

WIVES OF FOREIGN STUDENTS:
THEIR PROBLEMS IN HOME MANAGEMENT

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Leslie Lieberman
1965

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ABSTRACT

WIVES OF FOREIGN STUDENTS: THEIR PROBLEMS IN HOME MANAGEMENT

by Leslie Lieberman

This study of the wives of foreign students focused on their adaptation to their role of wife and mother while living in a culture differing from that of their own nation. An attempt was made to identify those problems common to foreign wives or to particular groups of foreign wives. An attempt was also made to examine the sources of information to help them carry out their role. A final aim of the study was to determine what kinds of assistance the wives desired in order to better help them in their adjustment.

The sample consisted of 32 wives drawn from 18 nations who met the following criteria: (1) Be the foreign wife of a foreign student or be a foreign student herself. (2) Have at least one child who is residing with her in the United States. (3) Be from the culture areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America, Israel, and Iran. Excluded from the study were those families who were here as resident aliens, or American citizens of foreign parentage.

Data were collected through interviews in the homes of the wives. An interview schedule was constructed consisting of four parts: (1) A background questionnaire.

(2) A comparative activity record form of tasks performed by the wife and/or other persons both in her home country and in the United States. (3) A check list of questions regarding specific problem areas. (4) A series of open-ended questions designed to stimulate discussion relating to problems, sources of information, attempts to gain information, and types of assistance desired.

Some of the major problems reported were getting adjusted to the changed pace of life, operating with more limited funds than they had been accustomed to, attempting to squeeze homemaking and academic activities into a limited amount of time, adapting to different foods, living as a single family unit without the support of relatives, finding babysitters, gaining facility in speaking and understanding English, and experiencing loneliness and boredom.

Their most important sources of information were of an interpersonal nature: friends, neighbors, husbands. In learning English, their most valuable tool was television.

The three factors which most affected the adaptation of the wives were friends, finances, and language ability.

Some differences between women of different cultures appeared in the types of problems and kinds of adaptation they reported.

Finally, the type of assistance wives most often wanted or thought to be most important was contact with other families, and information about living in the United States.

**WIVES OF FOREIGN STUDENTS:
THEIR PROBLEMS IN HOME MANAGEMENT**

By

Leslie Lieberman

A PROBLEM

**Submitted to
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The number of foreign students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States is increasing. Before World War II the total never exceeded 10,000 but by 1962-63 the total had reached 64,000,¹ and 100,000 is predicted by 1970.² Many of these students are graduate students, who are older, and married. The wives of the foreign students may face numerous problems of adapting their home management practices to new and different conditions. Their problems deserve attention because the number of such wives is likely to increase as the number of foreign students increases.

At Michigan State University the number of foreign students is likely to increase more than at many other institutions because of the university's programs of special interest to persons in developing nations, and because of the aid given to development of universities in such nations as Nigeria and Taiwan, and because of the special encouragement given to foreign students to attend the university.

¹August G. Benson, "Foreign Students in United States, Higher Education" (unpublished manuscript, Office of the Foreign Student Advisor, Michigan State University, 1964), p. 1.

²The College, the University and the Foreign Student (New York: Committee on the Foreign Student in American Colleges and Universities, 1963), p. 5.

In the Fall of 1964 there were 882 foreign students from 84 countries attending Michigan State University. Of that number, 36.6% listed their status as married and approximately two-thirds of the husbands brought their wives with them. Nearly half had both wives and children living with them.

It is important to study the welfare of these families for three related reasons: (1) Since 79% of the students came from non-Western and developing nations, their wives face problems of adjusting to a strange culture. (2) The pressures of family problems on a husband and father can influence his performance in his role as student. (3) At present, assistance to the wives by the University is limited to English language classes and an informal program of contact with host families. The office of the Foreign Student Advisor wishes to provide more comprehensive orientation program and needs information on which to base its program.

The research problem reported below aimed at determining the nature and variety of adaptation problems in areas of family living experienced by foreign wives at Michigan State University. The study focuses upon their problems of home management and child care and, therefore, is within the scope of the field of Home Management and Child Development. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine how the wives go about performing those tasks which are associated with their roles as wives and mothers.

2. To determine how they obtain information to carry out their roles.

3. To ascertain what they consider to be their greatest difficulties in performing their roles in this country.

4. To determine the kind of assistance that they desire.

5. To present the above information and recommendations to the Office of Foreign Student Advisor for use in expanding the orientation program for foreign students.

6. To develop and test an instrument for gathering data which may be useful to the Foreign Student Advisor's Office at Michigan State University.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A library search for literature related to this problem reveals a sizable and growing body of material on foreign students in the United States,¹ but only one item of research was found which directly studied the wives of foreign students, the 1964 thesis by A. M. Diaz.²

The Diaz research included only the wives of Latin American students at Michigan State University. Diaz found that only 17% of the wives considered themselves to be adjusted. She also found "some indications" of influence upon adjustment from seven factors: language facility, social class, finances, education, friends, length of stay in the United States, and differences in role expectations; but she acknowledges that no relationship was "statistically

¹A few major works on foreign students in the United States are listed in the bibliography and include works by Beals, Bennett, DuBois, Seltiz, et al. A statistical report prepared for the Foreign Student Advisor's Office at Michigan State University by Mrs. Pauline Schutmaat compared the Latin American students at Michigan State with other Latin American students at other universities. She tabulated their age, sex, religion, marital status, financial support, academic status, grade point average, field of study, and type of visa.

²A. M. Diaz, "An Exploratory Study of the Adjustment Problems of the Latin-American Students' Wives and Factors Affecting This Adjustment," unpublished Master's Thesis, Michigan State University, 1964.

significantly associated with adjustment level." Diaz concludes her study by recommending that a similar study be conducted in the future with foreign students' wives from other countries to determine if the Latin American students' wives had unique problems.

While the Diaz thesis was a pioneer study on foreign student wives, it was limited to Latin American wives and their general adjustment. The study reported here utilized a more representative group of nations and focused on the management role. The use of several nations allowed comparative analysis of problems of wives from different cultures as a mode of explanation rather than the correlation of variables as used by Diaz. Instead of measuring adjustment, a highly subjective item, it will be assumed that, whatever the level of adjustment may be, it will be affected by the problems the wives report as most troublesome. These problems themselves constitute the major focus of the present research.

The Diaz study concludes with suggestions for future use in helping foreign wives achieve adjustment. Most of these suggestions focus upon orientation programs at home before departure and after arrival at the host university. Her most specific suggestion is that volunteer foreign and North American wives aid in the adjustment (59). Most of her suggestions are useful but they are at a general level, which leaves any orientation project still lacking the specific content of its program for the new foreign

wife. The identification of specific problems constitutes the major focus of the study reported.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sample

From the Foreign Student Advisor's office, a listing of foreign students enrolled for courses at Michigan State University was obtained. This list included all students whose primary purpose is pursuing academic course work and who are in the United States on student or visitor status, excluding immigrants and persons currently holding foreign citizenship, but who have been permanent residents of the United States.

From this list it was possible to select those students who listed their marital status as married. As of November, 1964, there were 882 students from 84 countries, of which 237 men and 36 women, or a total of 36.6%, were married. Elimination of the 138 Canadian students, who are legally foreigners, but culturally very close to the American citizen, left 744 foreign students, of whom 242 men and 32 women (35.8%) were married.

