3-25-2010

Adaptation of Trailing Spouses: Does Gender Matter?

Anne M. Braseby

Florida International University, anne.braseby@fiu.edu

DOI: 10.25148/etd.FI10041604

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Braseby, Anne M., "Adaptation of Trailing Spouses: Does Gender Matter?" (2010). *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 153.
<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/153>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the University Graduate School at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

ADAPTATION OF TRAILING SPOUSES:

DOES GENDER MATTER?

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY

by

Anne M. Braseby

2010

To: Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation written by Anne M. Braseby, and entitled Adaptation of Trailing Spouses: Does Gender Matter?, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Nina Cole

Leslie Frazier

Alex Stepick

Lois West

Sarah Mahler, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 26, 2010

The dissertation of Anne M. Braseby is approved.

Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

Interim Dean Kevin O'Shea
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2010

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my Dad who was the clever one of the family and my Mum who taught me independence. I wish they could have been here to see this degree completed. I would have been so proud of them both.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I must thank all the participants in Brussels and Kuala Lumpur who opened up their homes and hearts to me with gracious hospitality and made this dissertation possible, in particular the STUDS group who accepted me as a “studette” even though I did not fit their criteria of membership. I especially I want to thank the Woolman family who extended their hospitality to me in Kuala Lumpur and made me feel very welcome and acted as my cultural bridges into the expatriate world.

I wish to thank the members of my committee for their valuable input that made this dissertation truly multi-disciplinary. In particular I want to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Mahler for all her diligence and tenacious edits and determination that I was going to get through this, her suggestions, and steering me through the analysis. She helped me sculpture this dissertation through seven long years, but more importantly, she believed in me from the beginning. I could not have developed my research topic without the help of my dissertation group, “Team Mahler,” who gave me unending support, advice and encouragement during some very trying times. My emotional support came from my wonderful friends, in particular Donneth for having been there before me and guiding me though this last year and asking the awkward questions that really made me think. Carmen, my rock, who was always there when I needed a friend.

I would like to thank my department, Global and Socio-Cultural Studies, Department of Asian Studies, and G.S.A. for partially funding my research and Florida International University Graduate School for their financial support though the Dissertation Year Fellowship which financially enabled me to finish this dissertation.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
ADAPTATION OF TRAILING SPOUSES: DOES GENDER MATTER?

by

Anne M. Braseby

Florida International University, 2010

Miami, Florida

Professor Sarah Mahler, Major Professor

The adaptation to a new country is a complex and stressful process that is compounded when changes in status and identity have to be made. This exploratory study examined the adaptation of international company transferee spouses when they decide to follow the transferee on overseas assignments. Research to date indicates that the spouses' dissatisfaction with life abroad is the leading cause of transferees breaking contract and prematurely returning home. The causes of this dissatisfaction are still not clear and this study sought greater clarification, particularly examining the experiences of male as well as female trailing spouses. The study, thus, takes gender as a main variable to consider. It explores how gendered expectations inherent in the structures of society inflect and inform the decisions, attitudes, and behaviors that affect the adaptations of trailing spouses living in a foreign *habitus*.

The study is based on eight months of ethnographic research in two culturally different locations, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Brussels, Belgium. Forty-two American international company transferee spouses were recruited (seven males and thirty-five females).

The data analysis revolved around five main themes: (1) the comparison of male with female trailing spouses' experiences, (2) the effect of location on spouses' adaptation, (3) the communities that spouses integrate into, (4) variations in personal work and family histories, and (5) conditions of exit. The analysis engaged multiple theories regarding gender, sociological adaptation, and psychological adaptation.

Results indicate that both socio-cultural and psychological factors affect adaptation and that gender matters very significantly, particularly along two axes: (1) gendered structures in our society create different reasons why males and females become trailing spouses, (2) the gendered social constructions of role expectations make the experience of being a trailing husband different from being a trailing wife. In addition spouses' status as parents (or not) and their "readiness for change" were found to be important predictors of positive spousal adaptation. In contrast, significant ties with families in the home country and strong professional identity with career projections were important predictors of negative spousal adaptation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Theoretical Model	7
Literature Review	10
Gender Theories	10
Theories on Femininity and Masculinity	10
The Social Construction of Gender	12
Gendered Societal Forces	15
Stay-at-Home Fathers	20
Adaptation Theories	24
Business Literature	24
Migration Literature	29
Psychological Literature	32
Conceptual Plan for the Study	39
II. METHODOLOGY	42
Research Question	42
Operationalization of Adaptation	42
Socio-Cultural Adaptation	44
Cultural Adjustment	44
Interactional Adjustment	45
Psychological Adaptation	46
Personal Adjustment	46
Structure of the Study	47
Target Population	49
Research Sites	51
Sampling	56
Demographics of Participants	58
Data Collection	59
Data Analysis	64
Evaluation of Spousal Adjustment	65
III. MOTIVATIONS TO MOVE	67
The Trailing Spouse – Thirty Years On	68
Decision Time	73
Does Money Matter? Relocating for Economic Gain	73
Ready For Change	81
Should I Stay or Should I Go? Push and Pull Forces	87
Get Me Out of Here: The Unequal Playing Field	87
I Do It For You: Society's Expectations	94
How Much Choice Do I Really Have? Structure v Agency	98
Conclusions	101

IV.	SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION	103
	How Do I Prepare? Anticipatory Adjustment	106
	Company Initiated Pre-Departure Preparation	107
	Spouse Initiated Pre-Departure Training	113
	Previous Mobility	119
	I've Arrived, What Do I Do Now? In-Country Adjustments	123
	Physical Environment and Social Structures	124
	The Ethnic "Enclave"	127
	Strategies Towards Adapting to the Physical Environment	139
	Gender Differences	142
	Interaction With the Host Society	145
	Motivation	148
	Contact	150
	Participation	160
	Gender Differences	165
	Expatriate Community	167
	Parental Status	172
	The Gendered Community	178
	Approaches to Socio-Cultural Adjustment	186
	Conclusions	189
V.	PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT	195
	The Appraisal Process	198
	What Have I Done? Stress and Loss	200
	Feelings of Transience and Rootlessness	200
	Cross-Cultural Stressors	205
	Feelings of Loss	207
	Loss of Independence	208
	Loss of Identity	211
	Loss of Family Connections	216
	Gender Differences	219
	Who Am I? Sense of Self	219
	Identity and Sense of Self	220
	Self Esteem and Sense of Self	224
	It's My Life? Locus of Control	229
	Just Deal With It! Coping Strategies	232
	Stress and Social Support	237
	Gender Differences	242
	So How Am I Doing? Mental Health Outcomes	243
	Gender Differences	244
	Conclusions	245
VI.	CONCLUSION	247
	Limitations	260

LIST OF REFERENCES	261
APPENDICES	290
VITA	302

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1.1 Conceptual Framework for Studying Trailing Spouses	9
1.2 Berry's Acculturation Model	35
2.1 Operationalization of Adjustment for Trailing Spouses	47
2.2 Road Map for Factors: Dual Frame of Reference Conceptualizations	50
2.3 Demography of Participants	59
3.1 Percentage of Mothers in the Workforce	70
3.2 The Continuum of Agency	98
Figure 4.1a Expatriate Interaction Matrix	188
Figure 4.1b Berry's Social Identification Matrix	188
Figure 5.1 Conceptual Map of Stress and Coping	197

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Four middle-aged white women clad in aerobic gear sat under the sun umbrella next to the sparkling swimming pool at the American Club in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Their conversation revolved around the upcoming jewelry party, the congested traffic and the latest complaints about their servants. These women were all accompanying wives of international company employees who had been transferred to work in subsidiary overseas offices. They appeared to be living an idyllic lifestyle: they had few financial worries, did not have to work, and their children were attending one of the best private schools in the world. They had servants to do their cleaning, laundry, cooking and shopping, yet in their conversations they expressed profound dissatisfaction. They spoke about the expectations of a company wife, their frustration at having to put their own careers on hold to accompany their corporate husbands, and the difficulty adjusting to their new roles.

A few miles away from this group, another group of white, middle-aged women who came to Malaysia under similar conditions sat with a group of Hmong refugees, showing them how to calculate their profits on a computer from the sale of embroidered bags, purses and telephone cases that had been sent to New York to sell in a fashionable boutique. They spoke of their relief of getting away from the corporate world, having the time to be parents, and the opportunity to help more unfortunate people.

Several thousand miles away from these scenes in Kuala Lumpur, a group of white, middle-aged men, also spouses of international company transferees sat around a table in a coffee house in Brussels, discussing the latest iphone and the advantages of using Windows 2007 over Windows XP. They demonstrated little to no

acknowledgement of the fact that they were thousands of miles from home and living an unusual lifestyle for American men---house-husband and stay-at-home-parent.

