

**SOCIAL NETWORKS AND COMMUNITY AMONG INTERNATIONAL WIVES OF  
ASIAN ORIGIN IN PITTSBURGH, PA**

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There were approximately 3,000 international students, scholars and their dependent spouses and children associated with the University of Pittsburgh in 2003-2004. As the accompanying wife of an international student or scholar proceeds to take care of practical home and family tasks in a new and unfamiliar environment—the U.S.—she may experience negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety, frustration, depression, isolation, etc. These adverse outcomes are a significant public health problem for the population of international wives because they decrease quality of life and sense of wellbeing. The symptoms can also have negative affects on the husbands and dependent children of the international wives. Using an ecosystemic approach, the current study contributes to the literature on international student wives by exploring the following research questions at the intersection of the *individual* and *meso*-system levels of interaction: (1) What tasks must international wives accomplish in the U.S.? (2) How do international wives access community in order to more successfully accomplish these tasks? (3) What ideas do wives have for how their communities could be enhanced? Using qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven Asian wives of Asian international students and scholars, the current study is an exploration of the tasks that international wives feel they need to accomplish in Pittsburgh and the social systems they access. Three themes emerged from the interviews which described the wives' transition from dependency to agency, their strategies for maintaining cultural identity and the use of “virtual communities”. The study concludes with practical recommendations of population-specific social support interventions which may be implemented by public health practitioners and other interested purveyors of mental and social support.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Institute for International Education first began collecting data on international students in the U.S. in 1954 in its annual *Open Doors Report*. In 2003-2004, there were over 572,509 international students at U.S. institutions. There were approximately 3,000 international students, scholars and their dependent spouses and children associated with the University of Pittsburgh in 2003-2004 (Office of International Services, personal communication).

Most international students experience some period of psychosocial adjustment to life and studies in the U.S. (Char, 1977). While this culture shock can be disorienting, demoralizing, and disheartening, there generally exist multiple opportunities for international students to work through these feelings and alleviate them by access to and use of services provided through university counseling centers (for serious mental health issues), academic support groups (such as “Doctoral Students Association”), and the support of fellow students, colleagues and professors. International students may also have the support of their spouses who have come with them to the U.S. The personal support, availability of a native language speaker in the home and home administration (housekeeping, cooking, child-care, transportation) the spouse provides may aid the student’s transition to the U.S. and maintenance of life in the U.S.

The vast majority of dependent spouses are wives, in F-2, J-2 or H-4 visa classifications. These visa classes are linked to that of the “primary” or the international student/scholar and there are often restrictions on if and how much a dependent spouse may work in the U.S., and whether she may have a social security number. Thus, many international wives take on the role of homemaker while sojourning in the U.S. For some, this is a role they have had in their home country; for others, it is a new role that they must adjust to from previous roles as physicians, lawyers, scientists, researchers, teachers, etc. So while international wives are adjusting to the

culture of the U.S., some are also adjusting to the new role and tasks of homemaker, and the dependence of finding oneself in a new environment with a new social role.

There are many tasks a wife may need to accomplish on behalf of the family while in the U.S. including managing the household, shopping on a limited budget, preparing food, preventing illness/treating sickness of family and self, management of children's schooling, health care and social development and numerous other activities. In addition to fulfilling these kinds of homemaker's tasks, most wives will also want to establish and maintain friendships that contribute to the wife's emotional fulfillment and social support through interactions with other people.

Since the family's primary reason for sojourning to the U.S. is for the enhancement of the husband's education or career path, there may be unspoken assumptions between the husband and wife that the wife will take on the responsibility for fulfilling domestic duties so that the husband may concentrate his energy on academic life. In order to accomplish these tasks and seek their own self-fulfillment, the wives will need to make use of practical tools such as communication, transportation, health care and health insurance, support from peers, socialization with locals.

As a program manager for a local university's international student office, I have run orientation programs for international students and scholars for 3.5 years. During this time I have become aware of some of the concerns for the health, well being and quality of life among the population of international wives. I began this research as a way to explore and learn about the experiences of the local population and to begin to consider how their needs could be addressed.

## **1.1 NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES**

As an international wife proceeds to take care of practical home and family tasks in a new and unfamiliar environment—the U.S.—she may experience negative mental health outcomes such

as anxiety, frustration, depression, isolation, etc. (Cho et al., 2005, Urias, 2005). She may feel anxiety if she cannot communicate in English well enough to accomplish the tasks. She may also feel frustration if she does not have access to transportation that will enable her to accomplish these tasks. She may not have skills to drive nor financial means to have a car. Or available local public transportation may be of poorer quality than what she was used to in her home country. She may feel depressed if she does not find peers who can offer social and emotional support for cultural and personal adjustment and for managing home and family life. She may feel isolated if she cannot find a connection to the new local culture through socialization with local people. Her own health and that of her husband and children may be in danger if she is unable to access the local health care system, communicate effectively when she does access it, or deal with the American cultural values that underlie the provision of and access to U.S. health care.

When the mental health of the wife deteriorates, the health of the international student and the family may also suffer. Studies of expatriate businessmen have shown that the success and productivity of the expatriate is linked to the successful adjustment of the spouse (Black & Stephens, 1989). While not tested in an international student or scholar population, the results of Black and Stephens may be extrapolated to this population, and it may be suggested that the adjustment of the wife of an international student may have great impact on the husband's successful completion of a degree at a U.S. higher education institution. Additionally, the mental health of the international wife may impact the health of her children. Psychological studies have shown that depression in mothers affects the development of their children (Field, et al. 1990).

## **1.2 ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT**

Some of the tools an international wife needs to feel successful and happy in her home and personal life in the U.S. may necessitate learning new skills, such as learning how to speak English, learning how to drive a car, developing cross-cultural social skills and learning about

health care and insurance in the U.S. How do wives develop these skills? Quite often, skills are developed through interactions and relationships with individuals and organizations that provide social support. In Heaney and Israel's (2002) chapter on social support and its ties to health promotion interventions, they explicate the concept of social support in this way:

*Social support has been defined and measured in numerous ways. According to House (1981) social support is the functional content of relationships that can be categorized into the following four broad types of supportive behaviors or acts:*

- *Emotional support involves the provision of empathy, love, trust and caring.*
- *Instrumental support involves the provision of tangible aid and services that directly assist a person in need.*
- *Informational support involves the provision of advice suggestions and information that a person can use to address problems.*
- *Appraisal support involves the provision of information that is useful for self evaluation purpose, in other words, constructive feedback, affirmation and social comparison (p. 186).*

Through this study I aim to describe how the wives international students access social support through social networks and communities in order to accomplish tasks in the U.S. The impact of community social support on how international wives accomplish tasks, muster personal agency and maintain cultural identity has not been well studied. Previous studies on populations of women who are living in countries other than country of origin have focused on determining individual antecedents to cultural adjustment and describing the individual cultural adjustment process. Since the late 1980s, several studies have been done among wives of expatriate businessmen, and more recently, wives of international students have become a subject of interest.

### **1.3 ANTECEDENTS TO CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT**

As the number of multinational corporations has risen, an increasing number of business executives have been placed on assignment outside of their home country. Because corporations are financially invested in the success of their executives abroad and would like to ensure the success of the expatriate, a body of research has grown to explore how expatriates succeed. This

research has been reported in both human resources and psychology journals. In the 1980s, several articles that focused on articulating the experience of expatriate businessmen showed that spouses were a factor in an expatriate’s success (Black & Stephens, 1989; Harris & Moran, 1989; Harvey 1985; Tung, 1981). About 80% of expatriates are married (Black, et al., 1990) and since the success of the expatriate is linked to the success of the spouse, research about spouse adjustment began in the 1990s. One expatriate is quoted in Black and Gregersen (1991) as saying, “Employees can be 100% productive only when their families are stable” (p. 475).

Black and Gregersen (1991) conceptualize cross-cultural adjustment as “the degree of psychological comfort with various aspects of a host country” (p. 463) and suggest that it has at least two dimensions, which they articulate as general adjustment and interaction adjustment.

They also articulate six anticipatory independent variables (*previous international experience, pre-move visit, firm sought opinion of spouse, spouse motivation, firm-provided pre-departure training, self-initiated pre-departure training*) and five in-country independent variables (*time in country, social support from host country nationals (HCNs), family social support, living conditions and culture novelty*) and hypothesize that each variable is either positively or negatively correlated to two dependent variables (*general adjustment and interaction adjustment*) for the spouse (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Antecedents of adjustment in expatriate spouses.**

Anticipatory independent variables	In-country independent variables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous international experience</li> <li>• Pre-move visit (*), (#), (!)</li> <li>• Firm sought opinion of spouse (*), (#), (!)</li> <li>• Spouse motivation (#)</li> <li>• Firm-provided pre-departure training (*)</li> <li>• Self-initiated pre-departure training (#)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time in country (*), (#), (!)</li> <li>• Social support from HCNs (#)</li> <li>• Family social support (#)</li> <li>• Living conditions (*), (#), (!)</li> <li>• Culture novelty (*), (#), (!)</li> </ul>
<p>(*) Significantly related to general adjustment            (#) Significantly related to interaction adjustment            (!) Significantly related to both general adjustment and interaction adjustment            As tested by Black &amp; Gregersen, 1991.</p>	