By checking addresses of those students living in married student housing, contacting nationality club presidents, talking to various foreign students who knew other foreign students, and through direct phone contacts with some of the students, it was possible to ascertain which

students were accompanied by their spouses, and further, whether they had children who were living with them in the United States. It was also found that some students had completed their degrees and departed for their own countries, a few were officially enrolled in the University, but were residing in other parts of the United States or in their home country, and several newly married students had come to the University since the Foreign Student Advisor's listing had been prepared.

Because this study was primarily concerned with the adjustment problems of families from non-Western or developing nations, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, representing a total of 23 married males, no married females, was further eliminated. In May, 1965, a revised list of 203 married males and 29 married females from Latin America, Asia, Africa, Southwest Asia (India and Pakistan), the Middle East and the Caribbean was prepared. Of the 203 married males, 129 (63.5%) had their wives with them, 68 (33.5%) had left their wives at home, and 6 (3%) were married to American girls. Eighty-four (41%) had children who were living with them in the United States. (For a breakdown by culture areas, see Table 1.) Of the 29 married females, 16 were part of a foreign student couple, 1 was married to an American, and 12 were studying independently. One of the 12 had her children with her.

Because of limitations of time and finances, the researcher selected only the culture areas of Africa, Asia

Table 1. Breakdown of Foreign Student Population by Marital Status and Family Residence

Fall, 1964 Spring, 1965

Country	Number of Students	Fall, 1964		Spring, 1965		Wives in U.S. at Home	Wives American	Wives in U.S. No Children
		Married Male Students	Married Female Students	Married Male Students	Married Female Students			
<u>Africa</u>	76	25	3	21	3	10	2	6
Cameroon Rep.	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ghana	3	1	-	1	-	1	-	-
Kenya	7	2	1	2	1	1	-	1
Liberia	7	4	1	4	1	2	1	1
Nigeria	34	16	-	13	-	6	1	3
Rhodesia	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	1
Other Nations*	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Southeast Asia</u>	201	51	11	48	10	22	1	12
China	47	16	3	15	3	5	-	4
Hong Kong	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Korea	28	7	2	7	1	1	1	2
Japan	27	7	1	5	1	1	-	1
Ryukus Is.	14	2	1	2	1	2	-	-
Philippines	33	8	3	9	3	5	-	4
Thailand	26	6	1	8	1	7	-	-
Indonesia	7	2	-	1	-	1	-	-
Malasia	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Viet Nam	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laos	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Burma	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Southwest Asia</u>	126	44	3	42	2	21	2	11
India	97	34	3	33	2	14	-	11
Pakistan	23	8	-	6	-	4	2	-
Afghanistan	3	2	-	3	-	3	-	-
Ceylon	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Middle East	174	45	12	46	11	40	6	-	26	14
Iran	54	8	1	7	0	4	3	-	2	2
Israel	12	7	2	7	2	7	-	-	4	3
Iraq	24	6	3	6	3	6	-	-	6	-
Egypt	26	13	4	14	4	12	2	-	8	4
Turkey	17	5	2	6	2	6	-	-	2	4
Saudi Arabia	21	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Lebanon	8	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	1	1
Syria	3	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Sudan	1	1	-	2	-	2	-	-	2	-
Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin America	107	49	2	41	2	35	5	1	30	5
Argentina	5	5	-	4	-	4	-	-	4	-
Brazil	27	12	2	8	2	7	1	-	7	-
Chile	13	10	-	8	-	6	2	-	6	-
Columbia	18	4	-	5	-	4	1	-	2	2
Ecuador	5	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	2	-
Venezuela	16	4	-	4	-	4	-	-	3	1
Br. Guiana-										
Peru	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Costa Rica	2	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
El Salvador	2	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Guatemala	3	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	2	-
Honduras	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Nicaragua	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Panama	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mexico	9	6	-	5	-	5	-	-	4	1
Caribbean	14	5	1	5	1	1	4	-	-	1

*Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Malagasy, Malawi, Union of South Africa, Zanzibar, Uganda, Zambia.

Table 2. Summary of Breakdown of Foreign Student Population by Marital Status and Family Residence

Culture Area	Number of Students	Fall, 1964		Spring, 1965		Wives in U.S. at Home	Wives in U.S. at Children	Wives in U.S. No Children		
		Married Male Students	Married Female Students	Married Male Students	Married Female Students					
Latin America	107	49	2	41	2	35	5	1	30	5
Africa	76	25	3	21	3	9	10	2	6	3
India, Pakistan, Afghanistan	126	44	3	42	2	19	21	2	11	8
Asia	201	51	11	48	10	25	22	1	12	14
Middle East	174	45	12	46	11	40	6	--	26	14
Caribbean	<u>14</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	698	219	32	203	29	129	68	6	85	45

and two nations from the Middle East: Israel and Iran, for study. The sample was further limited by including only those wives of foreign students who had children. It was felt that wives with children would present a greater range of problems, although it was recognized that by excluding wives without children some kinds of problems would be missed.

An attempt was made to secure an interview with every wife who met the following criteria:

1. Be the foreign wife of a foreign student or be a foreign student herself.
2. Have at least one child who is residing with her in the United States.
3. Be from the culture areas of Africa, Asia or Israel and Iran.

Excluded from the study were those families who were here as resident aliens, or American citizens of foreign parentage. Also excluded were American women married to foreign men, and foreign wives who had left their children in their home country.

Of 24 women who met these criteria, 20 were included in the study. One wife refused, and three were unable to grant interviews due to language barrier (1) and lack of time because of academic commitments (2).

A second sample of Latin American wives was simultaneously studied through the Foreign Student Advisor's office. Mrs. Pauline Schutmaat was assigned to interview

wives from South America, Central America and Mexico, using the same interview schedule developed for study with the Asian-African-Middle Eastern sample. Using the same criteria for selection, as stated above, 12 non-random interviews were secured from a possible 30, with wives from 8 different countries. Mrs. Schutmaat chose to select at least one wife from each country, and 2 wives from countries with larger numbers of married men in attendance at Michigan State University.

Development of an Instrument

A four-part questionnaire was developed for this study. It consisted of:

1. A Background Sheet for information on nationality; age; religion; length of marriage; number, ages, and sex of children; education and language ability of wife; and family finances.
2. A Comparative Activity Data Sheet for recording data regarding homemaking and child care activities in five areas: Food, Laundry, Household Tasks, Finances, and Child Care. Space was allotted for information on practices here in the United States as compared to practices in the home country; assistance from husband, children, relatives, servants; and any special problems.
3. Problem Areas: A checklist of questions regarding Housing, Transportation, Medical Care, Religion, Babysitting arrangements and the use of Community and University Resources.

4. Open-ended Questions designed to find out how much information wives had about American life before arrival, sources of information before and after arrival, specific problems, and kinds of assistance they would have liked to have or think other newly arriving wives would like to have.

The use of open-ended questions and the loosely structured homemaking activity sheets were aimed at deeper penetration into the specific problems of foreign wives in their attempts at adaptation. It was through discussion that many facets came to light and greater insight was achieved.

Collection of Data

Telephone contacts were made with each prospective interviewee to arrange a convenient time for the interview. Interviews were conducted mornings, afternoons, evenings, and weekends to fit in with the personal schedules of the wives. Most interviews ran between two and three hours, averaging about two and a half hours. A few lasted three or four hours.

All interviews were conducted in the homes of the wives, which enabled the interviewer to maintain a relaxed, informal atmosphere which would allow for free-flowing discussion. Every attempt was made to keep the interview on a personal, friendly basis rather than a more formal structured basis. It was felt by the researcher that these wives, coming from cultures that strongly emphasize interpersonal

relations and which are less concerned about matters of time, efficiency, and organization, would appreciate an American contact that was more intimate and, therefore, they would feel freer to express their feelings about problems and about those aspects of American life that were perplexing or troublesome to them.

