivals, spending more time with Indian friends and visiting India more often are some strategies parents employ to maintain a stronger bond with Indian culture.

In the author’s interviews of participants who had children, some views expressed were:

“I remember I bought a swimsuit for [toddler daughter] and he [her husband] says, ‘whatever you want to wear, wear it right now. She is not going to wear it when she is 16’. [He thinks] that he can control his daughter the way Indian parents do.”

“My primary reason [to send her two girls to Hindu religion Sunday school] was [because] the American culture is going fast in their head.”

“My kids are very flexible. When they go out for an American dinner, they can manage well, with the food, the kind of food that they serve, or we decide on. At home, I am making only Indian food.”

“[I talk to my daughter in our mother tongue]. That’s my goal because I know she’s going

to learn English in school anyway; might as well learn our language right now.”

An Indian child born and raised in the U.S. is often referred to as “ABCD- American Born Confused *Desi*”. The word *Desi* means Indian in the Hindi language. The fear of most Indian parents is that their child may become Westernized, shun Indian culture and hence may face identity confusion. The child may find it difficult to assimilate into the American culture or connect to the Indian system. Compounding this confusion is the fact that adolescence is a Western concept, absent in traditional Indian culture. The parents struggle with understanding how to raise a child in a culture that they were not raised in. Freedom, independent thinking and privacy are commonly debated issues. These parents have to bring up their child with an ever-emerging dissimilarity and discrepancy between their own upbringing and that of their growing child. In addition, the parents are themselves juggling with demands of cultural adjustments.

How family professionals can use this information

Family professionals may encounter Indian immigrants in different realms of their careers: as professionals, friends, neighbors, their children’s friends or as casual passersby. They need to realize that bridging the cultural gap is not in the active thinking process for immigrants before coming to the U.S. One needs to understand that traditional Indian culture is almost diametrically opposite to the Western culture, and that it poses unique challenges to Indian individuals. Lack of social support in the U.S. and stigma attached to seeking professional support makes adjustment in the new environment a daunting task. The fact that there is a constant balancing of the two cultures at an individual and relational level makes parenting and family living a continuous struggle. Immigrants overall are faced with challenges of a new culture, a new lifestyle, new demands and hence new stressors. Awareness and education in the area enables family professionals to understand, anticipate, and practice in a way that benefits both cultures at individual and institutional levels.

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Voices of Latino immigrant parents: lessons learned through the collaborative development of a parent education program to prevent substance use by Latino teens

by Rose Allen, M.Ed, Extension Educator-Family Relations and Professor, University of Minnesota Extension, allen027@umn.edu; Michele Allen, M.D., M.S. - University of Minnesota Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine and the Program in Health Disparities Research; and G. Ali Hurtado, Research Specialist, University of Minnesota Extension

Introduction

There is evidence that the norms, values and behaviors of immigrant Latino parents serve as a protective factor for their teens and reduce the incidence of substance abuse in this population. We also know that providing parent education and support that affirms and strengthens these norms is a critical part of helping first generation Latino parents and their teens make the transition to life in the United States.

Few parent education programs have successfully incorporated the values and daily realities of Latino parents into a curriculum. We will describe the process, rationale and lessons learned in the development of “*Padres Informados/Jovenes Preparados*.” (Informed Parents—Prepared Youth.) To do this, we utilized a collaborative participatory approach that engaged parents in the development of the parent education themes, tested the curriculum with Latino parents and checked out our assumptions with focus groups. The entire process was conducted in Spanish and in partnership with organizations serving the immigrant Latino community in Minneapolis, MN.

The situation

In Minnesota, the growth rate of the immigrant population has exceeded that of traditional gateway states such as California and Texas, with the Latino population experiencing the fastest growth rate during the past two decades. The Latino immigrant population in Minnesota is largely composed of Mexicans (71%) followed by Central Americans (8%) and Puerto Ricans (5%).

While tobacco and other substance use have declined in recent years among adolescents, rates continue to be unacceptably high and disparities in use between White and Latino

youth exist. Recent national data such as Monitoring the Future and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) suggest that compared to Whites, middle school age Latino adolescents are at equal or increased risk for lifetime tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and other illicit drug use. Given the elevated rates of high school dropout in this population, however, this school-based survey likely under-represents the true smoking rates of Latino youth. Given that nearly a third of youth who begin smoking will go on to become regular smokers, and that cigarette smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death in our society, preventing initiation of tobacco and other substance use in the large and growing population of Latino youth is an important public health concern. We also know that rates of tobacco, alcohol, inhalant, and poly-substance use increase in Latino youth with acculturation. Therefore, given that the Latinos in Minnesota are largely recent arrivals, without intervention, it is likely that rates of tobacco and other substance use will rise.