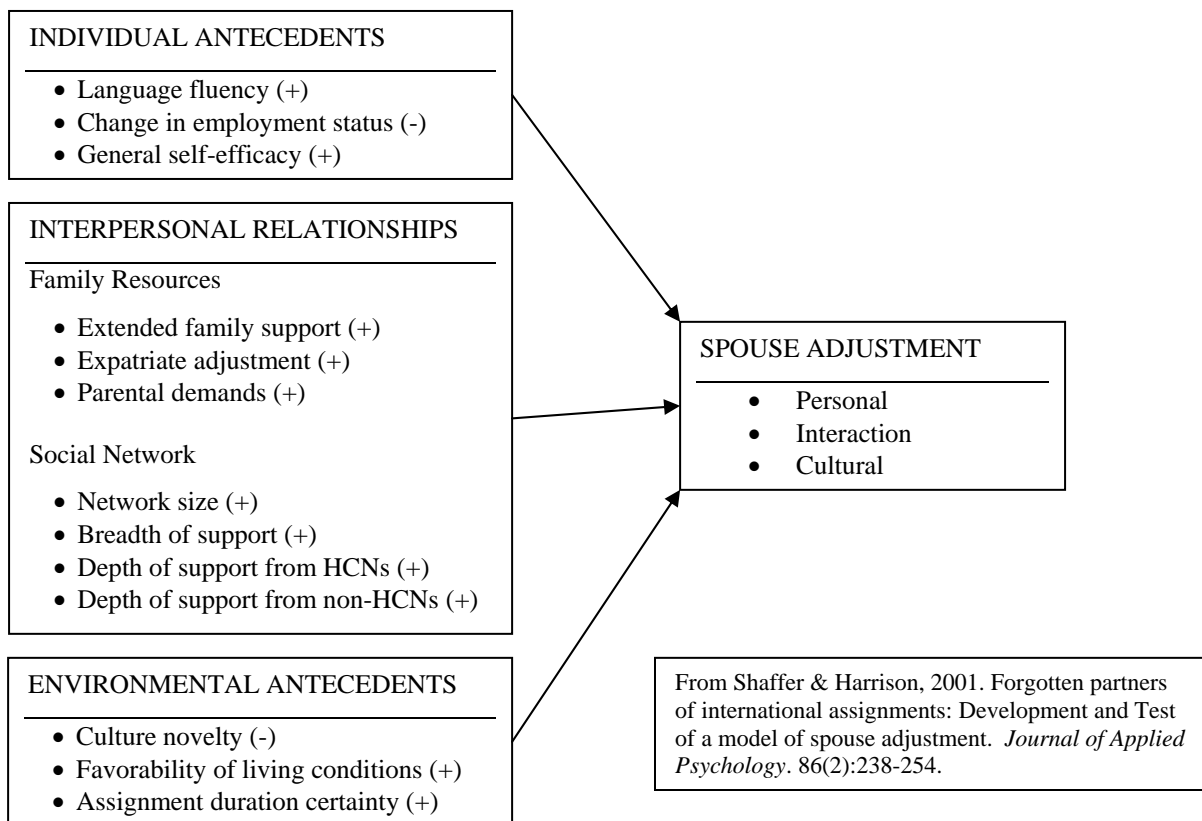
These authors mailed 1500 questionnaires to expatriate wives selected through the American Chambers of Commerce in four European and four Asian countries. The response rate was 21.4% (321 surveys returned). A one-way ANOVA analysis of the results showed that level of spouse general adjustment and interaction adjustment varied by country of assignment. Correlations showed that six of the eleven variables were significantly related to general adjustment (*pre-move visits, firm seeking spouse opinion, firm-provided training, total time in country, living conditions, culture novelty*), nine of the eleven variables were significantly related to interaction adjustment, (all the variables which were related to general adjustment except *firm-provided training* but also *self-initiated training, favorableness of spouse's opinion, social support from host country nationals and social support from family*) and five of the eleven were significantly related to both general and interaction adjustment (*pre-move visits, firm seeking spouse opinion, total time in country, living conditions and culture novelty*). The data showed that the only variable not related to either general or interaction adjustment was “*previous international experience*”.

Multiple regression equations were calculated for each dependent variable (interaction adjustment and general adjustment) to determine strength of correlation. For interaction adjustment, it was found that the more spouses undertook *self-initiated training* and the more *firms sought the spouses' opinion* of the assignment, the greater the spouses' interaction adjustment. The greater the *family support* and *host country national support*, the greater the spouses' interaction adjustment. For general adjustment, the more *firms sought the spouses' opinion*, the greater was the general adjustment. Additionally, the greater the number of hours of cross-cultural training provided by the firm, the less the spouses were adjusted to the general environment. Also, favorable living conditions facilitated spouse general adjustment, while culture novelty inhibited it.

Authors were surprised that the findings showed that *previous international experience* was not positively related to adjustment and that *firm-provided training* was significantly negatively related to spouse adjustment. They suggest that their study did not differentiate between the type, intensity or location of the previous experience and they imply that a more detailed study may tease apart the effects of these variables on adjustment. Additionally, it was

theorized that the overall lack of firm-provided training among the sample may have been a confounder (only 10% received any, and of those who did, it was generally less than four hours in duration). An admitted limitation of the study is the absence of “host country language proficiency” as an independent variable.

In a 2001 article published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Shaffer and Harrison echo the importance of interaction adjustment, and also articulate cultural and personal dimensions of adjustment, suggesting a three-dimensional construct. Using similar populations and methods, they obtain similar results about the relationships between antecedents of adjustment and dimensions of adjustment among the wives of expatriate businessmen. Shaffer and Harrison used qualitative in-depth interviews with 10 expatriate wives to explore adjustment, and then proposed and quantitatively tested a model of adjustment through a cross-sectional, self-report, written survey with 252 spouses in 36 countries on six continents. See Figure 1 for their proposed model, including the hypothesized directionality of their anticipated correlations of antecedents with the dependent variables personal, interaction and cultural adjustment.



**Figure 1. Model of spouse adjustment to international assignments.**



Shaffer and Harrison found that social bases of identity carried the greatest weight in the study, and while extended family support was shown to have a negative effect on spouse adjustment (perhaps because spouses with strong extended family ties spent more effort maintaining these ties than establishing new ties within the new environment), having young children was shown to be a positive predictor of spouse adjustment. Authors postulate that the dependence of young children and the responsibilities of parenting young children during the foreign assignment give the spouse a social role (the role of mother) to fulfill and the importance, traditions and techniques of this role may not waver for them even across cultures. Thus, motherhood may provide some level of consistency of social role, facilitating adjustment. Of the elements of non-familial social network resources, authors conclude that breadth of support is more important to spouse adjustment than depth.

Other studies use similar survey techniques among the expatriate wife population and arrive at a nearly identical antecedents and models (Ali, et al. 2003; Mohr & Klein, 2004). While their findings attempt to provide generalizable information about internal psychological antecedents of expatriate spouse adjustment, they do very little to investigate the interaction between the individual and setting.

#### **1.4 ADJUSTMENT PROCESS**

A few recent articles and dissertations have begun to explore the experiences and cultural adjustment of foreign wives who come to the U.S. with their husbands while the husbands engage in graduate programs, post-doctoral fellowships and other positions at U.S. universities. Day (2003), who was a foreign wife herself in the 1950s, authored a dissertation in interdisciplinary studies entitled "*Culture shock and beyond: The experiences of foreign wives of foreign graduate students and post-doctoral fellows sojourning at Rutgers University.*" She writes in her introduction, "my primary interest in this study was the way the participants

responded to the U.S. and negotiated their way through the difficulties of experiencing culture shock and beyond culture shock.” (p. 30).

Through a preliminary questionnaire with ten foreign wives and in-depth interviews with ten additional foreign wives, she uncovers broad themes within the participants’ lives regarding their responses to living in the U.S.: expectations about the U.S., preparation for change, aspects of identity, attitudes toward women at home and in the U.S., perceptions of change among wives and among husbands, responses to the U.S. and U.S. responses to the participants, perceptions of the U.S.’s place in the world, attitudes towards foreigners and racism, and what she calls the “U.S.’s ability to change attitude toward foreign students’ wives”. Day’s approach is anthropological in nature and her own voice and experiences thread through the work.

An article published in *Health Care for Women International* emerges from a collaboration of nursing schools in Seoul, Korea, and Buffalo, New York. Cho et al. (2005) study the process of and barriers to adaptation to life in the U.S. among Korean women who are wives of Korean international students. Cho et al. situate their study not in psychological theories, but in an exploratory mode, using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as a way to uncover social processes that exist within the population of interest. Cho et al. conducted semi-structured formal interviews with 14 Korean women living in the U.S. as student wives and elucidated an eight-phase theory of adjusting to life in the U.S. Through their interviews, the phases of adjusting to life that they articulate are: pre-confronting, confronting, discovering, undergoing crisis, seeking, reorienting, reflecting and re-confronting (see Table 2). The theory shows the process of adjustment to a new culture as dynamic and cycling, with women moving from stages beyond “crisis” back into “discovering” and “crisis” in times of hardship.

Cho et al. conceive of the adjustment process for their sample as a “constant process of changing and familiarizing themselves to American life” (p. 912). Often, this process involves multiple symptoms of stress, including psychological and physiological symptoms. The authors conclude by providing recommendations for relieving some of the stress experienced by this population, including university-provided orientation programs for spouses in conjunction with the typical “new student” orientation programs; support for international spouse social networks

among existing organizations such as universities, churches, social clubs and individuals of similar ethnic groups who have immigrated to the U.S. (such as Korean-Americans); provision of free or low-cost English-as-a-second-language programs by universities; assurance of health care access to spouses of international students through university student health departments or means to purchase reasonably priced health insurance through the university.

While Cho et al.'s population is similar to that of the current study, the theory of adjustment that emerged from their work described the internal psychological adjustment within an individual. The current study undertook to explore how wives described the types of social support they sought and received in their lives in the U.S. and from where they were receiving such support.

**Table 2. Processes of adjustment of Korean wives of Korean international students in U.S.**

<b>Phases of Adjustment</b>	<b>Characteristics of Phase</b>
Pre-confronting	Perceptions and anticipation of and readiness for life in the U.S.
Confronting	Feelings and first impressions of U.S.
Discovering	Uncovering barriers that prevent adjustment to life in U.S. including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of support</li> <li>• economic hardship</li> <li>• parenting burden</li> <li>• language barriers</li> <li>• lack of transportation</li> <li>• racial discrimination</li> <li>• acculturation</li> <li>• limitation of self achievement</li> </ul>
Undergoing crisis	Psychological and physical symptoms related to addressing the barriers to adjustment such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression, insomnia, nightmares, panic, anxiety, nervousness</li> <li>• Influenza, indigestion, stomachaches, cramps, cystitis, hemorrhoids, earaches, back pains</li> </ul>
Seeking	Search for help and resources to overcome crises using information found from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting books &amp; internet sites</li> <li>• Other students' wives or Korean Americans</li> <li>• English as a Second Language classes</li> <li>• Driver training courses</li> <li>• Religiosity</li> </ul>
Re-orienting	Changes in priorities, attitudes and perspectives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift focus from self-achievement through career to parenting achievement</li> <li>• Become proactive about communication in English; using dictionary, losing fear of communicating in English in public</li> <li>• Embracing new independence and becoming "a real adult"</li> </ul>
Reflecting	Looking back at sojourn and considering personal progress and regress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing insight to newly arrived wives</li> <li>• Lamenting stagnation of career</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to be self-sufficient</li> <li>• Considering impact of U.S. culture on life</li> </ul>
Re-confronting	Facing new difficulties, cycling back through earlier stages of the process
Articulated by Cho et al., 2005	

## 1.5 COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social scientists and public health researchers have been refining definitions of community for many years. In their discussion of community as a location and situation for improving health, Minkler and Wallerstein (2002) anchor their concept of community in Hunter’s 1975 definitions from a sociological perspective: “Communities indeed have been defined as (1) *functional spatial units* meeting basic needs for sustenance, (2) *units of patterned social interaction*, and (3) *symbolic units of collective identity*” (p. 282). MacQueen et al.’s (2001) empirical study from a public health perspective arrived at a similar definition for community as “a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings.” (p. 1929).