In addition to data collected through discussion and direct questioning, it was possible for the researcher to observe the appearance of the apartment, the degree of relaxation of the wife, and in many instances, the interaction of wife and husband, father and child, and wife and child. The interviewer interacted freely with the young children present, and it was possible to observe the degree of acculturation taking place in these children.

For the Latin American sample, Mrs. Schutmaat conducted her interviews in both Spanish and English. Mrs. Schutmaat is an American wife and mother, who has lived in South America for nineteen years, and is presently pursuing graduate work at Michigan State University. Several meetings were arranged with her, before, during, and after her interviewing, in order to explain the purpose of the study, instruct in the use of the questionnaire, and check over her recording of data.

Analysis of Data

Data have been analyzed descriptively and comparatively among culture areas. Data have been analyzed in order to determine:

1. The major problems most common to all foreign wives.
2. Those problems peculiar to wives from a particular culture or region.
3. Those problems occurring less frequently but of major concern to a family.
4. The assistance they received from formal and informal sources which they consider to have been most valuable.
5. The kinds of assistance they would have liked to have had when they first arrived.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in that it did not sample all of the foreign wives. Omitted were the Indians who make up a sizable number of foreign students and several nations of the Middle East, most notably Egypt, Iraq, and Turkey.

A second limitation was that it included only those wives who have children. This had two major consequences: (1) Certain nations were under-represented in the sample, such as Japan and China in which many of the wives were childless. (2) Excluding wives without children would serve to bias the sample in such characteristics as age and length of marriage. Younger, newly married wives would not be included.

The instrument which was designed to gather a maximum

of information in a flexible manner proved to be limiting. The open-ended questions and loosely organized section on homemaking activities were not satisfactory when used by an untrained interviewer. Although an attempt was made to instruct the interviewer of the Latin American sample in the use of the instrument, the data collected were not fully comparable to those of the Asian-African-Middle Eastern sample. The areas of homemaking activity were not as fully explored and the data recorded for the Latin American sample were scant.

A final limitation of this study was the lack of funds for hiring interpreters. In two cases where the wife did not speak English, the husband served as an interpreter, but in the third case, the interview could not be arranged. This is an important omission for it is just such wives who are cut off by language barriers who may have the most problems and need the most help.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Nationality

The sample consisted of 32 wives from 18 countries; 12 were from Latin America, 5 from Africa, 9 from Asia, and 6 from the Middle East.

Table 3. Distribution of Sample by Country of Citizenship of Husband

<u>Latin America</u>				12
Argentina	2	Ecuador	1	
Brazil	2	Guatemala	1	
Chile	2	Mexico	2	
Colombia	1	Venezuela	1	
<u>Africa</u>				5
Kenya	1			
Nigeria	3			
Rhodesia	1			
<u>Asia</u>				9
Philippines	3	Taiwan (Formosa)	3	
Japan	1	Laos	1	
Korea	1			
<u>Middle East</u>				6
Israel	4			
Iran	2			

Most of the wives were born and reared in the country from which they had come. Four exceptions were: (1) The Chinese wife from Laos who was born and reared in India, studied in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and had most recently lived

in Laos; (2) An Israeli girl who was born and reared in Morocco and whose family emigrated to Israel; (3) A Spanish girl married to a Mexican boy she had met in the United States; (4) An Italian girl from Brazil.

Religion

Seven religious categories were represented: Catholic (18), Protestant (3), Jewish (4), Jewish Orthodox (1), Muslim (2), Baha'i (1), and None (3).

Table 4. Distribution of Sample by Religion

<u>Latin America</u>		<u>Asia</u>	
Catholic	11	Catholic	5
Jewish	1	Protestant	1
	<u>12</u>	None	<u>3</u>
			<u>9</u>
<u>Africa</u>		<u>Middle East</u>	
Catholic	2	Jewish	3
Protestant	2	Jewish Orthodox	1
Muslim	1	Muslim	1
	<u>5</u>	Baha'i	<u>1</u>
			<u>6</u>

Length of Residence in the United States

The length of residence in the United States ranged from four months to nine and a half years. Eleven wives had been in the United States less than one year, 7 had been here from one to two years, and 14 had been here over two years.

Age

The wives ranged in age from 18 to 49, with a mean of 28.5 and a median of 27.5. Latin American and Asian women tended to be older ($M = 29$) than the African and Middle Eastern women ($M = 24$ and 27 , respectively).

Length of Marriage

The length of marriage of the sample ranged from 9 months to 22 years, with a mean of 4 years and a median of 5 years. The Latin American women and the Asian women were also married longer, averaging seven years of marriage, as compared to the African women who averaged three years and the Middle Eastern women who averaged four and one half years.

Family Size and Age of Children

The factors of age and length of marriage were reflected in the family size and age of children. The African and Middle Eastern women who were younger and married a shorter period of time had one or two children, all under the age of 5. Larger family size was to be found among the Latin American and Asian women who had from one to six children. Of the Latin American children, 46% were school age, 7% were adolescents. Of the Asian children, 35% were school age.

Language Ability of the Wives

At the time of interview nearly all of the African, Asian, and Middle Eastern wives spoke English. One wife

Table 5. Age, Length of Marriage, Number of Children and Age of Children of Sample

Factor	Total	Latin American	African	Middle Eastern	Asian
<u>Age</u>					
Range	18-49	22-40	19-27	18-29	25-49
Mean	28.5	29.5	24	25.5	31
Median	27.5	29	24	27	29
<u>Length of Marriage</u>					
Range	9 mo.- 22 yr.	1-16	9 mo.- 7 yr.	1.5-7	2-22
Mean	4	7	3	4.5	7
Median	5	6.5	3	5	5
<u>Family Size</u>					
1 child	17	5	4	4	4
2 children	6	2	1	2	1
3 children	6	3			3
4 children	1	1			0
5 children	1	0			1
6 children	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	—	—	—
Total No. of Families	32	12	5	6	9
<u>Age of Children</u>					
Range	9 da.- 20 yr.	2 mo.- 14 yr.	9 da.- 5 yr.	4 mo.- 4 1/2 yr.	19 da.- 20 yr.
Newborns (9 da.-3 wk.)	3 (5%)	0	2 (33%)	0	1 (5%)
Infants (2 mo.-1 yr.)	6 (10%)	3 (11%)	0	2 (25%)	1 (5%)
Toddlers (1-2 1/2)	12 (20%)	3 (11%)	1 (17%)	3 (37.5%)	5 (25%)
Preschool (3-5)	18 (30%)	7 (25%)	3 (50%)	3 (37.5%)	5 (25%)
School Age (6-12)	20 (32%)	13 (46%)			7 (35%)
Adolescents (13-14)	2 (2%)	2 (7%)			0
Young Adults (20)	<u>1</u> (1%)	—	—	—	<u>1</u> (5%)
Total No. of Children	62	28	6	8	20

spoke some English and one spoke very little English, but was studying the language. Half of the Latin American wives spoke English, a quarter spoke some English, and a quarter spoke no English.

The English language background of the wives was varied. Their language background can be classified into four categories:

1. Those from countries where English is the predominant language spoken.
2. Those from bilingual or multilingual countries in which one or more native languages or dialects is spoken, but English becomes the lingua Franca. Generally, school subjects are taught in English.
3. Those who have studied English as a second or foreign language, either on a compulsory or elective basis.
4. Those with no knowledge of English upon arrival in the United States.