Immigrant Latino families, parenting, and substance use

A portion of the protective effect against substance use seen in less acculturated adolescents may be conferred by the norms, values, and behaviors immigrant Latino parents bring from their countries of origin. For example, researchers have identified the traditional Latino value of familism—belief in the importance of family including extended family—as a protective against alcohol and inhalant use. A number of social factors may



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mediate the relationship between acculturation and participation in health-risk behaviors for Latino youth, including parental monitoring and greater presence of extended family in teens' social networks.

Acculturation may affect these family relationships and thus the propensity for teens to become involved in health-risk behaviors. For example, two longitudinal studies indicate that increased acculturation leads to decreased familism and increased alcohol use, and to decreased parental involvement and increased proneness to engaging in problem behaviors. Conversely, Latino adolescents may become more peer-oriented as they acculturate. Young adolescence is an important time for preventive interventions because substance use increases rapidly as teens enter high school. This is also a time when conflicts between the cultural values of parents and those of Americanized peers may emerge. Qualitative findings from Minnesota suggest that these factors contribute to Latino youth smoking.

One strategy to prevent substance use in youth is through promotion of positive parenting practices. There is evidence that the norms, values and behaviors of immigrant Latino parents may serve as a protective

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factor for their teens and reduce the incidence of substance abuse in this population. Providing parent education and support that affirms and strengthens these norms is a critical part of helping first generation Latino parents and their teens make the transition to life in the United States.

One such effort occurred in partnerships between the University of Minnesota and different local community organizations including a health clinic, public school, and a Catholic church. Latino parents of teenagers were part of an advisory board, or participants in one of the four focus groups conducted. Throughout the development of a curriculum and piloting of the project in four sites in Minneapolis, we heard many voices of the parents regarding critical issues that should be addressed in any parent education to prevent Latino adolescent risk behavior.

What we learned

Latino immigrant parents are a heterogeneous group. In one class there will be participants who bring unique histories and beliefs and come from very different places: geographically, culturally, educationally and spiritually. It is important to check assumptions and encourage parents to apply the learning to their individual needs.

Tengo mezclados mis hijos, yo soy de Guatemala y el papá de México, y ellos al inicio me hicieron la misma pregunta, y yo les dije: Mire papito, usted tiene sangre Mexicana, tiene sangre Guatemalteca, pero nació aquí. *My children are mixed; I am from Guatemala and their father is from Mexico, and when they were younger, they asked me the same question and I told them: Well, my son, you have Mexican blood, and also blood from Guatemala, but you were born here. (U.S.)*

Reflection on how the participants were raised in their home country is an important component. As concepts are introduced, setting aside time to reflect on their experiences helps build understanding of the process of bi-cultural parenting. Reflection also supports and values the many cultural perspectives of the parents.

El me pregunta de dónde viene mi apellido porque somos La Ceja, de donde viene. Le digo pues viene de Los Aztecas, yo soy del estado de Puebla...

He asks me where my last name comes from,

why we are “La Ceja,” and “where does that name come from?” I told him that it comes from the Aztecs; I am from the state of Puebla.

Content needs to be delivered in a way that allows participants to interact – for these parents, the ability to connect, share stories and provide support to each other is a critical factor in the success of the program.

Aprendí a escuchar el compartimiento de las otras personas, consejos.

I learned to listen to the message shared from other people, suggestions.

Aprendí que tengo que expresar mi sentimiento... el respeto y ser más expresivo y amoroso con ellos (mis hijos).

I learned that I have to express my feelings ... about respect and to be more expressive and loving with them (my children).

Three key concepts – *familism, respecto* and *confianza* are critical to the cultural beliefs about parenting and family function in Latino families.

Many immigrant Latino parents come from an oral culture; we found a variety of literacy levels. Participant handouts need to be brief and visual. Activities need to use limited reading and writing by participants. We addressed the literacy issue by deliberately organizing small group activities where at least one participant has more advanced writing skills. This person was assigned to be the “note taker.”

Another challenge is the difference in Spanish dialects among participants whose first language is from their indigenous culture. It was important to acknowledge these differences and ask parents to respect variations regarding language and words used between countries.

Flexibility is key. Work with a curriculum that allows facilitators to address issues as they come up. A scripted approach does not work – not attending to current needs and questions will undermine the learning.

Be aware of the mental health and crisis needs of the parents. It is very important to have clear boundaries about your role as an educator and a plan for referral to therapy and crisis intervention resources. It is also

important to clarify that this group is an educational one, not therapeutic.

Acknowledge the reality of the families – economic hardship, work pressures and lack of time, stress, yearning to speak your own language and the extra energy it takes to live in two cultures *are daily realities*. Self-care is an important component to include in every session.