While researchers may be able to diagnose the functional status of a community through interaction and personal intuition, many have grappled with how dimensions of a community can be empirically measured. Thus the concept of “community capacity” has been developed and defined and measurements suggested. Community capacity is:

*The degree to which people in the community demonstrate a sense of shared responsibility for the general welfare of the community and its individual members, and demonstrate collective competence by taking advantage of opportunities for addressing community needs and confronting situations that threaten the safety and well-being of community members (Mancini et al., 2005, p. 574).*

Measurable dimensions of community capacity have been proposed that may help a researcher or practitioner identify areas of community strength and for community improvement. These dimensions have been articulated as participation and leadership, skills, resources, social and inter-organizational networks, sense of community, understanding of community history,

community power, community values and critical reflection (Goodman et al., 1998). The current study intended to explore the ways in which international wives interact with communities and the capacity of those communities. However, during the course of the data collection for this study, it became apparent that not all spouses were accessing communities, some were accessing social networks instead, and some were socially isolated.

In order to accomplish necessary tasks of home-making and socialization, it seems that some wives were not actually accessing communities, as defined by aspects of MacQueen et al.'s (2001) "joint action," or Minkler and Wallerstein's (2002) "collective identity". Some wives were accessing social networks rather than communities. Social networks are typically characterized as forming "an 'infrastructure' of multiple, inter-influencing dyadic interactions manifested over some duration of time" (Smith, 1999, p. 640). Network interactions have been highly mathematized by sociometrists and are influenced by the size and density of the network, as well as multiple other factors commonly examined by social network theorists such as clusters, cliques, centrality, multiplicity, strength, multidimensionality, link reciprocity and heterogeneity (Smith, 1999). Networks may be more or less dense than communities, but lack the sense of "joint action" and "collective identity" which MacQueen et al. (2001) and Minkler and Wallerstein (2002) suggest are key to defining community.

## **1.6 ECOSYSTEMIC FRAMEWORK**

A study of immigrant and refugee women's experiences in Canada (Guruge & Khanlou, 2004) approaches the research from an "ecosystemic" framework. Coming from a nursing perspective, they suggest that mental health promotion research among such populations is enhanced by considering the "intersectionalities of influence" that four domains have on health. They go on to state:

*The ecosystemic framework...considers individual situations as arising from the transaction between the individual, family (micro-system/level), community (mesosystem/level), and larger social and cultural environment (macrosystem/level); the transactions between the four systems are seen as continuous and reciprocal (p.37).*

They suggest that an ecosystemic perspective can provide new insights into several social and health research veins including “the stress of negotiating and navigating through various institutional and structural systems that are designed to serve the dominant groups and the impact of these experiences on the health and well-being of immigrant and refugee women” (p. 42).

Thus, the current study contributes uniquely to the growing body of literature on international student spouses by exploring the following research questions at the intersection of the *individual* and *meso*-system levels of interaction: (1) What tasks do international wives accomplish in the U.S.? (2) How do international wives access social support in order to more successfully accomplish these tasks? (3) What ideas do wives have for how their communities could be enhanced?

## **2.0 METHODS**

A qualitative methodology was used to collect data on the experiences of living and coping with life in Pittsburgh among seven Asian women who are the wives of international students or scholars. While international students at the university come from over 130 countries (Office of International Services, personal communication), the study was limited to Asian wives in order to allow from some amount of internal consistency for the culture of origin.

Women were in a dependent visa status (F-2 or J-2) and all but one were not formally employed in the U.S. at the time of the interview. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted by the author with seven women between August and November 2005 in locations chosen by the participant (e.g. participant's home, café, public library, friend's home). The interviews ranged from 45 – 90 minutes in length. This project was approved by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board as study #0505138.

### **2.1 RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPANTS**

To identify potential interview candidates, the author contacted local international student organizations by electronic mail with a letter of introduction about the project and a request to help identify women within or known by each organization who would meet the requirements of the study as listed in the previous section. Groups contacted were:

- CSSA: Chinese Students and Scholars Association
- ANKUR: Indian Graduate Students Association of Pittsburgh
- AID: Association for India's Development—Pittsburgh Chapter
- Office of International Services (OIS) Ambassadors Volunteers

Following the initial email, a recruiter was identified within each organization and the author was introduced to potential participants by that recruiter through email, usually by carbon copying both the potential participant and the author on the same email. Additionally, intentional sampling was made through a personal contact of the author acting as a recruiter. Once an initial introduction was made, the author emailed or telephoned directly potential participants to arrange an interview date and location.

Two additional participants were identified and recruited by an international wife who is a personal contact of the author.

The inability to speak English was an exclusion criterion for the study. Recruitment procedures stated that a potential participant must feel comfortable enough with her English language skills to participate in a 60 - 90 minute interview in English. Recruiters helped to narrow the pool of participants, and from those recommended by recruiters to the interviewer, women self-selected to participate.

## 2.2 PROCEDURES

All interviews were conducted in English by the author. The interviewer administered informed consent at the beginning of each interview. Participants were asked to complete a written, eleven-item demographic survey (see Appendix A), and each participant was given a printed copy of the seven-item question set to refer to during the interview. The participant's version of the question set was the highest level of interview questions; the interviewer's question set contained multiple probes for use as follow-up to the initial question set (see Appendix B). Questions asked to the participants are shown here in boldface. Sub-questions (indented, regular print) were asked orally by the interviewer to probe for additional information or description by the participant. Participants were allowed to use a dictionary during the interview if they did not understand a word or phrase. Interviews were audio-recorded and each participant was interviewed once.



Since some participants recognized the author as an orientation and social support professional from the University of Pittsburgh Office of International Services, occasionally the participant asked about available local resources during the interview. If questions about local resources were raised by the participant during the interview, the author gave information and contacts following the completion of the interview.

### **2.3 TRANSCRIPTION**

Audiotapes were transcribed between November 2005 and January 2006 by the author and one other transcriptionist. All transcriptions were checked for accuracy by the author. Filler words such as “um” or “yeah” were not included in the transcript when used by the interviewer for the purpose of encouragement/reassurance or when used by the interviewee for filling gaps due to English as a non-native language.

### **2.4 ANALYSIS**

Interview content was analyzed using an inductive coding process and memoing in the method of Miles and Huberman (1984). Transcriptions were read by the author multiple times and data were chunked into passages and coded with respect to the three research questions (tasks, community, ideas). Passages were entered into Excel spreadsheets for each major code and then within each major code, passages were arranged into sub-categories which are reflected in Tables 4, 5, and 6. Quotations which poignantly represented each sub-category were identified and inserted into the thesis text.

Within the thesis, quotations from participants are reproduced in this document verbatim, as spoken by the participants, several containing grammatical errors. Quotations that are more than one line long are italicized and offset from the main text with a wider margin. Quotations are attributed to their speaker using a designation such as: “P5,” indicating, for instance, that the

passage is a quotation of a statement made by Participant 5 during the data collection interview and is quoted in the thesis verbatim from the transcript of the interview with Participant 5.

### 3.0 RESULTS

Seven women participated in this study. A demographic matrix arranged by participant is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Participant Demographic Matrix**

<b>Participant (Pn)</b>	<b>Age (yr)</b>	<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Months in PGH</b>	<b>Months in U.S.</b>	<b>First time in U.S.?</b>	<b>Highest Education Attainment</b>	<b>Married (years)</b>	<b>Children (number)</b>	<b>Self-Rated Health</b>
P1	26	China	8	8	Yes	BS	1	0	Very Good
P2	35	China	32.5	32.5	Yes	Grad/Med	11	1	Excellent
P3	28	India	9	9	Yes	Grad/Med	4	1	Good
P4	32	India	32	56	No	BS	5	1	Good
P5	33	Japan	4	4	Yes	Some College	7	2	Excellent
P6	40	Taiwan	25	48	No	Some Graduate	8	1	Very Good
P7	37	Japan	7.5	8.5	No	Grad/Med	6	1	Very Good

### 3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

#### 3.1.1 Country of origin, visa status and race

Participants' countries of origin were China, Japan, Taiwan and India. Each participant came to the U.S. in a dependent spouse visa status of her husband. Each woman was married to man of her own race and from her own country of origin.

### **3.1.2 Age and stage of life**

The youngest participant was 26 and the oldest was 40. Marital status was one of the inclusion criteria for this study, and the range of marriage duration among participants was between 1 – 11 years. The largest group of participants (five) were in their 30s, and had been married >4 years. Six of the seven participants were mothers, and of the mothers, five had one child each; the sixth mother had two children. In general, all were well educated and self-rated their health as from “good” to “excellent”.

### **3.1.3 Length of time in U.S. and prior experience in U.S./Other countries**

The range of time that participants had been in the U.S. was between four and 56 months. Three of the seven participants had lived in or visited the U.S. prior to their experience in Pittsburgh, PA. Of these, one had lived for two years in Lansing, MI, one had lived for two years in Baton Rouge, LA, and one had visited the U.S. as a tourist. Additionally, one participant from India had completed a master’s degree in Hong Kong and had lived in Singapore with her husband prior to coming to Pittsburgh, PA.