The Philipinas and Africans are in category 2; the remainder of the foreign wives are in category 3 or 4. Twenty-four wives had studied English as a foreign language for periods ranging from six months to eight years, and five had no knowledge of English upon arrival.

Education

The sample ranged in education from four wives who have attended high school to two wives who are working on their Ph.D. degrees. Over half of the total sample (50%) have had college experience.

Table 6. Language Ability, Education, and Occupational Status of Sample

Factor	Total	Latin American	African Eastern	Middle Eastern	Asian
Education					
Elementary school	4	3	-	1	-
Attended high school	6	4	1	1	-
Graduated high school	4	1	2	1	-
Business or trade school	4	1	-	1	2
Attended college	5	3	-	1	1
Graduated college	3	-	2	1	0
Working on master's degree	4	-	-	-	4
Master's degree	2	-	-	-	2
Working on Ph.D. degree	32	12	5	6	9
Total Number					
Occupation while in U.S.					
At home	16	10	1	3	2
At home, babysitting	1	1	-	-	-
Attending school	6	-	3	1	2
Home, was attending school	4	-	1	-	3
Working	4	1	-	1	2
Home, was working	1	-	-	1	-
Total Number	52	12	5	6	9
Language Ability					
Comes from bilingual country	9	-	5	-	4
speaks English	14	6	-	4	4
Studied English at home	2	2	-	-	-
speaks English	2	1	-	-	1
speaks some English	1	-	-	1	-
speaks little or no English	2	1	-	1	-
Did not study English at home	2	2	-	-	-
speaks English	32	12	5	6	9
speaks some English					
speaks little or no English					
Total Number					

When broken down by culture area, some differences appeared. Of the Latin American sample, one-third had attended or graduated from college; none were presently enrolled in academic work. Of the Asian sample, all had attended or graduated from college, and two-thirds had done, or were doing, graduate work. Of the 5 African wives, 2 were, or had been, attending Lansing Business University, and 2 were engaged in graduate work. Of the Middle Eastern group, half had attended or graduated from college.

In summary, the Asian wives had the highest educational attainment; the African and Middle Eastern wives, who were younger, shared the next highest educational level; and the Latin Americans had the lowest level.

Occupation While Residing in the United States

Half of the wives were full-time homemakers and one was babysitting at home. Ten were going to school or had been going to school. Three of the ten had completed their degrees and one was out of school, temporarily, because of childbirth. Five of the wives were working full or part time or were looking for work at the time of the interview.*

All but one of the Latin American wives were at home. The one, who brought her maid with her, was working part

*Government regulations strictly limit the employment of foreign students and their spouses. Most foreign wives are not allowed to work. Those wives reported as working or seeking work have had their visas changed.

time in a professional role. By contrast, half of the African-Asian-Middle Eastern sample were, or had been, attending school, a quarter were involved in working, and a quarter were at home as full-time homemakers.

Income in the United States

The average monthly income while in the United States ranged from \$185.00 per month to \$1,000.00 per month. A few had summer employment, odd jobs, or babysitting by the wife which added to their income.

Ten had incomes of under \$300 a month, 13 had incomes between \$300 and \$500 a month, and 3 had incomes over \$500 a month. Eleven families reported that the amount they received was inadequate.

When asked whether they considered their financial status to be better, the same, or worse than it would be at home, 4 thought they were better off, 9 about the same, and 17 worse off. Two could not determine what it would be like at home.

Social Class

No direct measure of social class was attempted, but, through several questions in the interview schedule and through various clues dropped during discussion, it was possible to ascertain the approximate position of the family in the social system of their own country. Social status ranged from rising middle class to established upper class.

Fathers' occupations were mostly in the business and professional class. The occupations of the fathers ranged from farmer to army general. Husbands' occupations in the home country were mostly student, government specialist, or university teacher or researcher.

Nearly all were from urban areas, either capital cities or suburbs of capital cities, or large metropolitan areas. One girl came from a compound in Nigeria, one from a Kibbutz in Israel.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

One of the major findings of this study, and one which must be kept in mind in interpreting much of the data, was that there is distortion in both the American's image of the foreign student and the foreign student's image of America.

Often, the American thinks of the foreign student who is from a developing or non-Western nation as someone coming from a culture less advanced than our own, forgetting that, though some of the material aspects of our own culture may be lacking, these foreign cultures are in some aspects as advanced as our own. Often the foreign student comes from an upper stratum of his own society and is a participant in a sophisticated, urban culture which has been influenced by Western contact.

Cultural Background

The wives studied in this research represented a wide diversity of backgrounds, with varying degrees of contact with the American culture. A few wives had come to the United States as single students, and their acculturation has taken place mostly in the dormitories and classrooms. Some, such as the Philippinas, had come from a nation which has had strong American contact. For the

Chinese women, with little American influence in their own country, the shift from one culture to another has been drastic. Latin American wives reported that, except for language differences and social-family relationships, life was pretty much the same here as it was at home. The African women and Israeli woman had had some contact with Americans at home, but generally found that there were many aspects of life in the United States requiring adaptation on their parts. The two Iranian women in the sample reported practically no contact with the American pattern of life, before arrival.

Image of America

Nearly all of the respondents interviewed by the researcher reported that American films had created an image of the American way of life that was highly exaggerated. Many of the husbands and wives found, upon arrival, and often with something akin to shock, that life here was not at all like it is pictured in the movies. The films showed a luxury and leisure which contrasts sharply with the family life they observe around them, and with the life they themselves are living. As one Chinese put it, "People work very hard here. The American woman works very hard all day taking care of her house and her children. People at home don't believe me when I tell them how hard Americans work." The fact that there are poor people living in the United States came as a surprise to some. One wife summed up the films: "It is all fantasy. Nothing is real."

Books and magazines, particularly Life and Time, helped to contribute to an image of American life for some of the wives. The Philippine women reported access to all American magazines.

The most important source for a realistic image came from friends and relatives who had been to the United States and returned home. It was through friends that the African men and women became aware of race relations, food differences, and the cold climate. In school they had studied American history and American geography, but nothing about American family life. Nearly all of the wives except the Chinese and Iranians reported contacts with Americans in their own country or with friends or relatives who had visited or lived in the United States.

Some wives had expected the cost of living in the United States to be much lower, generalizing from the fact that clothing, appliances, and cars are so much cheaper in the United States than at home. Those wives who had had servants at home were aware that they would be unavailable and were prepared to manage without them.

Sources of Information

None of the wives had any sort of orientation program either before or after arriving in the United States. Most thought such a program would have been useful. A community-sponsored Host Family program designed to provide hospitality and assistance to foreign students from American

families proved to be of little success with the families in this study. Few had a host family and only one wife reported very much contact with her host family.

In response to questions aimed at finding out how they managed during their first weeks in the new environment, and how they obtained information, nearly all of the wives cited sources of an interpersonal nature: friends, neighbors, husband. A few mentioned such means as checking newspaper ads, telephone directory, reading books, observation of others, and exploring on one's own.

Most wives mentioned that friends had helped them. The Philippino women were more specific: their help came from other Philipinos, and they had made contact with families in the United States before departing from their country. Israelis and Africans, also, had contacts from the beginning of their stay in the United States through their respective nationality clubs. An Israeli girl, when asked, "Who would you ask?" responded, "First another Israeli, then another foreign person, and then an American, in that order." Several of the wives reported a special friend as being of great assistance. Many mentioned their neighbors as being sources of aid.

Five of the wives came to the United States a year to two years after their husbands had come here, and learned from their husbands. (Three came as brides.) One husband patiently taught his wife everything she needed to know, then deciding, "It's all very easy," left her to manage affairs.