Aprendí que cuando este estresada. No es un buen momento para hablar con mis hijos. *I learned that when I am stressed, it is not a good time to talk to my children.*

Three key concepts – *familism, respecto* and *confianza* are critical to the cultural beliefs about parenting and family function in Latino families. *Familism* is the belief in the importance of family, higher parental monitoring and a greater presence of extended family in teen’s social networks. *Respecto* refers to the value placed on family hierarchy. *Confianza* describes the process of building trust between family members.

Nuestro valor de los hispano está basado alrededor del respeto, eso se ha inculcado en la cultura hispana desde muy pequeño, *Our Hispanic values are based on respect. This is engrained as a part of the Hispanic culture from a very early age.*

En mi casa siempre hay, están mi abuela, estoy yo, están las tías, los tíos, a veces han niñas que vienen a mi casa y se quedan toda la semana y yo le digo OK.

In my house there is always somebody, the grandmother, I am there, the aunts and uncles are there....sometimes the children come to my house and stay the whole week and I said it is OK.

Transition is an overall theme for Latino immigrant families. Each family member is making a transition from one world to another. At the same time, the teens are making the transition from childhood to adulthood as well as living with a foot in the world of their family and the world of U.S. culture. Everyone is navigating uncharted waters.

Porque uno está tratando de mantener su cultura en un mundo que no es el propio, es doble el trabajo.

Because one is trying to maintain one’s own culture in a world that’s not their own, it is twice the work.

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Early childhood education and development as a means to integration and social inclusion of immigrant families in new host societies

by Colleen K. Vesely, M.A., colleen.vesely@naeyc.org, National Association for the Education of Young Children and the University of Maryland School of Public Health Department of Family Science, and Mark R. Ginsberg, Ph.D., National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

After numerous sleepless days in an early childhood center in Ghent, Belgium, an immigrant child who fled from violence in Somalia with his mother listens to a recording of his mother singing a familiar lullaby in his native tongue as he drifts off to sleep. Another mother from Africa teaches an early childhood practitioner some of her family's native language; these words are posted with the Dutch translation on a large chart on the wall of the classroom that includes 14 other languages. Teachers use children's native languages to communicate certain basic ideas as they begin to learn Dutch. This practice not only assists children as they learn a new language, but it helps parents feel more comfortable knowing their children will be understood while they are at work. In Aubry, France, parents are invited to stay in the early childhood center for one week to teach the practitioners important care techniques for their children and to help their children adjust to being cared for outside their home by a different person. Morning "circle time" in an early childhood program in Berlin,

Germany is conducted in multiple languages that reflect the languages of the children in the classroom. Children take turns counting the number of students in the classroom in Turkish and, together as a class, they sing a morning welcome song in German. The examples described are of early childhood education and development (ECED) programs serving immigrants in Europe as documented by Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training (DECET), a network of European organizations committed to diversity and inclusive early childhood education.

These scenes are not only typical in Europe—they are stories that are common in the U.S. as well. Today, 20% of the children living in the United States are either children of (one or both) parents who were born outside of the U.S., or they themselves were not born in the U.S. and immigrated with their families. The challenges these children and families face are both unique, in many respects, and similar to some of the challenges that confront native children and families. Innovative approaches to working with immigrant families that have been undertaken by exemplary early childhood education and development programs is the focus of a recent international project at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation of the Netherlands.

Despite the importance of ECED in lives of young children, and particularly young children and families who have immigrated to a new country, very little comprehensive research has been conducted on how these programs support immigrant families in the U.S. and in other parts of the world. We have very limited understanding regarding how early childhood programs and immigrant families are working together and what are the most effective practices being utilized to ensure that immigrant children



Colleen Vesely



Mark Ginsberg

reach their greatest potential. Additionally, researchers focused on ECED and immigrant families assert that understanding how certain ECED practices and policies support immigrant children and families will help improve services for non-immigrant children as well. Given this dearth of information, this new international project coordinated by NAEYC in the United States is underway, aimed at understanding the gaps in knowledge and practice related to ECED services and immigrant families in the U.S. and abroad.

Background

According to the United Nations, immigrants comprise at least 15% of the population in over 50 countries and families with young children are a significant proportion of international migrants. As previously noted, one in every five children in the U.S. has at least one foreign born parent, while one in every three school age children in England, and one in every two children born in Belgium live in such families. Families with young children immigrate to countries with different cultures, languages, and economic infrastructures for a variety of reasons ranging from enhanced economic and educational opportunities to freedom from war and oppression. Transitions into new countries and cultures can be both positive and challenging for immigrant children and families. Being in a new place may bring relief from dangerous

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Summary

The "Padres Informados/Jovenes Preparados" curriculum is a work in progress. The collaborative participatory approach used to develop it gave voice both to the research about the benefits of a positive parenting approach and to immigrant Latino parents who were able to define strategies that reflected their cultural values and traditional views of family function. A pre and post survey showed significant change in knowledge, attitudes and parenting practice, when compared to the control group. Next steps include offering the curriculum to a larger sample of parents and evaluating effectiveness based on the outcomes of the youth in the families. ■

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or economically challenging situations in families' countries of origin, but it may also create struggles in the new host country related to learning a new language, finding employment, living without the immediate physical and emotional support of kin networks, and generally transitioning into a new society.