### **3.1.4 Ability to Communicate in English**

The ability to speak English was an inclusion criterion for the study; even so, the interviewer did notice differing levels of listening comprehension, oral expression and overall communication among the participants.

### 3.2 TASKS

Of interest for this study was the tasks that must international wives must accomplish in the U.S. During the interviews, each participant was asked to mention challenges or problems that she has faced in the U.S. (see Appendix B, Question B). This question was posed to elicit descriptions of practical tasks that wives were aware of undertaking. As participants responded, the interviewer probed for additional descriptions. The general categories of responses given are listed in Table 4. It can be seen how wives depend on their husbands for the completion of many of the initial tasks of getting settled in the U.S., but as they begin to make tentative connections with new friends, they begin to acquire their own agency.

**Table 4. Challenges faced in the U.S. by international wives.**

	<b>Author Defined Category</b>
<b>1</b>	Maintaining physical comfort in new climate
<b>2</b>	Finding housing
<b>3</b>	Creating a functional household
<b>4</b>	Finding transportation
<b>5</b>	Locating familiar foods for the family
<b>6</b>	Maintaining the health of self and family
<b>7</b>	Raising children
<b>8</b>	Filling up time
<b>9</b>	Making friends
<b>10</b>	Self-fulfillment

#### 3.2.1 Maintaining physical comfort in a new climate

For some participants, Pittsburgh, PA's temperate climate was a new and unusual environment. Both participants from India mentioned winter weather as something to which they had to adjust. It caused both joy (at seeing snow for the first time) and discomfort (due to cold temperatures) during their first experience of winter.

*It was first time we were seeing how snow is! [laughs] (P3, p. 9)*

*First thing was to fight the weather out here. [both laugh]. I was only thinking about that when we came here, how do I fight [the weather] because I'm very sensitive...to cold. (P4, p. 3)*

P3 even said that she did not go out of her apartment for days on end during the winter because she did not want to take her infant out into the cold weather.

*Here winters in a snow you cannot go out with small baby. (P3, p.6)*

### **3.2.2 Finding housing**

In most cases (5/7), the housing of the participant had been obtained by her husband prior to her arrival in the U.S. This was especially true for those participants who were first-time visitors to the U.S. (4/4) and those who were bringing children with them from their home country (4/5), although the husband of the one non-mother in the study also preceded her to the U.S. and secured housing prior to her arrival. For the accomplishment of this most basic task, the participants said over and over, “my husband found” or “my husband’s friend helped him”. Most wives depended on their husband’s connection to his academic department and colleagues to locate and rent an initial apartment.

*My husband found the house before I came here. (P1, p. 14)*

*My husband’s friend was in Pittsburgh already, so he helped my husband to find my apartment...first my husband came to Pittsburgh and after one and half month...I and my daughter came to Pittsburgh. (P7, p. 4)*

*My husband came here first...three months, three months before, so he arrange everything, and he rent the house and he got money anything he arrange for me so when I came here with myself everything [was ready]. (P2, p. 2)*

*...we came late. Because we have a small baby, and it was winter. So he came first, then he made all the arrangements, his insurance, and house, everything, then we came. (P3, p. 11)*

### 3.2.3 Establishing a functional household

The participants described the arrangements that were made by their husbands and themselves to establish the apartment as a functional household. Some said that their husband set up everything, and some described how they were involved in the process.

*[My husband] arrange apartment and bank and everything he arranged already. (P7, p. 4)*

*I actually had to set up the house, first, initially, the first two days also we had to eat out, right after we rented the apartment (laughs) and I had to...get things out of my luggage, and, you know, set everything up, so it took some time. (P4, p. 15)*

One participant described in detail her feelings of being a bit overwhelmed by differences in appliances and housekeeping procedures as she began to approach usual homemaker tasks such as cleaning the house, preparing food and washing clothes.

*When I arrived in U.S. everything is big and I can't understand how to use. For example vacuum and oven and Laundromat. Everything is first time to use. It was a little nervous to me, I have to do every day but I can't how to use... (P7, p.3)*

### 3.2.4 Finding transportation

Five of seven participants had a car in their immediate family in the U.S. Of these, two participants did not drive, but their husbands had a car and drove. Three of the participants were drivers. One participant who did not drive talked about how she depends on her husband to drop her off when she needs to go somewhere.

*Mostly, usually my husband will drop to, drop me to the place I want to go. (P1, p. 7)*

The Indian women in the study did not drive before coming to the U.S. and did not learn to drive while in the U.S.; the Chinese women did not know how to drive before coming to the U.S. but learned to drive and got U.S. driver's licenses while in the U.S.; Japanese women drove in Japan and continued to drive in the U.S. on international driver's licenses.

The Japanese women who do drive mention that they were fearful and sometimes frustrated by driving in Pittsburgh.

*I get driver's license at 20 years old, but first I get the license I crash my new car...So I didn't drive 17 years. So in Pittsburgh I have to drive because my daughter take to pre-school. So it's very excited and difficult. (P7, p. 10)*

*...my driving is a big problem...the parking is very difficult for me...parallel parking... (P5, p.3)*

*For me, um, the problem is the road...(laugh)...this winter will be my first winter, so I'm worried about that, especially driving...I'm afraid to drive over the bridges. I have to go to [my son's] nursery school, it's in [neighborhood], so I have to go over the bridge...(laugh) (P5, p. 18)*

Other modes of transportation that were used in Pittsburgh were the city bus and walking. Also there are a couple of other Indian colleagues in [my husband's] department.... [They] told him how he could access to the bus from wherever we were. That's how we learned about the bus. And we didn't have to worry about a vehicle at that point of time. Because that's what everybody told us, you don't need a vehicle if you stay in this part of town. (P4, p. 5)

One participant (P1) mentioned that she was accustomed to riding a bicycle in her home country.



### 3.2.5 Locating familiar foods for the family

A few participants described their initial frustration with locating food items within the very large American supermarkets:

*Giant Eagle and WalMart is big and I can't find...I can't find sesame...I can't find where is sesame. (P7, p. 5)*

Others mention shopping at specialty ethnic food stores in Pittsburgh's market district:

*I found Lotus in Strip District. I can find my foods more easier. P6, p. 8*

One participant talked about her daughter's special food requirements and how she prepared in advance of her arrival in the U.S. to cope with her daughter's restrictions.

*My daughter has food allergy, so she, she can't eat wheat and eggs and some fruits. So it's difficult to prepare my daughter's dishes. So I bring my daughter's soy sauce...it doesn't contain wheat...so it's different for us. (P7, p. 4)*

Another participant describes a positive experience she had with a nutrition program at Michigan State University where she lived with her family for two years prior to arriving in Pittsburgh. When she arrived in Pittsburgh she sought out a similar program and used it to learn about different shopping and food availabilities in the city of Pittsburgh.

*At Michigan State University they have a nutrition program and I have a doctor, she told me how to cook, about cooking and things, and after I came here I got information about in Pittsburgh. They also have this program and I call to there and say 'I want to enroll to your program' and one instructor contact me and she told me how to shopping in Pittsburgh area, how to find groceries and meat store and something, and oh, okay, I can find things. P6, p. 7*

### 3.2.6 Maintaining the health of self and family

When asked about the use of health care, responses ranged from using self- or family-based care locally as their main health care in Pittsburgh to delivering a baby in a local hospital.

Of the participants who use self- or family-based care as primary health care, one is a physician herself (P7), two have a husband who is a physician (P2, P5) and one had a close relative in their home country who is a physician (P1). The woman who is a physician and both women whose husbands are physicians said that they brought familiar medicines and drugs with them from their home country and use them to treat common sicknesses in the home.

*We bring many medications with us...[from Japan]. (P7, p. 6)*

Participant 1 described her use of long-distance telephone service for health consultations with a close family member in her home country:

*You know, I am not very strong so sometime I feel headache, and um, we brought a lot of medicine with us when we came here. And you know my husband has a brother, he's a doctor, he's a surgeon in Shanghai, so when we feel not well, we call him what to do next. (P1, p. 9)*

The mothers of pre-school and school-aged children (6/7 participants) accessed health care through the necessity of vaccinating their children due to public health regulations for children attending public schools and summer camps:

*My daughter's vaccine...shots...so I went to the hospital three times...We need vaccine in Pittsburgh, in U.S....not in Japan. So I have to. (P7, p. 7)*

*She had to take shots...four shots, she had...it's the Children's Hospital." (P5, p. 7)*

*...in Hong Kong, in India and now in Pittsburgh! [laugh] So she is having...she is getting her vaccinations, all the vaccinations. (P3, p. 8)*

Some mothers had also accessed pediatricians on behalf of their children. The desire to keep a child healthy and seek care when necessary may help overcome a woman's fear of accessing/using U.S. health care system. One woman describes the precautions she has put in place for her daughter's health:

*For her health, yeah, we have a pediatrician for her, yeah, she is nice, we have insurance [through husband's employment]. (P3, p. 7)*

This woman went on to describe a positive interaction she had using the services of the pediatrician when her daughter was sick. She felt that the insurance coverage she had through her husband's employer health insurance benefits eased the interaction:

*Once she had a viral, so we went to a doctor, but she said it's normal, and she will be fine after three or four days...It's easy...if you have insurance then it's easy. (P3, p. 8)*

One woman noted that her insurance coverage is through her husband's employment at a local university. She went on to describe how she found the obstetrician/gynecologist at a major women's hospital in Pittsburgh, PA, who helped her to deliver her first child.

*I'm on my husband's insurance. The university has this insurance plan where I'm on the plan. So, I would be covered under that. So it wasn't a problem. (P4, p. 7)*

*So, finding a doctor—I had a PCP at [a local hospital]...and they suggested to me a gynecologist...and that's how I got to find this doctor who delivered my baby, so it wasn't hard at all because I just, I didn't go about researching if this doctor was good or bad, you know, somebody just suggested that particular group of doctors and I stuck with them. (P4, p. 7)*

She goes on to describe her feelings about giving birth:

*I was very scared like I told you, but uh, everything went on okay when it came to, she [the baby] came in two weeks early, but things were fine. (P4, p. 7)*

When asked if she were satisfied in all aspects with care she received, she said:  
*Exactly. The hospital facilities there were very good and the doctor who delivered the baby he was nice too. And when I went to my visits, I had to visit my doctor every few weeks, and I had to schedule an appointment. That's when I would have a lot of questions for the doctor and I would always be scared about things. But people told me that [the local women's hospital] is a very good hospital and all the doctors there are really nice and we don't have to worry about things, so, and that's how things were. (P4, p. 8)*

It should be noted that both P4's baby and mother were present during the interview. P4's mother had traveled from India to Pittsburgh on a six-month visa to be with her daughter immediately following the birth of P4's baby.