These three seemingly different groups all have one thing in common: they are spouses of international transferees who have followed, or “trailed,” their partners to different parts of the world. They have left their friends and families and, in some cases, have given up their own careers to become, what is commonly termed, “trailing spouses.” As can be seen from these three scenarios their adaptation to the new situation can be perceived differently as they adjust to their situation in many diverse ways. Why would the first group of seemingly privileged women have problems adjusting to their luxurious lifestyles? What frustrations were these women encountering? Why is the second group of women more fulfilled in their new role? Do the male trailing spouses have different adjustments than the female trailing spouses?

This exploratory, qualitative study focuses on American international transferee¹ spouses and their adaptation to their new environment when they decide to follow their transferee partner on an overseas assignment. Through analysis of data collected from in-depth interviews it examines their motivations to move, the cultural and lifestyle distance between their lives before and after relocation, the communities into which they integrate, and the changes that they experience to their sense of self after relocation. By incorporating and comparing male with female trailing spouses this research also explores how sex role expectations and gendered relations affect adjustment.

¹ International company transferees are usually middle management employees who are singled out to represent a multinational company and transferred overseas to work in subsidiary branches in global hubs around the world.

I will employ the term “adaptation” not as a theoretical statement but as an all-encompassing term to mean the change or adjustment of one group or individual to a new situation (1996; Hirschman, Kasinitz et al. 1999) . Because my target population is temporary residents, to assess adaptation I employ a variation of Black’s (1988) conceptualization of adjustment as the “degree of individual comfort and satisfaction with various aspects of the new situation.”

Specifically this dissertation explores these questions:

1. How do societal gendered expectations affect spousal adaptation?
2. What is the effect of pre-relocation situations on post-relocation spousal adaptation?
3. How do motivations for becoming trailing spouses affect their adaptation?
4. How does the reception environment, with particular reference to the physical, structural, and cultural environments of the host society and the expatriate community, affect spousal socio-cultural adaptation?
5. How do the coping strategies that spouses use to deal with change affect their psychological adaptation?

This dissertation uses a multidisciplinary approach to achieve a holistic view of the spouses’ adaptation including and, unlike in most previous work, gender relations. In some recent ethnographies on expatriates (all written by women), the trailing wife has been analyzed from a gendered point of view (Haour-Knipe 2001; Adler 2002; Willis and Yeoh 2002; Willis, Yeoh et al. 2002; Fechter 2007). However, few studies as yet have compared male with female trailing spouses’ experiences with adjustment and examined

some of the root causes of how structural and societal gendered expectations affect that adjustment. Trailing spouses have mainly been portrayed as wives trailing behind in a passive role, having problems adapting to their new identity in a cross cultural environment (Johnson and Salt 1990; Beaverstock 1991; Findlay 1995; Arieli 2007).

What is rarely addressed are the gender relations inherent in a relationship where the spouse possibly forfeits a career to follow the employee to a new geographic location.

Looking through the lens of feminist and gender migration literature I will argue that traditional ideas about sex roles, particularly in the corporate world, have limited much of the research on trailing spouses. Much of this literature fails to recognize the gendered relations and hegemonic power structures inherent in households that affect the decision making processes when deciding to become a trailing spouse. The positionality of gendered value systems relative to socially constructed boundaries results in giving different meanings to migration for husbands than for wives; for workers and for spouses (Fielding and Harding 1999; Li and Findlay 1999). By considering males as well as females as the “trailing spouse” I will deconstruct some reasons that may account for international company transferee spouses finding difficulty in adjusting, or adjusting well after relocation.

The use of the term “trailing spouse” is often used in the business literature; however, it is a little contentious in scholarly circles as it implies a lack of agency. Other terms used such as “accompanying spouses” (although that implies that they are both employed) and “tied movers,” seem just as problematic, if not more so. I found my participants had few hesitations about using the term and often referred to themselves as trailing spouses as a description to highlight their plight. Blogs and listservs also use the

term as in *trailingspousenetwork* and *trailing_husband* with no reservations. I use the term “trailing spouse” not as a derogatory term, but as a descriptive one that implies one partner becomes responsible for the relocation rather than both spouses being transferred by the company. The first use of the term, according to www.doubletongued.org, was by Mary Bralove in the Wall Street Journal in 1981; however, after inquiring on a few intercultural blogs, many of the scholars recall it being used in the early 1970s but could not give me a citation. After a search through the JStor data-base I found a reference to a medical book published in 1978 that used the term “trailing spouse” but the author denies being the inventor of the term².

The globalization of manufacturing activities, service industries, and the economic significance of transnational companies has led to an increase in skilled professional and managerial workers who relocate overseas (Guy and Patton 1996; Willis, Yeoh et al. 2002; GMAC 2007).³ No official statistics are kept on international company transferees except by individual companies, but it is estimated there are at least 1.3 million expatriates with American multinational corporations alone (Shepard 1997). However, this number does not accurately reflect the number of individuals who are *on* such assignments given that approximately 86% of transferees are accompanied by spouses or partners (GRTS 2009). There are also about one million spouses also on these

² The Alien Doctors by Stevens, Goodman, and Mick (1978). In a personal e-mail 12/11/09 Stephen Mick wrote, “Yes, indeed, I am one of the authors of that book. I don't think we invented that term; in fact, I am sure that we did not. That term has been used for years in academia to indicate the difficulty of recruiting faculty to a university because of the employment needs of the husband or wife, whichever is the case. Today, that might also include a same-sex partner, I suppose. I don't think that we used the term thinking that it was unusual, even at that time.”

³ GMAC surveys international companies each year: in 2006 they reported on 180 companies representing more than 8.4 million workers (GMAC 2007:4). Although there is no record in their report as to how many of these are expatriates, the questions asked are about their expatriate staff. All their findings are recorded as percentages, not actual numbers. Similarly GRTS (Global Relocation Trends Survey) in 2009 surveyed over 180 companies who managed a total worldwide employee population of 9.8 million.

international relocations (Shaffer and Harrison 2001). It is often difficult for a family to adjust when they, particularly spouses, typically must give up their professions and move away from their family and greater social and professional networks. Because of visa restrictions in the receiving country, the majority of spouses are not able to work after relocation, and for the modern day trailing spouse, this is pivotal to their decision to move. Research shows that companies are having greater problems finding personnel to agree to relocate overseas because of their spouses' careers (Harvey 1997; Pellico and Stroh 1997; Taylor, Napier et al. 2002; GMAC 2007; GMAC 2008).

Successful international transferees' assignments have been found to be positively related to the happiness of their partners (Corporate_Leadership_Council 2002; Linehan 2002; Takeuchi, Yun et al. 2002; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison et al. 2005). An unhappy spouse is the leading cause of transferees' breaking contracts prematurely (Tung 1981; Harvey 1985; Briody and Chrisman 1991; Harvey 1995; Adler 2002). Early returns among international company transferees are expensive, both materially and professionally, for the company and the employee⁴ (Abe and Wiseman 1983; Copeland and Griggs 1985; Black, Gregersen et al. 1992; Black, Gregersen et al. 1999; Simmons 2002). Therefore it is not only important to understand the causes for spouses' dissatisfaction and find innovative ways to address the problem, it is also important to understand why some spouses adjust extremely well and commit their lives to being an expatriate⁵ trailing spouse.

⁴ There have been many estimates of how many assignments "fail," depending on the definition of fail, numbers vary widely. Early returns have been estimated anywhere between 10 percent and 45 percent with a cost of a single failed assignment costing between \$200,000 – 1.2 million dollars (Swaak 1995, McNulty 2001). GRTS 2009 report that companies state that 7 percent of assignments are incomplete because the worker returns home early.

Theoretical Model

International company transferees and their trailing spouses are but one of many categories of people who cross international borders and live abroad; however, they are rarely included in the immigration literature that concentrates on low income low skilled workers moving to post-industrialized countries. The business literature that has been the most prolific in studying them rarely frames them as migrants. How, then, should their experiences be conceptualized? This choice is more than cosmetic; it involves choosing among myriad theoretical frameworks and terminologies scholars have developed to discuss immigration and cross-cultural experiences. The plethora of disciplinary approaches requires me to make several critical choices from the outset in order to frame my study. The most relevant literature on adaptation derives from business studies, migration studies, and psychology. Each discipline has relevant perspectives to widen our understandings of trailing spouses.

In much of the business literature trailing spouses have been studied only marginally, almost always in the course of research on expatriate employed transferees. Despite findings that spousal satisfaction levels affect transferees' longevity, much less research has focused on the experiences of trailing spouses. The existing spousal literature is largely praxis-oriented, identifying factors leading to adjustment that allow the employee to work efficiently and at high capacity. It thus aims to resolve the spouse "problem" in a pragmatic way. One of the leading expatriate business scholars, Stewart

⁵ An expatriate is defined as anyone who lives outside their nation-state but does not expect to be incorporated into the political system (Cohen 1977), but in the business literature the term refers to foreign professionals and their families and includes diplomats, teachers, NGO workers, missionaries as well as business people. In this study I will use the term expatriate in this sense. The term international company transferee refers to a sub-set of expatriates who arrive under slightly different conditions from other expatriates, in that marriage to a missionary or diplomat or an NGO worker tends to presume an overseas location, whereas a spouse of a businessperson may not include a sojourn overseas in their life plan.