Many immigrant families, particularly those who are marginalized or socially excluded from the dominant culture in some way (whether it be related to socioeconomic status, language, or religion) possess a unique combination of characteristics that influence their experience of integration into the new society. Despite facing challenges of limited proficiency in the new host language, poverty, low levels of education, and obtaining documentation for residency and employment, immigrant families possess numerous strengths that can buffer these challenges; a greater likelihood of living in two-parent families than their non-immigrant counterparts, strong ties with kith and kin, optimism for their children and families' futures, better health outcomes than their second and third generation counterparts, strong work ethics, and children who are being raised biculturally and bilingually. It is necessary to consider all of these characteristics that immigrant families possess to best understand how immigrant families' resources can be used to moderate challenges they face. Specifically, ECED programs, as potentially the first educational institutions that immigrants come in contact with, can recognize, understand, and embrace immigrant families' strengths and help mitigate negative developmental and academic outcomes for immigrant children. Research indicates that high quality ECED experiences reduce the negative impact of multiple risk factors, including improving pre-reading, literacy and numeracy skills as well as socio-emotional development.

Researchers in the U.S. and abroad note that ECED programs are an important aspect of increasing immigrant families' integration into and inclusion in new host societies. Given this, some European researchers are broadening the definition of quality—particularly in relation to early childhood education and development (ECED)—to consider the functions of child care, including economic, educational, and social functions.

Quality, according to Michel Vandebroek, a Belgian early childhood researcher, is indicated by, “finding the right balance,” among these three functions through macro-level policy and micro-level programmatic initiatives. The *economic* function of ECED is to provide care for children such that parents can be employed. The *educational* function of ECED is to give children developmental opportunities necessary for cognitive and socio-emotional development which is important for later educational success. Finally, and generally least thought of and least researched, the *social* function of ECED programs refers to the utilization of these programs to integrate diverse, marginalized groups. This conceptualization of quality, which includes the social and emotional function of ECED programs, is particularly relevant for programs that serve immigrant families, as it considers early childhood environments as vehicles for integration of immigrant children and families into host societies.

Given the importance of ECED programs in the lives of young children and particularly in the lives of immigrant children and families, it is necessary to think in a systematic way about how ECED settings in the U.S. and abroad can develop programs that effectively support immigrant children's development and families' integration into new societies.

The Project

The Bernard van Leer Foundation, an organization dedicated to supporting research that contributes to “significant positive change for children up to the age of eight who are growing up in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage,” is funding a project at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the largest early childhood professional association in the world (with a membership of 90,000), focused on understanding the status of ECED services for immigrant families. The primary task of this international exploratory project incorporates a review of the current knowledge base regarding the quality of ECED services available to immigrant children in the United States and elsewhere. It is intended that from this exploration of ECED, many questions for future research on immigrant families and ECED programs in a variety of countries and political contexts will emerge.

The first phase of the project includes developing a comprehensive inventory of what is currently known about the well-being of young children (birth to 5) from immigrant families who participate in early childhood programs around the world. Specifically, the demographic and contextual characteristics of immigrant families with young children in the U.S. and abroad will be explored. The second phase of the project is focused on creating an inventory of high quality programs working with immigrant families in unique and exemplary ways. To this end, intense, ethnographic case studies of six ECED centers in the U.S. and other countries will be conducted. These case studies will include observations and in-depth interviews with immigrant families, ECED teachers and directors in ECED settings to understand how specific practices related to various domains of early childhood programming (e.g.: language development, parental engagement, professional development, mental health and socioemotional development of children, practitioner-child interactions, and diversity of staff) are organized specifically to work with immigrant families. These case studies will lead us to the final phase of the project which will include a report of the ways that ECED programs in the U.S. and abroad are working with immigrant families across multiple domains of ECED programming, the gaps in our knowledge and ECED practices related to immigrant families, and ways to address these holes in our understanding of immigrant families with young children.

Throughout all three phases of the project, NAEYC will liaise with, share information between, and seek advice from relevant informants across multiple countries/regions (Australia, Africa, Western and Eastern Europe, Central and South America and the U.S.). The primary way of doing this is through the formation of an International Advisory Group comprised of experts from around the world who research immigrant children and families and ECED. This group recently met in Washington, DC and will meet again in February, 2010. Overall, this exciting international project will enhance understandings around the knowledge base and practices, which support ECED services directed to immigrant families and will ultimately result in a worldwide investigation of ECED service delivery issues, specifically related to immigrant children and families. ■