### **3.2.7 Raising children**

Participants mentioned parenting as an important task that they undertake while in Pittsburgh and specifically commented on their strategies and thoughts for helping their children to adjust successfully to a new environment.

One woman shows great sensitivity in diagnosing her daughter's problems with misbehaving in kindergarten and describes a strategy she has developed to help her daughter improve her behavior:

*My daughter also has a language problem...children can't be patient in that situation. So my daughter's teacher says she is not good student, and I...that is my...[sadness]...I tell her, some few words, 'bathroom', and 'thirsty' and 'hungry'...But she, her most difficult time to stay in classroom is story time...they will be speaking English long time and she cannot be patient at that place. So I ask the teacher, the subject of the books, before they read that book and I bought that book at bookstore and I translate it to her so she can more easy to stay. P7, p. 12*

The mother of an infant talks more generally about how she sees her role to cultivate a good environment for her daughter no matter in which country her family is living.

*I think um, family environment, it has an effect on child's thinking, everything. Personality. So wherever she moves...as a mother I should give her a good environment. This is my responsibility. (P3, p. 24).*

### **3.2.8 Filling Up Time**

The spouses of international students are typically in what is known as a “dependent” visa category. For the spouses of most students, this is the F-2 visa classification. Individuals in the F-2 visa class are not allowed to be employed in the U.S., thus, some of the participants, especially the younger women who were childless when they arrived in Pittsburgh, describe a need to find ways to fill their time.

*Because I was a dependent, so uh, how would I utilize my time otherwise was the question. (P4, p. 11)*

Another participant describes acute boredom and her desire to find something productive to fill her time:

*I have nothing to do...watching TV...I think killing my time so I must find something meaningful for me to do so I need some books in my major. P1, p. 10*

### **3.2.9 Making New Friends**

As the practical tasks of making a life in a new physical environment resolve themselves, the participants begin to talk about their need for companionship.

*When I came here I feel, I feel quite normal [but]...I cannot always find a lot of things to do except for watching TV or cookings, so frankly speaking I feel very lonely here. (P1, p.6)*

Some participants described frustration with a lack of local friends.

*In Hong Kong it was, means, uh, we have so many friends and uh, in I mean US here in Pittsburgh we don't have so many because so most of them are students so they are so busy and they don't get time as we don't, we cannot meet every weekend. (P3, p.6)*

Another participant described a distinct lack of quality of interaction with her new friends in the U.S. and describes her frustration with socializing in the U.S.:

*I think a lot of change...happen after I came here because when before I came here...I will have a lot of friends but after I came here I make some new friends but cannot compare with my friends...[in my home country I would go to work] and coming and to have friends to go shopping to other entertainments... [in Pittsburgh] although there are lot of entertainment place, but it seems very strange to us. For example I just came to see a baseball but I cannot understand it. (P1, p. 3)*

One participant compared her experience finding friends in her first U.S. sojourn (in Michigan) to what she was currently experiencing in Pittsburgh. She articulated a strong need to find and befriend women who she could consider her peers for ongoing emotional support as a parent.

*For me, I can find my peer group, over there [in Michigan]. After we move to Pittsburgh, I can't find my peer group. I don't know where the student parent are...so sometimes I feel a bit lonely. (P6, p.5)*

Another participant talked about how she met a new friend in her peer group while taking her daughter to primary school.

*[I met her because] my daughter and her son are in same class in kindergarten and at first my to think he was crying in the morning and I am very sad to see that situation, so I talk to her, yes, I talked to her and she was worried about him. So I, I told her she can watch them through the window, I told her. It's our first...[time to meet]... I think she is very similar and talking to people is similar to Japanese people. So I think, she can't and I ask her 'and do you, can you speak English?', and she say 'no' and I say 'me too!' (laugh) and we are similar age, so I think we can be good friends. P5, p. 17*

### **3.2.10 Self-Fulfillment**

The youngest participant, the only non-mother, described her sojourn to the U.S. as a separation from a meaningful career in her hometown and talked about her strong desire to continue her education while in the U.S.

*My major is public health so I worked in CDC in the community in the CDC for in Shanghai...I was included in the department of [epidemiology] program in immunization...so I was a manager...if I have a chance to be into a school, to get some further education [in U.S.] that's my biggest eager. (P1, p. 5)*

Another woman, who had come to the U.S. childless but gave birth after 2.5 years, describes her goals to complete a formal educational program in the U.S.

*I went to the college and found out about the courses there and I decided what I wanted to do... [So that] even if we were to leave this place, you know, that I could do something. And that's actually accomplishing something because, you know, I didn't waste my time... I had this in mind, I had this goal in mind that I wanted to finish the certificate program at least when I was in Pittsburgh (laugh). (P4, p. 12)*

Both women recognize their existing capacities and describe their desires to develop these capacities to a fuller potential.

### 3.3 ACCESSING SOCIAL SUPPORT

A main aim of the study was to explore how wives describe the ways they access community in order to gain the social support necessary to accomplish the tasks they need to accomplish.

When asked directly during the interview if they belonged to a community in Pittsburgh (see Appendix B, Question C), many participants consulted their dictionaries and furrowed their brows in consideration. The construct of “community” loomed large, and indeed, neat definitions of community offered by American scholars in the literature and upon which this research was based may very well be culturally constructed.

This limitation acknowledged, many participants did explicitly say that they belonged to a community in the U.S.:

*My apartment there is five Japanese families, so uh, I think this is more community. (P7, p. 10)*

*I can find some people in the [housing] complex because they all study in the seminary or in [local universities] and I can find my peer group and we are very similar, the husbands go to school and they wives stay at home and watch the kids...(laugh). (P6, p.9)*

*I belong to that internet mailing list...mailing list is community (laugh). (P7, p. 7)*

As a first response to the direct question about belonging to a community, one international wife explicitly denied her involvement with a community in Pittsburgh. However, from her response, it is clear that she was grappling to bring some definition of community to her mind and to her words while she spoke:

*No, we don't have any community here that we could belong to... We have, like, three different temples here, like, usually when they say communities, I think they mean that like those people who come here from other countries, I think some of them have these communities, and some of them belong to them. (P4 p. 9)*



Through the course of her interview, her descriptions of interactions suggested that she did access a very large, organized and rich community as defined by MacQueen et al. (2001) and measured by Goodman (1999) through one of the local Hindu temples. Indeed, in her response she seemed to try out using the word “community” until, by the end of the interview, she was referring to the people of the temple organization as a community.

Participants were asked a few follow-up questions designed to explore their behaviors around seeking support for the accomplishment of tasks (Appendix B, Question D) and about the leadership of the community (Appendix B, Question E).

With regard to social support, the participants’ descriptions illuminated the modes of social support and also the actors who provided such support. Table 5 shows the general categories of responses.

**Table 5. Type of social support provided to participants by each category of actor.**

	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Social Support</b>
1	Nuclear/Immediate family and friends in the home country	Emotional, Instrumental
2	Husband’s colleagues and contacts at U.S. university	Informational, Instrumental
3	Internet (web browser, email, webcam)	Informational, Emotional
4	New friends in the U.S.	Informational, Instrumental Emotional, Appraisal
5	Social networks and communities in the U.S.	Informational, Instrumental Emotional, Appraisal

### **3.3.1 Nuclear/Immediate Family**

Participants described interactions with their nuclear and immediate family (parents, parents-in-law, siblings, siblings-in-law) and with friends in their home country as providing mainly emotional support and also some instrumental support (emotional and instrumental support are defined in Section 1.2, p. 3-4). Most wives’ families resided in the home country and wives communicated with them using variety of technologies including long distance telephone, e-mail

and web-camera. By using technology to communicate with long-time intimates, wives were able to muster and maintain emotional support, especially during the early moments of their sojourn in the U.S. These technologies also enable connection with their home culture and cultural identity.

All participants (7/7) mentioned long-distance telephone as one way that they stay in touch with their family and friends in their home country. One participant spoke to her family in India “*almost daily*” (P3). Another described her pattern of calling friends in her home country and ways that they continue to provide emotional and instrumental support to her and her family, even from around the world:

*...[I call them] maybe after two week or three weeks and every week I will email them something if I have something, else I will call them. I have a lot of friends in China...because my parents live in China and if they have some problem, I will ask my friends to help my parents. (P2, p. 10)*

All participants had computer and internet access in their homes and used email to communicate with their friends and family at home for emotional support. One of the seven participants specifically mentioned using a web-camera to make telephone calls over the internet to friends and family in their home country. By using this combination of video camera and internet-based telephone, the participant and her family in Japan were able to both talk to and see each other in real-time during the call.

*[It is] not so difficult for me [to live away from my family] because we call each other. We prepare that webcam from camera and I bring that [from Japan] so I can [communicate with them]. (P7, p. 2)*

Of the two wives who delivered their first-born infants outside of their home country, both mention that a female member of their immediate family traveled to be with them for several months, arriving either just prior to the delivery or shortly after. This family support is both instrumental and emotional.

*My mother-in-law was with me when [my daughter] delivered. P3, p. 5.*

*My mother is here [in Pittsburgh]. She came in March...so that's 6 months. P4, p.2*

Women wanted close female relatives to be with them during the delivery and/or early days of caring for their infants.

### **3.3.2 Husband's colleagues and contacts at U.S. university**

Wives describe how they have received much informational and instrumental support (informational and instrumental support are defined in Section 1.2, p. 3-4) from colleagues of their husband. Sections 3.2.2, "Finding Housing" and 3.2.4 "Finding Transportation" subsection of the "Tasks" section are full of a litany of "my husband's professor..., my husband's colleague...". Wives describe a lot of instrumental support for finding suitable housing from their husband's colleagues such as driving the couple around to various neighborhoods to look at apartments and informational support on accessing public transportation, and the like. Wives also note that their husband's colleagues provided information about getting furniture, learning the way around the city, and getting settled.