Black, has extensively researched the adaptation of expatriate wives with the main purpose of preventing early returns. He and his colleague Hal Gregerson (1991:463) write:

Firms want to reduce the substantial direct and indirect costs of expatriate failures in overseas assignments and employees want to reduce the probability of failure overseas and the negative impact it would have on their careers. Because spouse adjustment can be a substantial factor in the completion of successful overseas assignments and given that most American expatriates have spouses who accompany them overseas (Black 1988, Black and Stephens 1989, Harvey 1985), it seems crucial to comprehend more about the cross-cultural adjustment of spouses.

Black's quote illustrates the emphasis of the business literature on saving the company money. Many studies link spousal adjustment to interaction with the host society and identify cross cultural training as the "solution" to the spousal adjustment "problem" (Cohen 1977; Church 1982; Black and Gregersen 1991; Arthur and Bennett 1995; Takeuchi and Hannon 1996; Caligiuri, Phillips et al. 2001). However, even though 80 percent of international company transferee families are now included in pre-departure cross-cultural training, spousal "challenges" are still the primary reason given for early returns (GMAC 2007:17; GRTS 2009).

More recent research in the business field has widened its perspective and many of the studies now are becoming more spouse focused, however studies to date have not exhausted the reasons for trailing spouses' dissatisfaction. I therefore turn to the migration literature to explore new perspectives. There is a vast migration literature on the adaptation of low skilled, long-term immigrants moving from developing to developed countries but a dearth of research on highly mobile and skilled professionals. Although trailing spouses are not traditional immigrants and much of the sociological

adaptation literature has little relevance, there are models in the adaptation migration literature, particularly the excellent work that is being developed on gender and migration, which are applicable to this group. Studies of adjustment need to examine both the socio-cultural and the psychological aspects therefore I include psychological theories which have been used extensively in trying to understand emotional well-being during cross-cultural encounters. By utilizing a multidisciplinary approach, using business, migration, and psychology theories, this study presents a more holistic approach to exploring the importance of gender in trailing spouses. Melding the most salient ideas from these three disciplines I built a conceptual map to frame my research and then interpose gender theories as an overriding analytical tool.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework for Studying Trailing Spouses

Literature Review

Gender Theories

Because gender is being considered an organizing factor affecting trailing spouses, it is important to discuss how gender has been theorized and how different scholars have linked power and privilege to gendered interactions. The term gender itself is contentious as it is often used inappropriately to replace the anatomical term “sex” meaning male or female⁶. Gender is used in many different ways which are explored below but generally gender is referred to as the socially constructed meaning that organizes behavior into masculinity and femininity (Kimmel 2004:3). As gender is not a property of an individual but an emergent feature of social situations, the term “gender role,” many feminists argue, obscures the fact that gender is a relational process (West and Zimmerman 1987; Lorber 1994; Feree, Lorber et al. 1999). However, many scholars still conceptualize gender as being the roles played out by males and females and much of the literature uses the term “gender role” to describe behaviors ascribed to masculinity and femininity. Moreover, popular, everyday speech typically refers to gender via the notion of male and female roles.

Theories on Femininity and Masculinity

In academia as well as in the popular press, there has been an inordinate amount of literature on the differences between males and females and explanations as to why there are these differences. Theories of gender have been articulated as either a function of biology or sociological influences, dubbed the “nature versus nurture” debate,

⁶ Some scholars argue that even the anatomical term “sex” is socially constructed and consider it not as a binary variable to be checked on government forms, but as being developed along a continuum. (Freimuth and Hornstein 1982; Kessler and McKenna 1978; Morrow 1991).

although more recent arguments have revolved around gender inequalities produced by structural constraints and the “production versus reproduction” debate.

A shift in paradigm from biological explanations to sociological explanations led the functionalist school of thought, dominated by Talcott Parsons, to argue that there is a social need for masculinity and femininity. Parsons (1951) argued that society had two types of major functions, production and reproduction. These, in turn, required two types of roles to fulfill their functions. First, he identified the production or instrumental roles based on rationality, autonomy, and competitiveness, and, second, he referred to the reproduction or expressive role required tenderness and nurturing. Rather than a biological need for the infant to display sex roles, Parsons explained that society “needed” strong competitive males to produce and earn money and expressive nurturing females to look after the producers, their homes and their children. Sex role theories posited by people like Linton (1936), Parsons (1951), and Komarovsky (1950), continued to dichotomize masculinity and femininity and reinforce the constructed ideal types of men’s and women’s behaviors and personalities (Brienes 1986).

Since the 1970s, sex role theories have faced significant scrutiny and opposition. Although sex role theories extended the scholarship of gender beyond purely biological theories, it gave normative prescriptions for sex roles and when people failed to conform to them they were labeled deviants. Expected sex roles required the suppression of similarities and the construction of differences reinforcing essentialism of masculinity and femininity. Sex role theories were not only criticized for what they explained, but also for what they did not take into account. Scholarship up until this point had mainly concentrated on white middle-class women but third wave feminism drew attention to

other axes of identity such as race, age, class or ethnicity (hooks 2000; Hernandez and Rheman 2002). Structural issues were deemed a better predictor than socialization for later life orientations (Lorber 1994; Kimmel 2004; McKinnon and Silverman 2005).

The Social Construction of Gender

By the mid 1980s the utility of the sex role approach began to erode and with the publication of West and Zimmerman's (1987) paper "*Doing Gender*" feminists galvanized around resisting the notion that gender was an individual identity or an internalized role in social interactions. Instead, they argued for seeing gender as a process for creating and perpetuating social difference. Feminist scholars including Myra Marx Ferree (1990), Judith Lorber (1994), and Sherry Ortner (1996) explored and expanded the idea that gender is not a role, not a set of traits, not a static variable but a product of social relations--something people do. Gender theory focuses on behaviors and roles given gendered meanings and how social structures and structural elements of institutions incorporate gender differences and advantages leading to differentials in power. Feminist scholars see gender as a way of legitimating division in society bringing power and privilege to the male section of society and creating patriarchy. For psychoanalytic, radical and Marxist feminists patriarchy, the process, structure, and ideology of women's subordination, is a central concept.

Although family is no longer seen as the primary focus of all women's oppression (Baca Zinn 1990; Ferree 1990), marriage is an important source of creating gender for it creates the roles of husband and wife, mother and father. Partners have expectations of behaviors as a male or female and these expectations are important in shaping behavior. Many of these expectations are shaped by the accepted, romanticized, vision of the

“traditional” family, with traditional roles for husbands and wives. Since the publication of “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792, feminists have argued that marriage is a social institution that reinforces gender inequalities.

The patriarchal family was constructed to give sexual control of men over women to ensure progeny once male inheritance became established (Kimmel 2004). In the 19th century biological arguments were used to justify women’s exclusion from the labor force; they were too weak, lacked strength, their brains were too small. So those who could, stayed home and looked after the children accepting the role of homemaker and mother. This was reinforced during the Great Depression when it was considered men should have the few available jobs. Although World War I had not lured many housewives into the labor market, World War II did. With the shortage of male workers, housewives forgot their fragility and entered the labor force to replace the men who had gone off to fight. They proved they could work, keep house, and raise a family. When the men returned, the women were expected to return to their previous role of housewife and mother (Kessler-Harris 1982; McDowell 1999; Hesse-Biber and Carter 2004). Women resisted, enjoying their new-found economic freedom, so a campaign was launched to re-domesticate women in the 1950s. Media images showed middle-class mothers enjoying cooking and cleaning, happy that they had husbands who earned enough that they could stay home (Strasser 1982; Carlson 1990). Books such as Lundberg and Farnham’s Modern Woman: The Lost Sex (1947) encouraged the traditional role of housewives and disparaged career goals for women.

The functionalist reification of society needing strong competitive males to produce and earn money and expressive nurturing females to look after home and

children, established “traditional” societal norms and idealized the sexual division of labor (Hartmann 1981). The ideals that were set up during the 1950s were to be indelibly fixed in many people’s minds to the point of believing that domesticity was a natural, innate feature of women, with men conveniently inept at keeping house. This “traditional” nuclear family was an ideal that was socially constructed; it never became normative for the majority of Americans. In the 1960s only 43 percent of American families conformed to the traditional single earner model of husbands as the breadwinner and wives as homemakers, the majority of lower socio-economic class women had participated in waged labor since the Industrial Revolution, and for African American women since the ending of slavery (Hill Collins 1990; Coltrane 1998; hooks 2000). Yet this model of the traditional nuclear family with the male breadwinner and female stay at home nurturer became insinuated into the popular cultural imaginary where, at least among a substantial number of Americans, it continues to hold strong today (Coltrane 1998).