Enclaves

It has often been noted by American observers at the University that the foreign students and the families of the foreign students tend to form enclaves. The research carried out here did, in fact, show that certain groups had very strong interaction patterns with their own members, some, almost to the exclusion of contacts with American groups.

The Philipinos, Israelis, and Africans reported strong interaction with each other through their nationality club membership, through informal social meetings, and particularly in response to the questions regarding sources of information and sources of assistance upon arrival. Africans and Israelis also reported an interest in contact with Americans and did participate in American social life. These three groups reported few problems in their initial adaptation to the American way of life, and seemed to find their first weeks of life in the United States much easier because of the help they received upon arrival.

The Chinese, who do not have a strong nationality club, and the Latin Americans, who have no nationality club (expressed the feelings that they did not want one, either), reported more difficulties upon arrival. The Chinese appeared to be more independent in their quest for information on how to function in a new situation. They reported, as sources of information, observation, exploration on their own, asking a neighbor. This contrasts with Philipinos

who always stated, "ask another Filipino." During the interviews it became apparent to the researcher that most of the Chinese wives did not know very many of the other Chinese wives. The independent action taken by the Chinese wives may be due to their greater education and experience. All were college graduates, and three of the four had earned master's degrees at American universities.

The Latin Americans appeared to find each other shortly after arrival, but not through organized means. Because of their common language, they maintain ties with each other. Four of the group, when asked what kind of assistance would have been most helpful upon arrival, stated they would have liked some kind of welcoming committee, or at least someone they could have turned to for help in finding out about how to do things. They specifically stated that a member of their group could best help them.

Housing

All of the students except one were living in married student housing at the time of the interview. University married student housing consists of the one and two bedroom furnished apartments renting for \$90 and \$96 per month. Included in the rent are utilities, phone, maintenance of grounds, and repairs.

Nearly all of the wives were happy with their housing and considered the rent to be very reasonable. Some felt their incomes were too low, having to spend half of

their monthly income on rent. Both husbands and wives liked the convenience of living in University housing where they had readily available such facilities as laundromats, milk-vending machines, babysitters, and most important, friendship with other families. Children of the foreign students played with other children in the area and were able to learn and improve their English. The researcher noticed that many of the young children spoke English without any trace of an accent.

Living in married student housing provided the foreign wife with close contact with American families. If interaction within the building was not strong, or if the woman was separated from her neighbor by language barriers, she might miss the friendship she desired. Many wives reported that their building was one of high interaction, with neighbors frequently going in and out of each other's apartments. Others reported that no one in their building was particularly friendly with anyone else and there was little or no inter-apartment contact. One wife had no idea who her neighbors might be. It seemed to be a matter of chance which type of building a foreign couple might be assigned.

The one couple who was living off campus had at first lived in married student housing at Michigan State, but they had moved into a cheaper apartment in Lansing. The wife was cut off from her old contacts and seemed very lonely. She missed her friends, the closeness to the campus, and the availability of babysitters. This particular

woman was further cut off from other members of her nationality group by religious differences.

Most wives reported that their housing had been all arranged and was ready for them upon arrival. Some reported difficulties with their housing due to lack of communication from Married Student Housing Office or they reported lengthy stays in hotels, when apartments were not ready. For those foreign student couples who did not move immediately into married student housing, but found off-campus housing upon arrival, sources such as friends or newspaper advertisements were used.

The major problem reported by the wives in married student housing was that of space limitations. Most affected by this limitation were families of 4-6 children in two bedroom apartments and one child families (mainly those with infants) in one bedroom apartments.

Medical Care

Husbands and those wives who are attending Michigan State University are entitled to the services provided by Clin Health Center for their medical problems. Clin Health Center does not provide services for wives or dependent children of the students.

None of the wives reported any difficulty in finding doctors. They asked friends and neighbors for recommendations. The Latin American woman expressed concern about finding a doctor who spoke Spanish, and stated that

they would have liked to have had a list of doctors when they first arrived.

Twelve wives had babies born in the United States. None reported any special problems concerning childbirth, except for the high cost of doctor and hospital bills. All reported that their medical expenses would have been from one-half to one-tenth of the cost in their own country. Nearly all wives stated that the care they received was identical to that which they had received or would have received at home.

Housekeeping Activities

At home, most of the wives had had servants to do the work, help care for the children, and prepare the food. Some had had large homes with two or three maids and a gardener. Living in the United States had meant, for the most part, doing these things themselves. How well a wife has adapted to living in a servantless society has depended upon three factors: the nature of her relationship to servants at home, her general attitude toward change, and the amount and kind of assistance received from husband or others here in the United States.

The wives in the sample could be divided into three groups: (1) Those wives coming from cultures where it is customary for members of the upper or middle strata to use servants. This included Latin America, the Philippines, and most of Asia. (2) Those wives coming from cultures

such as Israel or Japan where servants are not part of the way of life, but who had hired help because they were engaged in careers outside the home. (3) Those wives who, for a variety of reasons, did not have servants at home.

For wives who had not had servants at home, house-keeping in the United States posed few problems. They were well prepared both technically and psychologically to care for their apartments and their families. Wives who had had servants because they were career oriented, and who now found themselves at home, were somewhat bored with house-keeping and found that "doing everything yourself is a big nuisance." The wives who had grown up with the system of servants were prepared to do the work themselves, and most often did not mind doing it. One wife, in fact, considered it a great lark. "I'm a housewife," she said happily. "My father told me, 'You'll never be able to survive in the United States. You won't possibly manage there with these little children.' -- But I'm managing."

Many of the wives found that it was easier to do the work themselves than to have servants do it. It takes time to train a girl to do things properly, and servants must be supervised. The wives' roles at home had been more managerial, and in the United States they were both worker and manager.

General attitudes toward change accounted for a part of the wife's success in managing her new role. The Philippino women expressed great adaptability. One said,

"This is my philosophy. The American woman can do all of these things without help. If the American woman can do it, then I can do it. This is the challenge in my life." Another Philippino woman stated: "People at home do not believe it is possible for us to come here and live without servants. It is unimaginable to them. They would never do it." A Chinese wife expected life to be more difficult and was prepared to work very hard. A factor of selectivity was probably operating, that allows the more flexible, more determined woman to come to the United States with her family.

Among the Asian-African-Middle Eastern sample, most husbands offered assistance with housework and care of children. Most commonly, they helped with the chauffeuring duties of taking their wives to the supermarket or laundromat. Many times they took the laundry in themselves. The division of labor was generally flexible. Husbands performed a wide range of activities when help was needed. The degree to which husbands helped varied according to the needs of the family, but where the wife was working or going to school, or where there were infants, or small children, husbands pitched in and vacuumed, washed dishes, prepared formula, fed and changed babies and performed numerous little tasks. During interviews, several husbands took over functions, allowing their wives to continue with the interview without interruption.

In answer to the question of how husband and wife felt about the husband's participation, such comments were

made as: "Oh, he likes to do things around the house." "It's better this way, doing things together like the American does," or "In the Philippines a man never does woman's work, but husbands understand that a wife needs help, and we don't have servants to help here, so they won't let us do everything." And, from a husband, "It's a pleasure to help."

The Latin American sample was reported to receive considerably less help from husbands. Generally their assistance was in chauffeuring the wife to supermarket and laundromat.

Help from older children or relatives living with the family was reported in four cases. One Latin American wife brought her maid with her.