*[My husband's] professor told us about a few places we could get furniture. P4, p. 8)*

*This professor had kind of given us an idea as to how things are here and he also took us around the city, like this part of town especially. That's when...he mentioned to us the bus facility. (P4, p. 5)*

*[A colleague of my husband] received my husband at [the university] and my husband stayed at his house for, I think, 15 days, then he searched for a house and took this one. P3, 13*

International wives also experience direct instrumental support from the university through the provision of group health insurance and education benefits to university employees and their families.

*I'm on my husband's insurance. The university has this insurance plan where I'm on his plan. (P4, p. 7)*

*My husband has...the [staff education] benefit for me so I can learn some English [at the university-related English Language Institute]. So I think I should learn first and then maybe I can go and get a job. (P2, p. 3)*

Wives also describe the social network that their husbands access through their connection to colleagues and peers through their academic department which provides informational support.

*The people in the department helped him to know how things were in Pittsburgh. (P4, p. 7)*

*Because he has a friend just beside his lab, and in lunch time he can talk with him a lot and he has a child just starting in elementary school and he told him because he was working in the same building and then can find the place, just live here and then can find the elementary school just near the house. (P2, p. 14)*

### **3.3.3 Internet**

All participants talked about browsing the internet in their home as a source of information to accomplish tasks such as finding local maps and driving directions, finding an apartment, browsing and buying furniture and even a car, locating local ethnic food stores, downloading coupons, learning about the local public school system and how to enroll their children, identifying summer camps and nursery schools for children, identifying English classes for themselves, learning about available local entertainment for children and adults, and identifying local social organizations. Some illustrations are these:

*At that time my son was in school age. So I had to find a pre-school or kindergarten for kids. Yeah, actually, I had to find all the information. I tried to*

*look for this information from internet, to find this education, the government education department for school department. (P6, p. 5)*

*Interviewer: How did you know about the [English] school? How did you find it?*

*P7: Internet! (P7, p. 3)*

Some international wives accessed information about Pittsburgh even before they arrived in the U.S.:

*...first I...I'm nervous to come to Pittsburgh, uh, that is one years ago, so I have internet, so I search internet about in Pittsburgh, so I find that website and I register. (P7, p. 6)*

### **3.3.4 New friends in the U.S.**

As participants described that they began to make new friends in the U.S., they found all four types of social support through their interactions with the new friends.

Two international wives described the emotional support they receive from friends when they are feeling sad or need advice about parenting their children:

*Sometimes, if I feel sad, I will call my friends and then she will talk to me and just say something to keep me, so I feel better and then after that I feel not alone. (P2, p.10)*

*They hear my, my talking about my children, and um, I have the um, other fun with them. (P5, p. 10)*

Local friends also provide instrumental support in other ways:

*Yes, yes, we made a good friends and they have a son, same age with my son so they play together, and, so sometimes if we have some thing we need to do and my son go to their house and...maybe for weekend. (P2, p. 9)*

*[A friend] has some books so he lend them to me and I found that I read it quickly. (P1, p. 10)*

New friends sometimes provide informational support to international wives about how to locate recreational and social activities in the U.S. and about American cultural norms and celebrations.

*They give me a lot of information, to, to make a lot of interesting experience...about museum and uh, pool. (P5, p. 10)*

*This Halloween, one family organize a party for kids, that family lived, uh, 5 years in U.S. so they know the Halloween. I don't, we don't know. Other families don't know the Halloween party, so she organized the party. (P7, p. 10)*

Appraisal support (appraisal support is defined in Section 1.2, p. 3-4) on a participant's maintenance of and progress with English language communication and how new friendships with non-Chinese can help improve her skills is offered by her husband.

*My husband he doesn't like I only stay in the Chinese community, yeah, because if you only stay... you have no chance to improve your English, so if you couldn't only stay in America in the Chinese group. But it's easier for me. (P6, p. 10)*

In addition to the four modes of social support that are mentioned in the literature (Heaney & Israel, 2002), the participants in this study also seemed to be describing an additional form of interaction and group support with new friends in the U.S. who were of their same nationality. This allowed them to celebrate their home culture through the preparation and consumption of favorite foods, watching special television programs together and other activities. This appeared to help the international wives maintain internal cultural identity even while externally immersed in the U.S.

*One of my friends, she organize a sushi party, so she need help in the house. So I help her and help her but I, I'm not good at cooking and I'm not good make sushi*

*so often. I practice how to cook, make the sushi roll by internet so that is the information. (P7, p. 10)*

### **3.3.5 Social networks and communities**

Participants also describe to varying degrees their interactions with social networks and communities.

P6 talked extensively about her experiences at Michigan State University, her first experience of living in the U.S., while her husband was completing a master's degree immediately prior to coming to University of Pittsburgh for his PhD work. First she talks about a university-related family resource group called the "Student-Parents' Club" and the instrumental support services, informational support and celebratory activities they were providing to students who were also parents:

*In Michigan my husband attend Michigan State University and they had a family resource center, and uh, the family resource center gave me a lot of information on how to adjust to life in America. And uh, like, they had some activities, family activities, with kids. Yeah. And they had, even for midterm examination, for final examinations, they provided child care for the children of the student parents. And that's easier. Because some people help you to watch your kids, then you can pay all your attention to study. You know, oh, that's a great idea. Because (laugh) because of my husband, his, his examination is not always taking all the time so sometimes we can have some free evening and we can have dinner together and do something without our son. And um, at Halloween, they sponsored Halloween trick-or-treat, and to the pumpkin patch and they get so much budget...!*

*Yeah, at the end of that year, at the end of the school year, like in May or June...we have a big feast and all the student parents come together and we congratulate all the student parents. For all student parents...even if you are*

*American or international. Yeah, and they also have, every month they have, one student parent night and we can get together and have share our meeting and we can also have a speech at that time. One can be how to keep your health, or how to care your kid, and the parenting skills and they also provide child care at the same time. For me, I can find my peer group, over there. After we move to Pittsburgh, I can't find my peer group. I don't know where the student parent are.* (P6, p. 3-4)

She also talks about a smaller social support group that she accessed while living in Lansing, Michigan, called Mothers of Pre-Schoolers (MOPS). This group offered instrumental, informational, emotional and appraisal support for mothers and was also an opportunity for children to meet and play with each other.

*In Michigan, Lansing, in one church we attend, everyone tell me, 'you should attend our MOPS program.' And so I attend the MOPS program and I learn a lot of resources from the MOPS. And even from the MOPS and uh, I found a play group for my son. And he can play with the other kids and I can communicate with the other moms and uh, we have a small group of about 5 families and we got together every week, every Friday, and uh, have a tighter relationship.* (P6, p. 10)

*[MOPS] also have child care and we can get, all the mothers get together and we have a speech and a small discussion group. And topics on health care and parenting and we also do some small craft and we can share our, what is our tension in caring for our kids and we can find out 'Oh! This is not only my problem!'* (P6, p. 11)

While P6's social networks and communities are university-related, the community that Participant 4 accesses in Pittsburgh is a faith-based community. P4 initially denied being part of a community, but through the course of the interview, she described her interaction with a community centered on a local Hindu temple. She describes the temple as a place to meet new people and get involved in activities:



*You could visit any temple any time, and you could make friends there, meet people actually. That's how...that's where you can get more social...you get to know more people and you get involved in the things there. (P4, p.10)*

She also describes how the temple is a location at which kids and mothers can meet and interact with their respective peer groups:

*If you have kids, children, ages like 3-5, they have activities for children too, so if you have your child and you want to send him to the activities that take place there, you can get him or her involved in that, you know, and that's how you get to know people. (P4 p. 9)*

Interacting is a way for P4 to meet and get to know her peers, something that P6 could do in Michigan with the MOPS group but was unable to do in Pittsburgh.

Participant 4 also describes a specific example of informational support she received from a peer in the temple community that helped her to achieve a personal goal of completing some formalized education while in Pittsburgh:

*...Once I was in the temple talking to people, and I met this girl there and she, she was also new too to Pittsburgh, she was married, she said, um, somebody there told her about the community college and she started taking a few courses there ...when she told me about the community college, it occurred to my mind that I should also go find out about it...had I not met this girl, had she not told me that she enrolled herself in a course...I would have been idle at home not doing anything at all for a long time. But I could accomplish this because I met her at the temple and I went and enrolled immediately myself.... (P4, p. 11)*

In addition to the social networking and social support functions of interacting at the temple, it is also a place to engage in productive “works” and to serve God:

*I volunteer at the temple, so it's like volunteer work...They have a kitchen of their own, and sometimes, like, there's food for everyone who comes in there, so they need help sometimes in packing the food and things like that...A temple is a place*

*which anyone would like to work, you know, service to God is, always, yeah, something that you would like to do. (P4 p.10)*

Participant 4 also describes how the temple is a site for cultural recognition.

*They have a lot of cultural events which they organize and you get to meet a lot of people and they come in there for activities. Like there's music, performers will come from India, and perform, there's dance, there's music. (P4 p. 9)*

She describes her pleasure when she found out that her husband was offered a position in Pittsburgh:

*This temple was the first temple in the U.S. and it's very popular, any Indian community, any city would know about this temple in Pittsburgh. I knew I could really meet people, you know, get to know people, something would be there because of the temple. (P4 p. 10)*

She also talks briefly about the temple's support of the 2004 Tsunami, which destroyed many towns and villages in southeast India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia:

*Well, the temple has activities, especially the S.V. Temple which you must have heard of in the news, quite often, you know when there was this Tsunami you would have heard S.V. Temple on the news. (P4, p.9)*

While the Hindu temple provided P4 with a community of interaction and support, Participant 7, a Japanese woman, describes her interaction with an internet-based messaging group.