It is this hegemonic belief in the male breadwinner and the female nurturer that frames the analysis in this dissertation. It is so hegemonic that it affects the careers that women pursue, the wages they negotiate, their prospects for career promotions. It affects the division of labor in the home leading to role overload because women work a first shift and second shift and a third shift. But also, I argue, it is inherent in women’s decisions to become trailing spouses. It is reified by the companies that transfer the families overseas and expect the male worker to have a female support at home so he can give 100 percent to the company. It is constructed within the expatriate community with

American Women's clubs and schools defining activities and information needed to be a "good mother." And it is shattered when men decide to become the trailing spouse.

Gendered Societal Forces

Gendered societal forces that are driven by the breadwinner/nurturer model include marriage and the workforce. In terms of marriage, there is evidence that stereotypes about gendered sex roles have not changed very much even as people perceive marriage to be more of an egalitarian institution (Spence, Deaux et al. 1985; Wharton 2005). It is recognized that women are still socialized into the importance of their role in domestic family life and are continuously exposed to images of femininity and domesticity (Olson, Frieze et al. 1990; Pfoister and Fiore 1990; Gilbert 1993). Men are also socialized into being the breadwinner and provider even though most women are economically independent (Friedman 1996; Potuchek 1997; Moya, Exposito et al. 2000; Hochschild and Machung 2003). And, even though males are contributing more to household jobs (Hochschild and Machung 2003), the married woman's responsibility is not just to keep the house clean (the so-called second shift). Women also are expected to do the majority of socio-emotional work (what Hochschild refers to as the "third shift") including creating psychological well-being for family members on a daily basis, a sense of kinship among extended family members, and sociability when friends are invited into the home (Di Leonardo 1987; Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007). This combination of material and socio-emotional labor differentiates women's and men's consciousness and reinforces the role of wife as the nurturing partner and the husband as the provider. Wives are cast as economically dependent on their husbands, even when in the labor force, and use their household responsibilities to show their power in a woman's domain or as an

expression of affection and subordination (Hood 1983; Pleck 1985; DeVault 1990; Deutsch, Roska et al. 2003).

Even though women advocate change, they often construct and reinforce traditional gendered stereotypes and defer to men (Hort, Fagot et al. 1990). For instance, Zvonkovic et al. (1996) noted that the majority of women who report having reached consensus with their husbands over important decisions have really acquiesced to the husband's point of view. The traits that have been socially constructed for males and females within marriage affect the behaviors and attitudes of spouses to each other and the attitudes of other people towards those behaviors in social interactions. Such expectations construct boundaries that help to define behaviors as gender appropriate or inappropriate (Risman 1987; West and Zimmerman 1987; Schwartz 1989; Potuchek 1992; Thompson 1995).

For example, in her book Intimate Strangers, Lillian Rubin (1983) describes her own difficulty in modifying domestic roles when her husband changed careers to become a writer and she assumed the primary provider role in the family. At first her husband was relieved to be freed from the financial responsibilities he had assumed for so many years, but then he fell into a six month depression. She grew very angry at him, outraged that the male was not the provider anymore and her work was no longer voluntary. As a psychologist these feelings surprised her and exposed to her how deeply rooted and embedded the gendered roles of marriage are, ideas that many people find difficult to alter.

Sex roles are as deeply embedded for parental roles as for marital roles, and once a couple decides to become parents they have to negotiate the gendered construction of

motherhood and fatherhood. The construction of parenthood currently in western cultures claims that women naturally feel unconditional love for babies and want to nurture them. It is generally accepted, particularly by men, that women should be children's primary caregivers for biological reasons (Winkels 2005). Alice Rossi (1977; 1984) argues that women are genetically programmed to look after children because the hormonal input during pregnancy and the physical act of lactation form an emotional bond which men are not able. Through historical analysis, Lorber (1994) challenges this assumption and establishes that many women do not form emotional ties with their children. She argues that anyone can develop the skills, competence and emotional ties that are used to nurture children. Many men are learning those skills and taking a more active role in their children's lives.

However responsibility for taking care of emotional, social and physical development is what mothers, as opposed to fathers, do. Mothers do most of the emotional work, not necessarily because they are "naturally" more nurturing or competent, but because of the gendered expectations society expects of them (Potutcheck 1992; Sainsbury 1996; Janssens 1998; Crompton 1999; Deutsch, Roska et al. 2003; Warren 2007). Lorber (1994) believes that women's devotion to child care legitimates the very social order that stratifies men above women, since it affects employer expectations and career prospects as well. Socially accepted gender norms, particularly for females, are now widening as women make choices, albeit restricted by structural factors, but these choices can be problematic. One set of gendered norms portrays women as the primary care provider, the nurturing mother who should want to be with her children to help them develop and grow. On the other hand she is required to strive for economic

independence and develop her abilities to be able to follow a career. Although women are now expected to join the work force, it is only acceptable if family roles are considered their primary responsibility (Treas and Widmer 2000).

Employers treat men as providers giving them more prestigious jobs, better pay and more career prospects (Budig and England 2001; Correll, Benard et al. 2007; Fernandez-Mateo 2009). Men's paid employment is normalized with little concern for the impact of working fathers on families; it is presumed that family commitments will not interfere with the man's job (Bianchi, Robinson et al. 2006). This is borne out by statistics showing the number of days taken off by men for family reasons is minimal. In a country like Sweden that has instigated policies to create equality between the sexes at work, parental leave is offered to fathers as well as mothers, but most men only take a fraction of what they are entitled to, whereas women normally take the full amount (Moen 1990; Haas 1991). When Britain first instigated "daddy days" fiercely advocated for by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, he only took two days when his wife gave birth and even then worked from home. The social construction of the provider versus the family is embedded in institutions and the traditional sex roles still dominate many people's decisions.

In contrast, it is asserted that women's allegiance is to the home and family and it is presumed that women, unlike men, will take time away from the job to raise children or take time off for family commitments (Budig and England 2001; Correll, Benard et al. 2007). Because of these expectations, women are penalized in their wages and in their career prospects. Even single, childless women who take no breaks from employment

experience less career mobility than men and earn less than men (Dex 1987; Budig and England 2001; Fernandez-Mateo 2009; Williams 2010).

Over the last thirty years there has been an increase of women into the formal labor market creating the dual working couple. Some of those women pursue careers previously considered the preserve of men where the organizational structures are configured toward masculine lifestyles presented as the norm and described by Tony Fielding as the “male-stream” (1999:31). These dual career couples form an enigma within the traditional breadwinner/ nurturer paradigm. In the past most professional men have been supported by their wives who tend to housework, social functions, childcare and the general running of the house. With the dual career household where the woman enters a traditionally male profession that takes full-time support for granted, there is a disconnect between expectations and practicalities. It has been suggested that they both need a “wife” (Hunt and Hunt 1982). Sometimes this “wife” is hired to do the domestic chores, or a nanny is employed to look after the children, replacing what is considered the wife’s responsibilities; however, even without this “second shift” women have what Michele Bolton⁷ (2000) has described as the third shift; the psychological battle over family responsibilities against their career aspirations.

Successful career women want to perform like men in their professional lives, but men don’t have the pull of family responsibilities that career mothers do. Often women try to “do it all,” the supermom syndrome which inevitably leads to role overload. They are criticized at work for trying to perform their work tasks and the family tasks, but they

⁷ It is unfortunate that Bolton uses the term “third shift” to describe the psychological battle over career versus family as the term had already been coined by Hochschild to mean something slightly different, i.e. the managerial and emotional work that women do in the home on top of their domestic duties. The one thing that is the same, both authors consider women to have this third shift and not men.

are also criticized in the domestic area for not performing their nurturing duties. They rarely feel they are doing either to their own satisfactory level and can lead to a negative self image. Pamela Stone and Mary Blair Loy have written about these professional middle class women who have opted out of the workplace to become stay-at-home moms because they felt they could not “do it all.” These many competing pressures to be a successful career woman, a good homemaker, a good mother and a good wife, all driven by the ideals of the traditional sex roles, impact women’s lives tremendously. It is these competing identities that determine whether women will become trailing spouses, and will affect their adaptation once they have relocated overseas.

Men do not have such competing identities, so their reasons for becoming trailing spouses are much more elusive. Although the role of the father is changing and men are now expected to participate with child-care, according to the traditional role paradigm still very prevalent in our society, it is only acceptable if their primary responsibility is to provide for their family (Glick and Fiske 2001). Men who decide to become primary care givers go beyond the gendered boundaries in parental roles and suffer the consequences of “gender bending”.