The housekeeping duties performed here were essentially similar to those performed at home. Most wives reported that they had far less to do here than at home because of smaller living quarters and, perhaps, because of less time spent in telling others what to do. The Latin American woman had more appliances at home. The use of appliances appealed to most of the wives.

All of the women except one used the laundromats which are located in Married Student Housing. At home, laundry was done either by a servant or by washing machine. Most women found that, though the clothes are cleaner when scrubbed on a wooden board or rock, they suffer less damage when put through the machines. The Israeli woman used

washing machines at home, and the Philippino women expressed the desire to purchase an automatic washer and take it home with them.

Preparation of food was one area in which most wives had to make an adjustment. The Asian and African wives could not obtain many types of food that they were accustomed to, and had to learn how to prepare the American foods available to them. The Chinese reported that they missed their own food very much, more than any other thing, and felt that American food is tasteless. The African and Asian wives had learned to make substitutions for certain ingredients, to find those stores where foreign imports are available, and to adapt to Western tastes.

A second food difference reported by all wives was the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables in the United States during the winter, and the high cost when they were available. All were using canned and frozen foods which, though easier to prepare, did not taste the same.

Most wives were accustomed to supermarkets, although fresh vegetables and fruits and meats might be purchased in the market place. Wives who had not used supermarkets before found them easier and less time consuming. "Everything is there and you don't waste a lot of time haggling," stated one young African wife who is attending school. Nearly all wives reported shopping once a week for groceries.

Several of the wives had had home economics training in college or high school, and reported the influence of

Western cultural patterns in their courses. American recipes, American women's magazines such as Ladies Home Journal, and American imported food were available in Latin America, the Philippines, Nigeria, and Israel. If one could afford it, one could have these more costly items.

All of the wives in the Asian-African-Middle Eastern sample reported joint decision-making regarding family finances. Bills were usually paid by the husband, who had the car, or who stopped by to make the rent payment on his way to classes. Those with checking accounts reported they were joint accounts. Decisions to purchase items were usually made by husband and wife together. Among the Latin American wives, two-thirds reported joint handling of the finances. Husbands handled the money in the remaining cases.

Child Care Activities

Most of the time spent by the wives was in the care of their children. All but four of the families had one or more children under school age, and nine families had infants under a year.

The central difference between raising their children in the United States and at home was reported to be the lack of surrounding relatives. Wives missed the emotional support of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. At home, relatives would have helped watch younger children, assisted in their care, advised on their upbringing, and provided affectional ties. The general feeling was

that it was better for a child to have other people besides just his parents to whom to turn.

Wives reported few problems in connection with child care except for the problem of newborns. Most wives reported that they really didn't know too much about babies before their first child was born. None of the wives had attended baby care classes, two had read some books on baby care, and the remainder either turned to friends for advice or struggled along by themselves. At home, they would have had the aid of either their mothers or their husbands' mothers. One African girl stated, "If we were at home, and if my husband were working for the government, his mother would come to help me. And even though we are of the new generation, and would want some things done differently, still she would be there to help."

One wife who reported no problems was the Israeli girl who had been born and reared in a kibbutz where children are separated from their parents at birth and are raised communally. Having worked in the nurseries during her high school period, she was familiar with newborns and found it easy to care for her own child born here.

Husbands were found to be deeply involved in the care of their children, from the beginning, when they shared sleepless nights with their wives, and worried along with them about how the new baby was doing. They have learned to change diapers and give bottles. Many wives reported that their husbands helped care for young children,

babysitting with them while the wives went out or attended classes. Fathers spent time playing with their children and teaching them. The Asian and African fathers appeared to have very strong affectional ties with their children. The Latin American fathers were reported to have less time to spend with their children than at home.

The Asian-African-Middle Eastern sample reported no difficulties in finding babysitters, if finances permitted. But the Latin American wives could not accept the American babysitter arrangement. They did not wish to leave their children with a stranger, nor with anyone who did not speak the child's native language. Several wives reported that they were unable to pursue a social or cultural life outside of their home because they could not leave their children.

Wives reported that caring for their children was made easier by the use of safe, cheap baby foods, and fresh, pasturized milk, although some mothers were continuing to sterilize bottles and prepare formula for their babies of one to two years of age. Mothers also thought that their housing provided a safe place for their children to play outdoors.

Several of the children attended Spartan Nursery School and the mothers reported that the children loved the nursery school. They felt the major benefits to their children were: learning to play co-operatively with other children, learning English, gaining wider experience and gaining in self-confidence. They felt they had benefitted

from nursery school participation, if at all, by learning techniques for handling young children and by being able to observe a co-operative nursery school which does not exist in their own country.

Special Problems of Foreign Wives

1. Language

Many of the wives reported difficulties with language when they first arrived. Those who had studied English abroad found upon arrival that they could neither understand, nor speak, although they were able to read in English. Even the African wives who had spoken English at home found it difficult, at first, to understand American speech patterns which are more rapid and slurred. Those wives who do not speak any English face problems of isolation from neighbors.

The most rapid and effective means for learning English has been through watching television. One wife reported, "I watched everything on T.V. all day long, till I was sick of those programs, but I learned English."

Seven wives reported that they had attended the English language course for foreign wives which is sponsored by the YWCA and Spartan Wives. Most reported attending once a week for a term and learning little or nothing. The wives who had studied English before coming to the United States thought the classes were nice for those who spoke no English, but too elementary for themselves. Those

who spoke no English thought the classes were too slow, too infrequent, and utilized poor teaching methods.

2. Finances

Next to language, the most common problem for the foreign wives was finances. Over half of the wives had had better levels of living at home. Although their income may have been lower, their buying power was greater. Eleven wives reported that the amount they received was inadequate. One husband, with an income of \$200 a month to support a family of four, stated, "Money is our biggest problem. It's not critical, but it limits our choice. It limits our doing the things we otherwise would be doing." His wife reported not having attended a particular cultural function because she did not have a babysitter. With half of their income paying for rent, and the other half, for food, there was nothing left over for babysitters. A major expense for some families had been the cost of childbirth which has ranged from \$400 to \$2,000. A few wives reported that they would very much like to attend school but could not afford the tuition fees. Although the majority of wives interviewed appeared to be fairly content, the few cases of unhappy wives were those under financial pressures.

3. Sharp Cultural Shifts

For the Chinese students and their wives, the major adaptation problem was in moving from one culture to another. The American pattern of speed, efficiency, activity and

hard work were very alien to them. One Chinese wife responded, "I could never have believed that I would work so hard, or that I could work so hard." She further commented, "I thought the American does not know how to enjoy life. He doesn't enjoy his work, he doesn't enjoy his food, he doesn't even enjoy his sleep."

4. Family Relationships

Many of the wives reported that they missed having their families near by. They were aware of, and often admired, the American women's independence and her ability to move from one part of the country to another. Accustomed to having relatives around to help in caring for their young children, several wives confided that they felt tied down, too close with their children. They also felt strongly that their children were missing the affection they would have received from grandparents and other relatives. One wife expressed her feelings, "He has only us, he doesn't know that there are others who can love him."

5. Time

Wives attending school or working found that lack of time was their greatest problem. They stated that they could not keep up their housekeeping as well as they would like. One Chinese working mother regretted not being able to spend as much time with her children as she did at home. Latin American wives reported that their husbands had less time to spend with the children than they did at home.

At the other extreme were those wives who had too much time. The women who had had careers at home and were now housewives reported being bored. One Israeli wife stated, "I have no real problems. It is only that I'm not doing anything. After two years in the Army, and two years of teaching while I attended school, just sitting around is so hard. I feel like nothing." A Chinese wife who spoke very little English, and was therefore unable to participate in the housewives' "koffee klatch hour," felt her major problem was what to do with herself all day. She was bored and lonely with little work to do, only one little child to care for, and a husband busy with academic work.