*[There is an internet site] for Japanese better to live in Pittsburgh. I think many Japanese in Pittsburgh read that webpage. And many Japanese in Pittsburgh register for that mailing list...Every person [can post messages on mailing list]. It gave us many information, for example moving sale, and celebration and how to, how to see the doctor and uh, danger at that street, every information. (P7, p. 8)*

Participant 5, another Japanese wife talks about the same website:

*P5: Yes, and um, a lot of people in CMU there are caring for the website. It's very, very good...*

*Interviewer: Oh! So you can learn about the city of Pittsburgh in Japanese.*

*P5 Yes...A lot of people use this website...my husband told me [about it] (laugh)...And a friend told him it's very famous between Japanese people. (P5, p. 7)*

Participant 7 talks about socializing in a cooking class she became aware of through her interaction with the Japanese internet site. Obviously, many other Japanese women have become aware of the same cooking class as she finds that 50% of the class attendees are Japanese international wives.

*I go to cooking class, so cooking class teacher tells me various ingredients, various things I never eat, so I try to do that and 'oh it's very good'... I try to buy that...Every time there are 16, 17 people. But half of them is Japanese. And one part, person is Korean, and another is another country's people. (P7, p. 5)*

Participant 5 describes how both the car she drives and the apartment she lives in were as formerly owned and occupied by two different Japanese families, and that several apartments in the same apartment block are also currently occupied by other Japanese families.

*Interviewer: So do you have a car here?*

*P5: Old car...We bought it from Japanese person. [He] left Pittsburgh...my friends told us about him, and uh, we can know him and we can buy it...My husband came here six months ago, so he bought it...*

*Interviewer: So when your husband came, did he find an apartment?*

*P5: Yes, okay, a Japanese family lived before I came here...after they left, after one days after, one days, [he] lived there in[the] apartment...a Japanese family lived [in my apartment] before I came here...And neighbors in the same apartment and she tell me a lot of things about the apartment and around there, (laugh) and about kindergarten...*

*Interviewer: Is she also Japanese?*

P5: Yes...[she lives] other side, same floor...

Interviewer: But you didn't know each other before you came?

P5: No. I didn't know.

Interviewer: Only because you are living there, you know each other?

P5: Yes. Umhmm (P5, p. 6)

### 3.4 WIVES' IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THEIR EXPERIENCE

Finally, wives were asked to give their own ideas about how social or institutional support could improve their lives in Pittsburgh (see Appendix B, Question G). Some participants were reluctant to give an answer, while a few responded quite directly, commenting on programs and changes the university could make to support international wives better and structural changes that could be made at the level of the U.S. regulations in visa classifications and issuance of work permits that would enhance their lives. Their answers are summarized in Table 6.

**Table 6. Wives' ideas for improving their experience.**

<b>Wives' Ideas</b>
University-sponsored Student-Parents' Club
Mentor Program
Work Permit

#### 3.4.1 University Sponsored Programs

One participant mentions that she would benefit from a university sponsored club that could focus as either a support group for students, student parents or internationals and their families.

*I think if we have, if the university has a student club, for student parent, or international student club I can come there and say 'you can do this, you can do that...' even they can assign a mentor for each person. (P6, p. 15)*

The same participant also describes a mentorship program specifically for international wives.

*I should need a mentor...a mentor to introduce me, yeah, and how was the Pittsburgh, and how to, and when I have a small question...the Triple A maps, they have two kinds of Triple A maps for Pittsburgh, and one is uh, the vicinity, and they also have the city and uh, I think, for a newcomer, like me, I think the two kinds of maps. So even these kinds of small things...I think if I have a mentor, and I can ask 'this map, it can't show me everything...' then she can say 'oh, you just use this map...' (P6, p. 14)*

Participant 4 states that her life would be improved if she could work in the U.S. not only because she would be able to earn money to support her family, but also because she would gain the self-fulfillment of putting to use the formal education she received while her husband furthered his academic career at the university.

*Maybe if the university, like, helps my husband, you know, get his residency and [then] I could...apply for my work permit...if I start working...then that's, that's the best thing that could happen... if I start working, then money-wise it would help us and we would be financially more fit, that's one thing. And also, like I told you I did my certificate course in web designing, so, I could put that into use too because I have that now, I have a degree, as such, here in the U.S. and I could put that to use by working. You know if I start working I will be doing what I have kind of accomplished. P4, p.15*

## 4.0 DISCUSSION

The comments of the participants suggested that motherhood shaped the experience of life in Pittsburgh for those who had children. At an individual level, motherhood shaped a woman's experience through the tasks that she undertook on behalf of her children. For example, locating a school served as an introduction to a new city. Once a suitable school was identified, a mother's interaction began to extend into the mesosystem level of interaction with the school becoming a venue for meeting peers, an outlet for productivity, and an opportunity for socialization.

Taking children to primary school was a weekday activity that brought international wives in contact with peers. The school became a venue for starting friendships as can be seen in the quotation by P5 in Section 3.2.9. (p. 28). The social networking available to mothers through their interactions at the school not only brought them in contact with other mothers, but by extension, with other families, effectively linking them to social support from other families in the same stage of the life-cycle.

School was a socializing force for their children, and to some extent, for the mothers too. Women learned American childhood stories by reading storybooks along with their children. They were involved in the completion of homework and study projects.

Motherhood also more quickly linked women to health services in the U.S. One such link was formed because of public health statutes regulating the vaccination of children prior to enrollment in public school and recommendations for infant vaccinations. All of the mothers who had arrived in the U.S. for the first time or who had recently given birth described their

experiences of taking their child to be vaccinated. For many, vaccinations were the only interaction with a health service provider they had in the U.S.

Mothers also described seeking primary care physicians and dentists on behalf of their children. One mother talked about using her husband's insurance to take her infant to see the pediatrician for a viral infection (P3). Another mentioned that she had never seen a doctor in 2.5 years in Pittsburgh, but she had taken her son to see the dentist (P2).

The sample included only one non-mother (P1), and the needs and concerns she articulated with respect to her own quality of life were different than those of the mothers. While mothers met other mothers delivering their children to school, P1's struggles with acute isolation and loneliness were related to the difficulty she experienced in identifying venues for socialization into U.S. culture among her peer group of young, married, childless housewives. She talked about activities she enjoyed with friends in her home country (shopping and other entertainments), but at the time of interview, she was still struggling to achieve the same satisfaction by engaging in similar activities in the new cultural context of the U.S. Her voice underscores the role of motherhood as one that facilitates an international wife in finding social support.

Shaffer and Harrison (2001) documented the role of motherhood as a positive predictor of spouse adjustment and theorized that motherhood may provide some level of role consistency across cultures that smoothes a mother's interaction in a new environment. The voice of P1 in the current study supports Shaffer and Harrison's idea.

In their conclusions from the study with Korean wives of Korean international students, Cho et al. (2005) recommended that universities provide orientation programs specifically for international spouses. This suggestion was also made by Participant 6 of the current study, who had experienced a high level of university-related social support at a previous university through interactions with the Student-Parents' Club but struggled to find her peer group in Pittsburgh.

Thus, the current study situates itself within the existing psychological and mental health literature and does share some similar findings. However, when approached from an ecosystemic framework (Guruge, 2004), it is possible to examine how individual participants of the study describe their interactions with the mesosystem levels of community and social network. Motherhood can be seen as an individual role which links international wives to the mesosystem level of interaction, through the school system and health care system. Three other themes emerged from the data from an mesosystem perspective: an international wife's dependency or agency, her sense of cultural identity and the use of virtual communities.

#### **4.1 EMERGENT THEMES**

Analysis of the interviews reveals several themes about how international wives described their experiences as they interacted with social organizations in order to accomplish necessary tasks of life in the U.S.

The first theme, which can be called *dependency vs. agency*, came directly out of wives' descriptions of their tasks in the U.S. Wives described receiving instrumental and informational support through their husband's connection to the university in the early days of their sojourn. Such interaction, while temporally expedient, causes feelings of dependency of the wife upon the husband and his connections until she begins to make her own connections and establish personal agency in her new environment. Thus, the word *agency* is used here to mean both the "condition of being in action" and "the means or mode of acting" (New American Webster Handy College Dictionary, p. 24).

The second theme that emerged relates to the ways through which wives accessed communities and social networks. In analysis of the wives' descriptions of how they accessed a mesosystem level of support in order to accomplish daily life tasks, it became clear that social networks and communities were not only fulfilling instrumental/informational/emotional/



appraisal support roles but also providing links to a cultural identity for women who access them. This theme is labeled *culture/identity*.

The third theme emerges from the use of the internet as a modern way for wives to harness the power of technology to establish “virtual communities,” which may provide both social support for achieving agency and also allow wives to link to a broad variety of resources and organizations that sustain their cultural identity while immersed in the new lifestyles of American culture.

#### **4.1.1 Dependency vs. Agency**

Often, the initial social network most accessible to the family is the one that the husband has through his contact with the university department in which he is studying or working. This university-based social network is already populated with individuals with defined roles of peer (other students or post-docs), mentor (professors), and helper (student affairs professionals and administrative support staff). However, the international wife may feel outside of this network and dependent on her husband to access it for the accomplishment of necessary tasks. Thus, an international wife may struggle to find her own agency in the first weeks, months or years in the new environment.

The interview data include two stories of wives who articulated this struggle in their lives in Pittsburgh. The first was Participant 1, a young, newly married, childless woman who is with her husband as he pursues a PhD program in Pittsburgh. In her interview, she describes struggling with acute loneliness, boredom and dependence on her husband for transportation. She also describes her most ardent wishes for continuing her own education while she is in the U.S. For her, life as a homemaker seems to be undesirable and stagnant. She is struggling to find agency in her life—to come into her own self-defined “condition of being in action”.

The second is Participant 6, who described in rich detail of her positive experience with the “Student Parents’ Club’ at Michigan State University. For her, even as a mother, access to

peer groups was lacking in Pittsburgh. Thus, even as she developed her own agency in acting to locate schools and other information on the internet, she was not satisfied with the “means or mode” of that agency and missed the emotional and appraisal support she had received from the Student Parents’ Club that truly made her feel active and supported.

Thus, in their location within a new environment and with new social settings, women at different stages of life may go through this struggle with dependency vs. agency.

#### **4.1.2 Culture / Identity**

In addition to providing informational, instrumental, emotional and appraisal support, an international wife’s interaction with a social network or community may serve to promote not only the celebration of her own unique cultural heritage and identity but also a recognition and exploration of mainstream American culture. While the definition of social support offered by Heaney & Israel (2002) does not include aspects of cultural celebration, in the case of the study population, this aspect was an important dimension of social support. Such *cultural support* includes both the maintenance of home country culture as well as guided exploration of American culture. It should be noted in future research on and programming for this population that cultural support has a role in the population’s overall sense of well being.