Stay-at-Home Fathers

While women have been accepted in both domains of family and work this acceptance is not necessarily reciprocated if the male wishes to enter the traditional female domain of primary caregiver. Men have generally been excluded from many discussions surrounding families and child-rearing. Even within the vast academic literature fathers were non-existent in early parenting studies (Sullivan 2004), and it was not until the 1980s that studies started to document change in male attitudes to parenting

(for example Lamb 1987). Much of the gender literature concentrates on women striving for equality in the sphere of the workplace, with little complementary attention to men's equality in the sphere of the family (Olah, E.M. et al. 2002). However, within the last ten years there has been a growth in research on masculinities in particular on the changing symbolic representations of masculinity and fatherhood. According to Trudie Knijn (1995) there are shifting images of fatherhood, the new father is becoming part of the male gender identification. Robert Connell (2000) suggests that men have a hierarchy of masculinities, including a hegemonic masculinity and a masculinity associated with caring. Studies have shown that men are now more involved fathers and taking on some of the caretaking role (Coltrane 1996; Gerson and Peiss 2000; Kimmel 2004).

With the increasing divorce rate and more widespread practice of joint custody of children, a few studies have been completed on single fathers to assess the similarities and differences between single mothers and single fathers. Risman (1987) found single fathers' performance with nurturing children is very similar to single mothers' performance. She noted that males can develop an emotional bond with children and the differences in child-care between single mothers and single fathers is minimal. Her conclusion has been questioned by some researchers including Kimmel (2004) who points out that men and women have a history of gendered interactions that are different and cannot be reproduced for men; therefore, their experiences have to be different. Robert Frank (1996), himself a stay at home father, found that primary care giving fathers do not fulfill the identical role of traditional mothers but combine characteristics of traditional mothers and fathers. Interestingly, he found that working mothers performed

child care responsibilities that working fathers didn't and had a closer emotional bond with their children than working fathers had.

According to the US Census Bureau's March 2006 Current Population Survey, among two parent households, there were 143,000 children with "stay-at-home fathers" (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>). Although stay-at-home fathering is becoming more frequent, it still remains a difficult decision for most men. To many people stay at home fathers have crossed the boundaries that are considered gender appropriate and tend to be distrusted by others, men and women alike. Men are told not to act or think "female;" showing signs of sensitivity is ridiculed and opens men up to being called a sissy or a wimp (Wood 2003). Men are taught to be powerful, that is economically successful, and staying at home to look after children is perceived as submissive or dependent. Relying on a woman's income makes them appear particularly unsuccessful. Women's work is devalued in many societies and as such stay-at-home fathers are devalued too (Wood 2003). Dunham (2003) even found employers were reluctant to employ men after they had chosen to stay at home for a period. These negative effects on men in non-traditional roles may lead to psychological health problems where men can experience anxiety, role strain, low self esteem, unhappiness or depression (Keith and Schafer 1991).

In a study on "stay-at-home dads," Kate Winkels (2005) writes about how many respondents found the need to earn an income while at home, continue with the work they were previously involved with, or become involved in a professional organization. They needed to display some semblance of masculinity, of being the provider. "Gender bending," where someone transgresses, or "bends" expected sex roles, helps us to

understand more clearly how gender statuses are constructed and how difficult it is to cross the boundaries of the expected gendered behavior. For example, consider the term “working fathers.” It is not a term frequently heard in everyday speech because it is not necessary to characterize fathers as “working” since it is automatically presumed that fathers work. On the other hand, the term “working mothers” is used ubiquitously. It is important to inflect “mother” with “working” to counteract the assumptions, still alive and well today that the role of mothers is merely to stay at home (Daily Mail Sept 18th 2009). Stay-at-home fathers make the decision to support their wives’ careers and become primary caretakers, which is a difficult decision given the socially constructed norms about parenthood. Rarely do men take on both roles of employment and primary caretaker like many women are now expected to do.

These gendered social constructions of masculinity and femininity, “good” mothers and “good” fathers, breadwinners and nurturers are highlighted when a family relocates for employment reasons. Migration emphasizes the social constructions where husbands and wives have to decide whether to reinforce those constructions or challenge them. This study explores the effect of these constructions and the decisions made because of them on the adaptation of trailing spouses by using the lens of gender theories to search for a deeper understanding of adjustment.

The next section will articulate adaptation theories from the business literature, the migration literature and the psychology literature.

Adaptation Theories

Business Literature

The bulk of scholarly literature on adaptation for trailing spouses is from business studies; however, most of the theoretical business literature in the 1980s focused on the adaptation of the employed expatriate with little acknowledgement that most employees relocated with their families. A turning point came when Rosalie Tung (1981) in her studies on expatriates asserted that family pressures, particularly the spouses' inability to adapt to the cross-cultural setting, was the main reason for early returns. With further studies affirming that spousal satisfaction is closely correlated with employee satisfaction, adjustment, and success at work (for example Black and Stephens 1989; Black, Mendenhall et al. 1991; Caligiuri, Hyland et al. 1998) the literature on spousal adjustment increased.

Stewart Black and Hal Gregersen (1991) were the first to systematically study the antecedents of spousal cross-cultural adjustment. Black had already designed a framework for employee adjustment using three dimensions: work adjustment, interfacing with the host nationals, and adjustment to the general foreign environment which he developed into international adjustment theory (Black, Mendenhall et al. 1991). Their seminal paper on antecedents of spouse cross-cultural adjustment built on international adjustment theory articulating two types of adjustment: (1) anticipatory adjustment which includes individual and organizational factors towards accurate expectations, and (2) in-country adjustment which includes interacting with host country nationals and coping with the general, foreign environment (Black and Gregersen 1991).

During the last part of the twentieth century studies on trailing spouses were almost exclusively quantitative analyses of surveys that were searching for factors that affected the adjustment of trailing spouses (exclusively wives at this time). These included cross-cultural training (Black and Gregersen 1991; Gerado 1991; Takeuchi and Hannon 1996; Caligiuri, Hyland et al. 1998; Copeland 2003), culture novelty (Black 1988; Black and Gregersen 1991; Harvey and Wiese 1998) language (Briody and Chrisman 1991; Takeuchi and Hannon 1996; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003) open-mindedness (Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003) length of residence (Briody and Chrisman 1991; Tung 1998; Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003), prior experience overseas (Black 1988; Takeuchi and Hannon 1996; Copeland 2003), company support (Harvey 1997; Kraimer, Wayne et al. 2001; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003; Cole 2010), social support (Black and Gregersen 1991; Briody and Chrisman 1991; Harvey 1997; Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2001; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Copeland and Norell 2002; Copeland 2003), and family support (Sanders and Nee 1992; Caligiuri, Hyland et al. 1998; Tung 1998; Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison et al. 2005). Some companies responded to these studies by implementing policies specifically for expatriate spouses including provision of language and cultural training, pre-assignment visits, support groups, and monetary benefits (Shaffer 1996; Shaffer and Harrison 2001). The number of companies including spouses in their pre-departure cross-cultural training increased significantly between 1993-2004 from 16 percent to 25 percent (GMAC 2004) with a gradual increase to 30 percent by 2006 (GMAC 2007). However it is still reported that spousal dissatisfaction is the most stated reason for employees breaking contract and families returning home earlier than

expected (GMAC 2004; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison et al. 2005; McCaughey and Bruning 2005; GMAC 2007; GMAC 2008; GRTS 2009).

In the last decade studies on expatriate spouses have expanded and brought different focuses and perspectives into the adjustment literature. More explorative, qualitative, and ethnographic studies have been published that break away from the business model of studying spouses by adding them as an independent variable or just adapting the existing employee literature (for example, Punnett 1992; Yeoh and Khoo 1998; Haour-Knipe 2001; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Willis, Yeoh et al. 2002; Fechter 2005; Fechter 2007).

An important step forward in understanding spousal adaptation is the acknowledgment that spousal cross-cultural experiences differ from employee cross-cultural experiences both in the physical environment, with host country interactions, and with their identity changes ((Harvey 1985; Harvey 1995; Caligiuri, Hyland et al. 1998; Shaffer and Harrison 2001). Recognition that dual career couples are more the norm than the exception has led to studies concentrating on spousal employment, or lack of it, and how this affects the spouses' identities (Punnett 1992; Punnett 1997; Harvey and Wiese 1998; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Kupka and Cathro 2007; Cole 2009). Quantitative researchers have recently included an opportunity for participants to give written responses on their surveys to provide more in depth understandings of spousal adaptation (for example, Copeland 2003; Copeland 2004; McNulty 2005). These later studies have expanded our understanding of spousal adaptation by exploring issues pertaining to gendered expectations of wives including women giving up their careers and becoming

redomesticated, wives existing in a different cultural space to their husbands, and psychological issues of stress and control.