Adaptability

Although the Latin American and the African-Asian-Middle Eastern samples were interviewed by two different interviewers and, therefore, subject to bias, there does seem to be a difference between the two samples in degree of adaptability to new cultures. While the Latin American woman expressed unwillingness to leave her children with a stranger, and particularly a foreigner (American), and expressed strong disapproval of the American system of babysitters, the woman of the other groups was using neighbors and paid babysitters if finances permitted, and even those with newborn babies spoke of their intention of using babysitters while they attended school or went out socially. The large percentage of Latin Americans who spoke no English

(20% in the Diaz sample,¹ 25% in the Schutmaat sample) also indicated a reluctance to make a personal effort to adapt. Diaz reported "half of the wives had not taken advantage of the classes offered for foreign students' wives at Michigan State University."

What are some of the factors that might account for this difference? Two factors which appear to have some relationship are age and education. The Latin American sample as a group was older than the Middle Eastern or African group (mean age 29.5 compared to 25.5 and 24 respectively) and had less education than the Asian group with which it corresponded in age. Youth and education could be expected to account for greater flexibility and proneness to adapt to new situations.

Assistance Desired

Two major sources of assistance to newly arriving wives from foreign cultures were suggested by the wives themselves: (1) a formal orientation program, and (2) an informal club or organization composed of foreign and American wives, which could provide immediate assistance to the just-arrived family.

Wives felt that contact with another family who could provide a friendly welcome, help in getting settled the first day, and offer information about the supermarkets,

¹Diaz, op. cit., p. 39.

laundromats, and customs would be useful. Such assistance is provided through the African Club, a local Protestant church, and for the Philipinos through their network of friends.

A few wives from Chinese and African backgrounds were concerned about avoidance of conflict with American neighbors. Upon arrival, they were eager to know what kinds of behavior might be offensive to others. Some wanted more information on how to use American foods. One African wife wanted more information on the subtleties of Western dress.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

This study of the wives of foreign students has attempted to focus on their adaptation to their role of wife and mother while living in a culture differing from that of their own culture. An attempt has been made to identify those problems common to foreign wives or to particular groups of foreign wives. An attempt was also made to examine the sources of information of the wives and how they proceeded to acquire information to help them carry out their role. A final aim of the study has been to determine what kinds of assistance the wives desired in order to better help them in their adjustment.

It was found that the wives came from a variety of cultural backgrounds with varying degrees of contact with American culture. Some of the initial tasks included: learning the American pattern of living, learning how to function in their homemaking roles with the resources available, finding friends, and in some cases, developing facility with the language.

Some of the major problems reported were getting adjusted to the changed pace of life, operating with more limited funds than they have been accustomed to, attempting to squeeze homemaking and academic activities into a limited

amount of time, adapting to different foods, living as a single family unit without the support of relatives, finding babysitters, gaining facility in speaking and understanding English, and experiencing loneliness and boredom.

Their most important sources of information had been of an interpersonal nature: friends, neighbors, husbands. In learning English, their most valuable tool had been television.

The three factors which had most affected the adaptation of the wives were friends, finances, and language ability. Limitation of finances can limit their participation in other areas, as well as contribute to feelings of worry and apprehension. Friends are needed for interpersonal support, and for providing assistance in getting families settled, as well as providing for a pleasant stay in the United States. Lack of ability to communicate results in isolation which can lead to loneliness and depression.

Some differences between women of different cultures appeared in the types of problems and kinds of adaptation they reported.

The Philipinas who had a strong network of friendships, active nationality club, familiarity with Western culture, and no language problems reported they had no problems of adjustment.

The Chinese, by contrast, who had had little Western contact, strong cultural differences regarding time

and activity, food and language differences, and a weak nationality club with little intra-group contact, reported greater problems of adjustment. Their means of seeking information were more independent.

The Israelis and the Africans both had close ties with members of their own group, strong nationality clubs, and contact with Americans. The Israelis had language differences, while the Africans had slightly different food and customs. Members of these two groups did not report many problems.

The Latin Americans had no nationality club, but close ties with each other, language problems, and greater resistance to change. They reported more difficulties upon first coming to the United States. They had more problems than the Philipinos, Africans or Israelis.

Finally, the type of assistance wives most often wanted or thought to be most important was contact with other families, friends, and information about living in the United States.

On the whole, most of the wives appeared relaxed and content. They appeared to have adjusted very well.

Need for Further Research

Because this study has revealed differences in the adjustment problems of families from different culture areas, it would be advantageous to continue a study into the problems of some of the other nationality groups not included

in this study. Omitted were the families from India, Egypt, Iraq, and scattered parts of the Middle East. It is possible that these families may have special problems or difficulties in areas not encountered in the present study.

A further research need is to study those wives who do not have children. Included in this category are brides who might have special adaptation problems. This category also includes wives who may have religious and cultural differences in their feelings about children or birth control.

CHAPTER VII

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOREIGN STUDENT ADVISOR'S OFFICE

1. An orientation program by the University for new foreign students which would include their wives would be useful. The program could include:
 - a. a tour of the campus and an explanation of the bureaucratic workings of a large university
 - b. a picture of American life that would offset the image created by American films abroad
 - c. information on campus and city transportation systems, family health insurance plans,
 - d. American patterns of interpersonal relations, and expectations.
2. Assistance be given to foreign wives in setting up an organization that would meet their needs for:
 - a. friendship
 - b. assistance to newly arriving wives
 - c. intercultural exchange between members of different cultures
 - d. information on American foods, simplified housekeeping, economy practices in shopping, preparing food, international cooking methods
 - e. a babysitting co-op
 - f. information on infant care and current child rearing practices

- g. a listing of university and community services available, doctors, and information about nursery schools
 - h. clothing, furnishings, appliances exchange whereby couples leaving could sell their household possessions to couples arriving.
3. The English class for Foreign Wives sponsored by the YWCA and Spartan Wives could be improved by:
- a. dividing the class into two groups: those who have studied English and have a knowledge of the language but who need to gain practice in speaking and understanding; and those who do not speak, understand, or read English at all
 - b. offering more intensive instruction.
4. The Host Family program, if it is to be successful, must provide the visiting family with honest, friendly, and helpful assistance when they first arrive. An invitation to dinner would be more welcome the evening of arrival than on Christmas or Thanksgiving.
5. A change in regulations in Married Student Housing to allow couples expecting babies to move into two bedroom apartments shortly before birth rather than after, which is a time of great stress for both parents. It is particularly difficult to take on the added labors of moving at a time when husbands are pressured with academic work, sleepless nights, and when mothers are recuperating from childbirth, with the added responsibility of caring for a newborn without much assistance.

6. Before arrival in the United States, couples should be provided with accurate information on the cost of living in the East Lansing area, particularly the cost of food and medical care. Information should also be provided on the restrictions and regulations governing the employment of wives.