One story that came out of the interviews was that of Participant 4, an Indian woman who found multiple aspects of social support at a local Hindu temple. For her, interactions at the temple went beyond a social networking environment and became a community of identity, a way to remain connected to her culture of origin.

Although she does not explicitly mention it in her description of her interaction, the temple is a place for P4 to meet other people of Indian ethnicity. At the temple, she may meet other people of the same race, other people who look like she does within the sea of mainstream Pittsburgh, PA. At the intersection of shared race and shared religion, perhaps there is a synergy of network infrastructure that creates a community. Hosting of visiting musicians and performers from India at the temple exposes those members of the Pittsburgh temple community

to contemporary Indian culture and maintains for the sojourners as well as immigrants a sense of cultural identity and heritage.

Indeed, the reputation of the Pittsburgh temple precedes itself among travelers and immigrants from India who are visiting or living in the U.S. This reputation in itself shows a “community of identity” which goes beyond social network. Also, the organization of the temple which was able to work to organize support for victims of the 2004 Asian tsunami shows MacQueen et al.’s (2001) “joint action”, and also illustrates aspects of Goodman et al.’s (1999) multiple dimensions of community capacity including participation, leadership, skills, resources, social and inter-organizational networks, sense of community, understanding of community history, community power, values and critical reflection an organized leadership.

Additionally, as an individual, P4’s interaction with the mesosystem of the temple allows her to gain instrumental support, which can make her feel functional and productive. Since she is in a dependent visa category, P4 is restricted from employment in the U.S. Thus, an opportunity to use her time in a meaningful way, by volunteering to prepare and serve food in the temple not only connects her more deeply with her peers, but it gives her an outlet for productivity, allows her to see and be with people of her own race who may come from similar backgrounds, may speak similar languages, may know familiar movies, songs and jokes.

Social networks can also provide opportunities for exploration of mainstream American culture on the part of international wives. Participant 7 described how she learned about Halloween by attending a party given by a new Japanese friend who had been living in the U.S. for 5 years. It may be that by exploring American culture with other people of one’s own culture is more comfortable than just joining an American Halloween party. It may also be an opportunity to practice new behaviors in a safe environment so that they can be used more successfully in the new environment.

### 4.1.3 Virtual Communities

All international wives in this study used internet browsers for informational support about local transportation, shopping, school systems and entertainment. They also used internet browsers to access local information from their home countries or hometown remotely. The internet was also a way to receive emotional support by sending and receiving electronic messages with friends and family. Through the interviews, it became clear that a unique Japanese internet community exists in Pittsburgh and this emerged as the third theme of the study.

From the descriptions that Participants 5 and 7 give, the Pittsburgh Japanese website acts as a virtual social network, connecting users to many local resources in the Japanese language. Both P5 and P7 talk about social organizations they have become aware of through the website such as a cooking class, a local Japanese church, faith-related organization called Pittsburgh Region International Student Ministries (PRISM), Bible study, adult English language conversation schools, and more. When they have accessed the organizations they have learned about on the internet site, they describe the interactions they have had, which provide in-person social support.

Thus, the virtual social networking through the internet allows these Japanese wives in Pittsburgh to have a breadth of social interaction not only with other Japanese families, but also with American organizations that provide support to internationals, such as PRISM and the English language schools. This breadth of interaction with host country nationals was found to be a positive predictor of cultural adjustment (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001).

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the current study indicates that for international wives residing with their student husbands and families in the U.S., three factors may help them to move from dependency to agency as well as connect them to the mesosystem level of interaction while also maintaining a sense of cultural identity. These factors are: a woman's status as a mother, her access to structured community groups (such as the faith-based temple community described by P4) and her use of the internet.

These conclusions will help to inform program development of university-related orientation programs targeted at international spouses. The role of the university with respect to ensuring the quality of life for international wives has been limited. Studies of expatriate businessmen have shown that the success and productivity of the expatriate is linked to the successful adjustment of the spouse (Black & Stephens, 1989). While not tested in an international student or scholar population, their results may be extrapolated to this population, and it may be suggested that the adjustment of the wife of an international student may influence the husband's successful attainment of a degree at a U.S. higher education institution. Also, as mentioned in Cho et al. (2005) and Day (2003), a wife is often the family member who takes care of practical tasks that sustain the family's U.S. household.

Thus, instead of considering the wife as an appendage to the international student or scholar, it is in the interests of both the university and of international students and scholars to have valuable information and opportunities available to spouses to enhance their success in gaining a skill set that can bolster the entire family. Such activities could include:

- pre-departure information (administered before leaving home country)
- spouse orientation program (administered upon arrival at the university)
- spouse social support groups (administered continuously at the university)

A distinct orientation program for international wives in addition to the orientation programs that are typically offered to international students and scholars would provide an opportunity for the wives to meet each other and interact. Additional reasons in support of a separate orientation program for international wives are the following:

- it eliminates the wife's dependence upon the husband to relay practical information from his own Student/Scholar Orientation program.
- it gives a wife agency in her role in the U.S.
- it is a venue for meeting peers early in the U.S. sojourn.
- it can provide introductory information about other venues and mechanisms for improving necessary skills for managing a successful life in the U.S.

While I had originally intended to study community capacity among international wives by conducting focus groups, I was unable to bring a group of international wives together to conduct a focus group. I began to realize during the recruitment that either the capacity of such a community was so low as to be non-existent, or that my recruitment efforts were not reaching the right population, or that the communities from which international wives draw agency, cultural identity and social connectedness are not exclusively made up of wives. While all the wives in the study were of Asian origin, they still came from vastly different cultures and had vastly different daily-life experiences, and skill sets with built-in strengths and barriers to interacting successfully with the Pittsburgh environmental and social context. Because the recruitment was not going well, I changed my method to personal interviews thus changed the focus of the study to one of which could investigate the experience of individual interaction with the environment and with the social mesosystem.

In hindsight, and with new ideas that were uncovered through the current study, I see that in order to study the community capacity of the communities that international wives access for social support a better design would be to center data collection on a single robust community. One such community that would be interesting to study would be the temple community that Participant 4 describes in her interview. A case study could provide a rich description of the community using a triangulation of methods including focus groups of members, key informant interviews with the temple leadership, participant observation and perhaps even a quantitative written survey. Another community capacity study could focus on the Japanese internet community in Pittsburgh. Thus, the current study provides an exploration of the tasks that

international wives must accomplish in Pittsburgh and the roles and social systems they access in order to achieve agency, maintain a sense of cultural identity and begin to integrate into the new environment. This study becomes the shoulders upon which future research on this interesting and understudied population may stand.

## APPENDIX A

### BRIEF DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

This survey was administered in written form after the administration of informed consent documents.

Healthy Communities—this survey is anonymous (no one will be able to identify you). Please do not write your name anywhere on this paper.

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your home country? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many months have you been in Pittsburgh? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is this your first time in the U.S.?    YES    NO
5. How many total months have you been in U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the highest level of education you have reached in your home country?
  - a. Primary school
  - b. Secondary school
  - c. Technical school
  - d. Some university
  - e. Bachelor's degree
  - f. Some graduate or medical school
  - g. Graduate or Medical degree
7. Are you married?    YES    NO
8. How many years have you been married? \_\_\_\_\_



9. Do you have children?        YES    NO

10. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

11. In general, would you say that your health is:

- a. Excellent
- b. Very good
- c. Good
- d. Fair
- e. Poor

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

*Interviewer script (introduction of theme and request for confidentiality):* “In the interview, I will ask questions about people who have helped you in your life Pittsburgh. In your response, I am not interested in the names of the people, but a description of the relationship that you have with each person.”

*Question Set:*

**A. DO YOU HAVE RELATIVES LIVING OUTSIDE THE U.S?** [Opener]

1. Who is there?
2. When was the last time that you saw them?

**B. WHAT CHALLENGES/PROBLEMS HAVE YOU FACED WHILE LIVING IN THE U.S.?** [Tasks]:

1. How do you describe your needs/worries?
  - a) housing
  - b) transportation
  - c) health care use/access/satisfaction
  - d) health insurance use/access/satisfaction
  - e) food and nutrition
  - f) child care/education
  - g) financial
2. HOW DO YOU MEET THOSE CHALLENGES?
  - a) Support from: husband

- b) friends
- c) community
- d) religious organizations
- e) services

**C. DO YOU BELONG TO A COMMUNITY IN PITTSBURGH? [Community]:**

1. Who are the people who support you in your life in the U.S.?
2. How did you meet them?
  - a) through your home country
  - b) through English lessons
  - c) through a religious organization
  - d) at your child's school
3. How do you describe your community?
4. Are there people in Pittsburgh you can call upon if you need help or advice?
  - a) Who are they?
  - b) Why are they important to you?
  - c) What do they help you with?
  - d) How often do they help you?

**D. CAN YOU DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU NEEDED YOUR FRIENDS TO HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH A TASK? [Community]:**

1. What was it?
2. How did they help you?
3. How often do you help your friends?
4. What are the benefits to helping them?
5. Can you describe a time when you worked with others to accomplish a goal?
  - a) What was it?
  - b) How did you all achieve it?
  - c) What was the result?

**E. ARE THERE PEOPLE AROUND YOU WHO HELP TO ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY? [Community]:**

1. Who is it?
2. What do they do?
3. How does it shape the community?

**F. THINK ABOUT A FRIEND WHO IS HAPPY LIVING IN THE U.S. WHAT SKILLS OR STRENGTHS DOES SHE HAVE THAT MAKES LIVING IN THE U.S. MORE EASY FOR HER? [Personal Skills]:**

1. English Language
2. Openness
3. Adjustment
4. Education
5. WHAT SKILLS DO YOU HAVE THAT MAKE LIVING IN THE U.S. MORE EASY FOR YOU?

**G. WHAT COULD SOMEONE DO FOR YOU, YOUR HUSBAND OR YOUR CHILDREN TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR LIFE IN PITTSBURGH? [Ideas]**

1. Orientation program
2. child care (baby-sitter listings, day-care listings, information about public school enrollment, etc.)
3. transportation
4. shopping
5. health care

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