What has only recently been addressed in the scholarly literature is the growing phenomenon of male trailing spouses. Literature is emerging on the executive female where male trailing spouses are given a fleeting nod (Punnett 1992; Caligiuri, Hyland et al. 1998), and studies have included male trailing spouses in their data (Punnett 1992; Harvey 1997; Punnett 1997; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Linehan 2002; Selmer and Leung 2003; McNulty 2005), but literature examining adjustment of male trailing spouses is sparse. The main concerns aired by the few researchers on male trailing spouses are highly gendered concerns about how males will cope with their change in identity. Because social role theory posits that socio-cultural norms view men as primary breadwinners (Haas 1986; Eagly 1987; Haas 1991; Brett, Stroh et al. 1992), the limited academic research on male spouses presumes that adjustment will be more difficult for a male trailing spouse than a female trailing spouse. Men, they argue, have “an additional burden” (Selmer and Leung 2003) of adjusting to a non-traditional role of househusband, rescinding their role of breadwinner and becoming financially dependent on their wives. Women, they reason, will experience less change in their gender roles than men because they are fulfilling traditional and socially expected family responsibilities (Punnett 1992; Harvey and Wiese 1998; Caligiuri, Joshi et al. 1999; Linehan 2002; Cole 2009). Other problems highlighted are the lack of social support and isolation because of the scarcity of male trailing spouses and activities of the expatriate community are geared more toward wives (Punnett 1992; Selmer and Leung 2003; McNulty 2005; Cole 2009) and

whether they are willing or capable of taking on the homemaker role (Punnett 1997; Harvey and Wiese 1998).

The only extensive research done specifically with male trailing spouses to date is research by Nina Cole (2009). She has incorporated qualitative methods to investigate spousal views on what kinds of assistance they believe to be most necessary for effective spousal programs and quantitative data to test for cultural, interactional and personal adjustment. Cole has found that spouses who experience a cessation or interruption of employment have lower interactional adjustment than those who do not. However, career-oriented female spouses had significantly higher cultural adjustment and significantly higher interactional adjustment than career-oriented male spouses.

With this expansion of knowledge about the trailing spouse, both male and female, one would expect that new theoretical frameworks would have been developed; however, little theoretical work has been attempted. The only significant work to date has been a model developed by Shaffer and Harrison (2001) who used qualitative research methods to develop a conceptual spousal adjustment model based on Black and Gregerson's (1991) dimensions of cultural adjustment and interactional adjustment. As they coded their interviews they found a new dimension that had not been included in the original model; one that reflected the spouses' personal adjustment. Using Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1985) they argue that spousal adjustment is a process of reformulating one's identity and posit there are three dimensions (personal, interactional and cultural), not two dimensions of adjustment as Black and Gregersen's model suggested. Using quantitative methods they then tested their model and found that

gaining fluency in the language and developing a large social network particularly with host nationals are helpful to adjustment.

Migration Literature

International company transferees and their families are not considered immigrants in the traditional sense; they are typically middle class, middle-aged, are temporarily away from their home country, and are transferred through the established pipeline of a transnational company. However, even though the immigration literature typically focuses on low-skilled, long-term residents and their structural integration, there are some standpoints that add different perspectives to the analysis of international company transferees and their families. In turn the analysis of my data can inform the literature on highly skilled immigration.

Adaptation studies were nascent from the migration literature and were first theorized by sociologists from the University of Chicago, particularly Robert Park. Theoretical perspectives on the adaptation of immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century centered on long term, poor, immigrants from Europe who were expected to assimilate to the white Protestant core culture (Park and Burgess 1921/1969; Warner and Srole 1945; Gordon 1964). Milton Gordon (1964) later proposed a framework arguing that assimilation is not unitary but consists of seven different categories of assimilation including cultural and different types of structural assimilation. He argued that people can be culturally assimilated, what today may be termed “acculturated”, but still not have full access to a society’s institutions.

The new wave of immigrants to the United States and Europe in the 1960s constituted economically and ethnically diverse peoples. This and the effects of the Civil

Rights Movement brought a consciousness of ethnocentricity surrounding assimilation theories and instigated new theoretical perspectives on immigrant adaptation.

Assimilation was challenged as a goal for immigrant adaptation and other alternatives such as integration (or incorporation) were posited and analyzed by migration scholars (Portes and Stepick 1993; Fernandez Kelly 1995; Sassen 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Raijman and Tienda 1999). Typically these studies focus on long term residents and their structural integration, particularly economic integration, education, intermarriage, and to a lesser extent citizenship and political engagement. Because my target population is temporary residents who are transferred through transnational companies who are there to promote American companies, little structural integration into the larger society is expected. Therefore these typical indicators of adaptation are not pertinent for international company transferees or their spouses.

What is pertinent to this study are the theoretical frameworks used in the immigration literature that consider structural factors such as conditions of exit, contexts of reception and modes of incorporation (Massey and Espana 1987; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Raijman and Tienda 1999). Migration scholars have used what is termed as “a dual frame of reference” (Suárez-Orozco 1989; Ogbu 1990; Mahler 1995) to examine how immigrants make sense of their current reality by comparing circumstances, conditions, and concerns in the home and the host society (Suárez-Orozco 1989). This perspective is important in recognizing that everyone migrates with different normalities, different expectations, and different personal histories. Therefore reflecting on the situations before migration often helps to understand the amount of change that has to take place for adaptation to occur.

Portes and his associates emphasize that conditions of exit greatly affect a way an immigrant adapts to the new country, particularly their reason for leaving and the expected length of stay. Reasons for leaving in the immigration literature concentrates on political and economic circumstances that tends to drive immigration; however, motivations to move and the temporary nature of the expatriate family are very pertinent to their adaptation. The context of exit is generally classified as voluntary or involuntary, although many scholars highlight the ambiguity of the term voluntary. Faist (2000) conceptualizes a continuum from voluntary to involuntary migration recognizing that very few people will be at either end of the spectrum as there is always some element of choice, and always some element of desire. I use this model to explore the facets of motivation in chapter three of this study examining trailing spouses' decisions to relocate and the agency exerted in that "choice."

Another important factor in the contexts of exit is the temporary nature of many skilled migrants. Bryan Roberts (1995) considers intention to stay an important issue when studying incorporation of immigrants. He argues that immigrants intending to return to their home country have different adaptation expectations than immigrants who intend to settle permanently. His views are based on Merton's (1984) "socially expected durations" concept that takes into account family commitments that influence the decision to return.

Short term adaptation is very different from long term adaptation that most immigration scholars concern themselves with. Assimilation and integration theories presume long-term residence, sometimes over generations. Concentrating more on short term adaptation, psychology and intercultural scholars have developed models that focus

on immigrants' and expatriates' short term acculturation which can be used for limited stay residents.

Psychological Literature

Three different theoretical perspectives have been developed to study acculturation: 1) culture learning perspective, 2) the social identification perspective, and 3) the stress and coping perspective.

The first theoretical perspective towards acculturation is the culture learning perspective which explores the behavioral aspects of intercultural contacts. The culture learning approach draws on work by Argle and Kendon (1967) who suggests that unsuccessful, unpleasant, or confusing intercultural experiences are caused by the lack of skills in social behaviors of interacting people. They argue that conflict arises when one or more of the participants does not have the skills to complete the encounter successfully. Culture consists of patterns of behaviors that are acquired and transmitted by symbols over time which become generally shared within a group (Kluckhohn and Kroeberg 1952).

When immigrants first arrive in a new culture, the motives and meanings of the behavior of the host society can be misinterpreted when viewed through the immigrants own cultural norms (Triandis 1989). The different behavioral expectations can be very confusing because often behaviors which were acceptable in their home country are not acceptable in the new culture, or they find some of the accepted behaviors in the new culture are offensive (Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1962; Torbiorn 1982). The culture learning approach argues that acculturation is the process of learning culture specific skills that are required to negotiate a new cultural milieu including verbal and nonverbal

language, rules, conventions and norms (Bochner 1972). It concentrates on the processes that allow immigrants to acquire culturally relevant skills to survive and acculturate to their new environment. Using the work from Hofstede (1980) and Triandis (1989), the culture learning approach attributes certain areas of the world and different ethnic groups with specific cultural values and advocates that one can be trained in the skills necessary to live in a new culture.

A change in cultural environment can be extremely stressful as it involves a reorganization of cognitive maps, learning new rules for interaction, changing previously learned behaviors and acquiring skills needed to perform in the new situation (Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1962; Torbiorn 1982; Bochner 1986). When expatriates first arrive in a new culture, the motives and meanings of the behavior of the host society can be misinterpreted when viewed through the transferees' different cultural lens (Triandis 1995). Not surprisingly, many studies have recommended that international companies use cross-cultural training to prepare transferees and families for their new location (Black and Gregersen 1991; Arthur and Bennett 1995; Takeuchi and Hannon 1996; Caligiuri, Phillips et al. 2001).

From an anthropological perspective, the culture learning approach is problematic because it presumes that a country or ethnic group has a homogenous culture that can be summarized by specific attributes that can be taught as a monolithic trait list. They see culture as a shifting set of interactions in which behaviors and attitudes are always being negotiated and reassessed, and not as a check list of cultural traits which can easily be learned (Barth and Noel 1972; Vega, Khoury et al. 1991; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Angrosino 1999).