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APPENDIX A:

Questionnaire

Background Sheet

No. _____

- 1. Country of Origin _____
- 2. Length of stay in U.S. _____ of husband if longer than wife _____
- 3. Age _____
- 4. Religion _____ Religion of husband if different from wife _____
- 5. Length of Marriage _____ Where Marriage Took Place _____
 _____ Arranged _____

6. Number of Children _____

Name	Sex	Age	Born at home	Born in U.S.
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

7. Level and Country of Education:

	of wife	of husband	of wife's parents	
			Father	Mother
elementary school	_____	_____	_____	_____
attended high school	_____	_____	_____	_____
completed high school	_____	_____	_____	_____
attended college, univ.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bachelor's or equivalent	_____	_____	_____	_____
Graduate level	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. Wife attending classes at M.S.U. _____ How many courses _____
 English language classes _____

9. Wife's major or field of interest(s) _____ Husband's major or field of interest(s) _____
 (M.S.U.) _____
 (Home) _____

10. Language ability of Wife:

A. Where Learned:

spoke English at home _____ Wholly _____ Partly _____
studied English at home _____ How Long _____
studied English in U.S. _____ How Long _____

B. Facility:

Do you feel that your understanding of English and ability to communicate in English is:

very good _____ fair _____
you have some difficulty _____ a great deal of difficulty _____

Interviewer rating of language facility:

1. _____ speaks clearly, understands well
2. _____ speaks with some difficulty, fair understanding
3. _____ slight speaking ability, difficult understanding
4. _____ speaks no English or only few phrases, needs interpreter.

C. Usage:

1. What language do you speak to your husband? _____
2. What language do you speak to your children? _____
3. What language do you speak with close friends?
(own nationals) _____ (other nationalities) _____
_____ (American friends) _____
4. Do you regularly read or look at any U.S. newspapers written in English? _____ If so, which ones? _____

5. Do you regularly read or look at any U.S. magazines written in English? _____ If so, which ones? _____

6. Do you feel that you understand adequately TV and radio programs? _____ Which programs do you regularly watch or listen to? _____

11. Status in Country of Origin:

A. Husband's Occupation _____

B. Father's Occupation _____

C. Type of Area Lived in Most of Life:

_____ Farm _____ Village _____ Small City
_____ Middle-sized City _____ Large City

12. Average Monthly Income in the United States:

- Between \$100 and \$199 per month
- Between \$200 and \$299 per month
- Between \$300 and \$399 per month
- Between \$400 and \$499 per month
- \$500 or more

Do you feel the amount you receive is adequate? _____

13. Sources of Income:

	United States	Own Country
<u>Grants and Fellowships</u>		
government	_____	_____
university	_____	_____
private agency	_____	_____
<u>Employment</u>		
part time employment--husband	_____	
salary of husband from home		_____
*part time employment--wife	_____	
<u>Personal Sources</u>		
savings		_____
family assistance (from whom)		_____
other	_____	_____

14. Would you say that you are better off, as well off, or worse off financially than you were at home?

Better _____ Same _____ Worse _____

*Under \$50 a month from any one source.

AREA	HOW DONE IN OWN COUNTRY WHO DOES IN OWN COUNTRY	WHAT WIFE DOES HERE HOW WIFE DOES IT	HUSBAND'S AND/OR OTHER'S ASSISTANCE HERE	HOW HUSBAND AND WIFE FEEL ABOUT HUSBAND'S
1. <u>FOOD</u>				
Shopping				
Preparation				
Equipment				
Dishes				
U.S. LAUNDRY				
Washing				
Ironing				
				SPECIAL PROBLEMS
				SPECIAL PROBLEMS

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AREA

HOW DONE IN OWN COUNTRY
WHO DOES IN OWN COUNTRY

WHAT WIFE DOES HERE
HOW WIFE DOES IT

HUSBAND'S AND/OR OTHER'S
ASSISTANCE HERE

HOW HUSBAND AND WIFE
FEEL ABOUT HUSBAND'S HEL

Learning

Sweeping

Baneting

Washing Bed

W.
GENERAL

Stitching

Knitting

Knitting
Sewing

Embroidering

Knitting
Embroidering

SPECIAL PROBLEMS

SPECIAL PROBLEMS

CARE

THE CARE
GIVING

PROVIDING
GIVING

PROVIDING CARE
GIVING

GIVING

GIVING

GIVING

GIVING
CHILD

GIVING
WORK

GIVING

GIVING
CHILD

GIVING
PARTICIPATION

GIVING

GIVING

SPECIAL PROBLEMS

I. HOUSING:

1. Was your housing arranged for you when you came here?
2. If not, did you have trouble finding housing?
3. Who helped you find housing? If by self, through what sources?
4. Is your housing adequate? Is there sufficient space?
5. Does the cost of your housing fit in with your budget?
6. Have you any suggestions that would help Housing Office or Foreign Student Office be more helpful to you or to future newly arriving married students?

II. MEDICAL CARE:

1. Do you have health insurance to cover yourself, your children, your husband?
2. Did you have trouble finding a doctor for yourself, or your children?
3. Did you have trouble finding a dentist?
4. Did you have trouble finding medical care for pregnancy and childbirth?
5. Did you have any special problems concerning pregnancy and childbirth?

III. TRANSPORTATION:

1. Do you drive a car? Do you have a car to drive?
2. Is public transportation available to you?
3. Do you rely on your husband for transportation?
4. Do you rely on friends for transportation?

IV. BABY-SITTING:

1. Have you been able to find baby-sitters for your child(ren)?
2. What are some of the occasions for which you need babysitters?
3. If there were provisions made for care of pre-school age children of several wives who were attending a specific function, would you take advantage of it?
 Would you be able to pay a small fee for such service, or would this be impossible?
 Would you be willing to serve as one of the baby-sitters in such a situation?

V. RELIGION:

1. Have you been able to find a place where you may observe your own religion?
2. Have you any suggestions concerning religious activity for the Foreign Student Office, United Campus Ministry, or individual churches or organizations?

VI. USE OF COMMUNITY AND UNIVERSITY RESOURCES:

A. English Language Classes for Wives

1. Do you attend the English classes for wives? If not, would you wish to?

B. Host Family Program

1. Do you have a host family?
2. How soon after your arrival were you contacted by your host family?
3. How often do you see your host family?
4. What types of things do you do together?
5. Do you ask your host family for assistance with any kinds of problems?
 How helpful are they?
6. Have you any complaints about your host family?
7. Do your children enjoy contacts with the host family?

C. Loan Program

1. Have you used the Loan Program. Coats _____ Other Clothing _____
 Baby bed _____ High Chair _____ Bedding _____

PROBLEM AREAS

D. Nursery School

1. Do you have a child attending Spartan Nursery School?
2. Does your child enjoy the nursery school program?
3. Do you feel that your child has benefited from the nursery school experience?
4. Do you feel that you have benefited from your contact with the nursery school staff?

E. Campus Organizations

1. Are you a member of any campus organizations?

Which ones?

2. How often do you attend meetings, or special programs, or parties of these groups?

3. Would you be interested in a Wives' Club?
4. Should American student wives be included also?
5. What type of a program should this club have?

Recreation
Assistance to newly arriving wives
Lectures or classes
Other

6. Would you be interested in helping to organize such a club?
7. Would you have difficulty arranging baby-sitting or transportation to attend meetings?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. How do you go about finding out how to do things? Where to buy things?
Who do you ask? Where do you look for information?
2. How much information and knowledge did you have about life in the United States before you came here? Where did your information come from? From friends who had lived in the United States? From government or other agency orientation programs? From books or magazines? Other sources?
3. How much help have you received in learning about life in the United States since you have arrived? From whom?

PROBLEMS

4. What are some of your biggest problems in taking care of your family in the United States?

5. What kinds of assistance could be given to you to help you adjust to life in the United States? To help you care for your family? What would have been most helpful to you when you first arrived? What help do you think other wives would like to have?

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
~~COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS~~
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

M.A. 1965

Lieberman, Leslie

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Their Problems in Home Management

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