The second theoretical perspective toward acculturation is the social identification perspective. It concentrates on group identification and the changing identity of immigrants in their new social environment. Named after Tajfel's (1978) Social Identification Theory which underlies the framework, the social identification perspective concentrates on inter-group perceptions and relations between host society and the immigrant group, and explains attitudes and reactions to each other. Early studies conceptualized immigrants gradually relinquishing identification with their native culture to adopt and internalize the norms, beliefs, and values of the host culture (Berry 1980; Padilla 1980), or as Gudykunst and Kim (1984:209) explained, "were directed..... ultimately toward assimilation." (For example, Park and Burgess 1921/1969; Brown 1934; Warner and Srole 1945; Campisi 1947; Oberg 1960; Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1962; Torbiorn 1982). To assimilate was assumed to have beneficial consequences. By climbing the social and economic ladder immigrants would leave behind their "old" cultures and embrace their new one leading to both economic progress and psychological well-being (Sowell 1981). More recent studies on the "new" immigrants have found that assimilation is not always the solution to the traumas of immigration and in some cases the higher the level of acculturation the more likelihood of depressive symptoms, deviant behavior and poor health (Burnam, Telles et al. 1987; Rumbaut 1989; Vega, Khoury et al. 1991; Gans 1992; Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Some immigrants feel a loss of their sense of identity as they are exposed to new and perceived deviant practices and try to retain aspects of their native ethnic culture as they absorb the new (Portes and Rumbaut 1996).

A new approach was developed as scholars realized the uni-dimensional approach ignored the fact that cultural meanings from the home country could be incorporated into the milieu or the host country. As theorists conceptualized identifications between native and host culture as counterbalancing rather than opposing, a bicultural perspective was developed. From this perspective grew the orthogonal approach which conceptualizes native and host cultures as independent domains.

The most often used variant of this perspective is the one developed by John Berry (1984), who formulated an overarching framework based on the two dimensions of maintaining one's own cultural identity and the desire for contact with the host society. The combination of the responses to these two dimensions produce a matrix that forms four possible acculturation attitudes: 1) "assimilation", which entails no preference for maintenance of traditional culture but positive relations with the larger society, 2) "separation" entails preference for maintenance of the traditional culture and rejection of the larger society, 3) "integration" entails preference and positive attitudes for both cultures, and 4) "marginalization" entails no preference for either culture

Figure 1.2 Berry's Acculturation Model

Identification with Host Society	Yes	No
Yes	Integration	Assimilation
No	Separation	Marginalization

Berry's contribution is breaking through the assumption that acculturating is necessarily dichotomous, as in "host" or "home" culture. Acculturation is conceptualized

by Berry as more complex. Berry argues that the acculturation processes function in separate domains such as attitudes, values, behaviors, and cultural identity and immigrants may relate to their native and host cultures to different degrees in the different domains. For example the group of Sikhs that Margaret Gibson (1988) researched in California rejected assimilation to the host culture and chose to retain many of their home country values and maintain social life within the home (using the strategy of separation), but they engaged with the community economically, educationally and structurally (using the strategy of integration). Navas and colleagues (2007) posit that acculturation strategies to be different in the public sphere, where integration or assimilation strategies are more likely to be used as opposed to the ones used in the private sphere where home culture values are more likely to be retained.

The two major focuses of the social learning perspective are the measurement of change in immigrant cultural identity and intergroup perceptions and relations. As yet no overarching theory has emerged although Berry's framework is used extensively. The majority of studies on cultural identity have been conducted mainly in the United States and other traditional immigrant receiving countries on long term immigrants. A few studies have been conducted involving sojourners, unfortunately these tend to measure the quantity of interaction and have not taken into account the eth-class, overlooking whether interaction between home and host country is conducted in an egalitarian relationship.

The third perspective to studying acculturation, stress and coping, views the adjustment to a new cultural environment and the life changes that it requires as inherently stressful and as necessitating strategies for coping responses (Espino 1991;

Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Ward and Kennedy 1996; Ben-Sira 1997). The stressful nature of inter-cultural contact for sojourners was first articulated by Oberg (1960) as he recognized that American expatriates in Brazil went through a period of anxiety and frustration which he called “culture shock,” precipitated by losing familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. The acculturation to a new culture, he postulated, went through four stages: the honeymoon stage where the immigrant is fascinated by everything new, but after a few months has to cope with real conditions of life when the second stage of culture shock sets in, usually characterized by hostility towards the host nation and longing for the familiarity of home country food, media and conational friends. The third stage shows some acculturation where functioning in the host nation becomes easier, and the fourth stage sees the immigrant existing comfortably in the host culture.

This set of acculturating stages provided a basis for more research in the field, the most notable is a study conducted on Norwegian students in the United States by Lysgaard (1955). He articulated adjustment as a time process and posited that cultural adjustment follows a U-shaped curve for acculturation along the lines of Oberg’s stages but with “euphoria” being the first stage and culture shock representing the bottom curve of the U. The U-curve description has been utilized extensively in cross-cultural training to prepare expatriates for their overseas postings, even though little rigorous empirical evidence has been collected to support the hypothesis (Black and Mendenhall 1991).

More recently theoretical perspectives on stress and coping theorized by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) emphasize changes in sense of self, specifically identity and self esteem. Change in sense of self influences perceptions of control, which in turn

influences the strategies used to cope with those changes. Lazarus' theory posits that the way one copes with the world will either promote adaptation and positive well-being or result in negative outcomes such as anxiety and depression.

It has been well documented that social support can influence coping and contribute to well being (Cohen and Wills 1985; Folkman, Chesney et al. 1991; Thoits 1995; Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Underwood 2000). One way that social support can help with a stressful situation is by providing the necessary resources to help cope with the stressor. Social support can help in many ways including exchanging information within a social network, gaining comfort by sharing, and shaping new interpretations to a stressful situation (Cohen and Wills 1985; Thoits 1986; Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Hopkins 1997; Haslam, Jetten et al. 2004).

These three different perspectives on adaptation, stress and coping, culture learning and social identification have been used on a variety of populations, but scholars using three different theoretical perspectives has led to a lack of clarity about what constitutes adjustment. Some studies found a curvilinear adjustment whereas other found a linear adjustment over time. This dilemma was clarified by Wendy Searle and Colleen Ward when they advocated a bifurcated solution.

Searle and Ward (1990) deconstructed assessments for adjustment and hypothesized that adjustment was not uni-dimensional but consisted of psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment. By dividing adjustment into these two different dimensions they used all three of the theoretical perspectives to include affective, behavioral and cognitive aspects of adjustment at the group and the individual level.

They assert that these two dimensions of adjustment are conceptually related but empirically different and should be assessed as such. They argue that socio-cultural and psychological adjustment are derived from different theoretical foundations, are predicted by different variables, and exhibit different patterns of variation over time (Searle and Ward 1990). Psychological adjustment is based predominantly on affective responses (mainly from the stress and coping perspective) to obtain satisfaction and well being during cross-cultural interactions, whereas socio-cultural adaptation is based on behavioral and cognitive abilities (culture learning and social identity perspectives) to fit in or maintain effective interactions in a new cultural milieu.

Conceptual Plan for the Study

As can be seen in this short review of the literature, much has been researched about the concept of adaptation, yet it is still a barely understood phenomenon, particularly for trailing spouses. What is missing from the literature that would help us come to a better understanding of spousal adaptation? I argue here that few scholars have analyzed the data through the lens of gender theories, and therefore have not understood the implicit gendered structures that are in force when a spouse agrees to relocate overseas leaving behind family, friends, community, and career and how this affects their adaptation.

Adaptation is not just about interaction between the foreigner and the host society; it is much more complicated than that. The phenomenon of the trailing spouse can be seen as a structural force impinging particularly on professional women's status and identity, or as a channel of agency to regain their "reproductive" roles without the burden

of the “first shift” (Hochschild and Machung 2003). This study explores the issues of continuity and difference between pre-location and post-location circumstances, differentiating the lifestyle of the transferee from the spouse. Continuity with employment, status, and the institution of the company give the transferee a similarity of pre-migration circumstances with post migration circumstances, while they constitute a disjuncture for the spouse. Not only do they become “redomesticated”, but are thrust into an intercultural situation for which they are often ill-prepared.

Almost all studies examine the effects of social interaction on adaptation. Social interaction has many facets, including frequency of contact, multiplicity of contact, amount of time, nature, content and context of the exchange. This will be different for the various communities that spouses interface with; the company community, fellow nationals, or the general expatriate community, or the host society. Many studies only include host country nationals when examining community relations, however Briody and Chrisman (1991) established that spouses interact primarily with members of the expatriate community and not with host country nationals. The expatriate community is developed in an attempt to create a more familiar environment to reduce culture shock and emphasize relationships and support mechanisms (Newstrom 1993). In this study I explore separately social relations and interactions with the host country society and the expatriate community.

The bifurcated framework developed by Ward and colleagues, I argue, is the most useful tool for analyzing spouses’ adaptation to their new environment as it takes into consideration both individual and group adaptation, and incorporates the important elements of affective, behavioral and cognitive adaptation. This parallels Shaffer and

Harrison's model of cultural, interactional and personal dimensions of adjustment. Socio-cultural adjustment is examined utilizing Black and Gregersen's (1991) framework of anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Psychological adjustment is examined utilizing Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping perspective. These will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

To date there are very few studies that have explored the consequences of being a trailing spouse for males and how this differs from female trailing spouses. How does this role affect their status and identity and can it can be a channel of agency for them to also develop a more "reproductive" role in the family? How does the difference in continuity and degree of contact with the greater society of the host country affect male trailing spouses differently from female trailing spouses? Will the gendered relations reverse when males become the trailing spouses or will they reconceptualize the phenomenon to claim agency for their status and identity? How will companies adjust their policies to accommodate the male trailing spouse?

This dissertation explores these ideas through a multi-faceted lens of theoretical frameworks. Throughout the dissertation I weave analysis based on the socially constructed ideas of gender, marriage, and parenthood and by comparing male with female spouses the gendered differences that become apparent are explored and analyzed.

CHAPTER II - METHODOLOGY

Research Question

How do the societal gendered expectations inherent in the structures of society govern the decisions, attitudes, and behaviors that affect adaptation of trailing spouses living in a foreign habitus?

Operationalization of Adaptation

The present study operationally defines adaptation as the change or adjustment of one group or individual to a new situation (Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Hirschman, Kasinitz et al. 1999) and employed a variation of Black's (1988) conceptualization of adjustment as the degree of individual comfort and satisfaction with various aspects of the new situation. In the immigration literature, adaptation typically focuses on economic integration, inter-cultural marriage, educational achievement, and, to a lesser extent, citizenship (naturalization) and civico-political engagement. These are not appropriate indicators for transferees or their spouses because of the short term nature of their contract in any one country. Assimilation or integration by international company transferees and their families into the greater society of the host community is usually not expected, nor aspired to. However they must make some adjustments to their new environment, so the measure of adaptation I used was adjustment.

Previous studies have shown that adjustment is complex and should be divided into two main concepts: psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment (Searle and Ward 1990; Ward and Kennedy 1992). The bifurcated approach is considered an accurate reflection on the concept of adjustment and has been used in studies on cross-

cultural adaptation (for example: Selmer 2001; James, Hunsley et al. 2004; Swagler and Jome 2005). Although these two adjustments are conceptually inter-related, socio-cultural adjustment refers to how well individuals relate socially to their new context such as their ties to the expatriate community and/or greater society of the new country and how manageable that life is. Psychological adjustment, in contrast, refers to more personal and interpersonal constructs such as identity, independence, stability, and life satisfaction and how they are modified by relocation. These two broad types of adjustment are both complex and are typically each broken into multiple dimensions that lend themselves to operationalization.

Spouse adjustment for this study was operationalized from a previously constructed instrument developed by Shaffer and Harrison (2001) based on Black and Stephen's (1989) dimensions of cultural adjustment and interactional adjustment. Shaffer and Harrison, in an inductive process, found that all aspects of adjustment were not represented in these two dimensions and added a third dimension, that of personal adjustment. I use these three dimensions, personal, interactional, and cultural by dividing them into their respective concepts of socio-cultural adjustment or psychological adjustment. Because Shaffer and Harrison's second dimension of interpersonal relationships contained both socio-cultural and psychological aspects of interpersonal relationships, I separated their indicators into social networks and social support. Social networks were conceptualized as socio-cultural adaptation and social support as psychological adaptation.

Socio-Cultural Adaptation

Socio-cultural adaptation is described as the ability to fit in and negotiate interactive aspects of the new culture (Searle and Ward 1990) and is based on cultural learning theory emphasizing social behavior and practical social skills underlying attitudinal factors (Selmer 2001). Black and Gregersen's seminal paper on spousal adjustment identified two dimensions, cultural adjustment and interactional adjustment. Both can be considered part of socio-cultural adjustment. Shaffer and Harrison also used these two dimensions in their model.

Cultural Adjustment

Cultural adjustment pertains to the general external environment in the foreign culture (1991:468). I divide this dimension into two parts, *manageability of life* and *acceptance of diversity and change*. Manageability of life is the adaptation to the physical environment and its social structures which includes environmental and situational conditions such as schools, transportation, availability of goods, weather, the ability to communicate, entertainment, communication facilities etc. These indicators have been used extensively by researchers of expatriates (Gerado 1991; Harvey and Wiese 1998; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Harvey and Kiessling 2004; McNulty 2005; Cole 2009). Although acceptance of diversity and change is not included explicitly in Shaffer and Harrison's model, it is implicit in their examples. Variations on this dimension have been used in various studies on adaption labeled as "cultural openness" (Searle and Ward 1990; Arthur and Bennett 1995) "commitment to live overseas" (James, Hunsley et al. 2004) "acceptance of culture" (Hawes and Kealey 1981), "cultural empathy" (Yellen and Mumford 1975; van Oudenhoven, Zee et al. 2001), and "open-mindedness" (Arthur and

Bennett 1995; Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003; Tucker, Bonial et al. 2004). These constructs make good indicators for this dimension.

Interactional Adjustment

Social interaction with host country nationals has been used as an indicator in many studies (for example, Ashamalla and Crocitto 1997; Caligiuri, Phillips et al. 2001; Harvey and Kiessling 2004; James, John Hunsley et al. 2004). However, what has been rarely considered is what spouses actually face is adjusting to *two* communities in the new setting: adjustment to the society of the *host country* and also adjustment to the *expatriate community*. Although the expatriate community can act as a buffer between home culture and host culture, there is still a great deal of adjustment, particularly when families are relocating for the first time. The expatriate community consists of many different nationalities and within the expatriate space cultures are blended and transformed into a cosmopolitan community that is similar around the world, but different from their home countries. In fact many studies are now concentrating on the repatriation process because of problems with expatriates adjusting back to their home culture (Harvey 1989; Feldman and Thompson 1993; Harvey 1997; Hammer, Hart et al. 1998; Sussman 2001; Szkudlarek 2010). Consequently, this research design does not consider only one “cross-cultural” space. Rather, it examines in detail spouses’ differential exposure to and expressions of interactional adjustment in these two different, albeit linked, post-relocation environments.

Psychological Adaptation

Psychological adaptation is described as feelings of well being and satisfaction and is normally analyzed within a stress and coping framework. This type of adaptation is reflected in Shaffer and Harrison's dimension of personal adjustment.

Personal Adjustment

Personal adjustment is about being satisfied with a sense of self while living overseas. Sense of self, using Folkman and Lazarus' (1984) conceptual model for stress and coping, is built from one's *identity* and one's *self esteem* which is interconnected with locus of control to determine whether positive adaptations will occur. Locus of control and self esteem are the two most studied coping resources studied by socio-psychologists (Thoits 1995). The stress and coping perspective has been used by other researchers including (Tung 1998; Selmer 2001; Navara and James 2002; James, Hunsley et al. 2004), also locus of control (Navara and James 2002; Tucker, Bonial et al. 2004), and self esteem (Navara and James 2002).

Important to personal adjustment is social support, as it has been found to be a coping resource that contributes to well being. When families move overseas they lose their social networks and support from their family. Therefore, to help with coping with their new situation, support is needed from the expatriate community and from companies if adjustment is to be positive. Social support has been used in many studies on expatriate adaptation (for example, Hawes and Kealey 1981; Abe and Wiseman 1983; Mendenhall and Oddou 1985; Fusilier, Ganster et al. 1987; Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2001; Navara and James 2002).

Fig 2.1 Operationalization of Adjustment for Trailing Spouses.

Structure of the Study

This exploratory study relied on ethnographic methods to investigate factors that affect adjustment of American international company transferees' spouses living in a foreign country and examined the effect of gender, in particular, on that adjustment. Through in-depth interviews and participant observation I collected data to compare differences and similarities between male and female spouses' experiences of adaptation.

Many previous studies conducted on trailing spouses have been quantitative in nature; however, it is recognized by many scholars that much can be gained from qualitative studies that capture in-depth lived experiences, perceptions and attitudes of those studied (Bielby and Bielby 1992; Cooke and Bailey 1999; Cooke 2003). Ethnographic methods stress a holistic approach that is particularly useful for examining multi-faceted concepts such as adaptation and gender. Qualitative frameworks allow the collection of “rich” empirical data which can be used to critically appraise existing assumptions by analyzing the previously hidden voices of trailing spouses. New factors can be scrutinized in a contextualized situation such as the role of agency in decision making, gendered ideologies inflecting career orientations and experiences, as well as motherhood and fatherhood, and the socio-cultural space inhabited by spouses (Cooke 2003; Smith 2004).

To guide the protocol and the analysis I use a dual frame of reference to explore how circumstances before relocation may affect adaptation post-relocation. Life-stages and employment history of the spouses were investigated to ascertain which stage of parenthood they are in (childless, pre-school, school-age, teenager, empty nester, grandparent), and their career orientation (income based or career based) (Cole 2010). Questions about activities in their home communities, friends, and closeness to families established their rootedness in their home community and their emotional ties to the United States. Spouses were asked about pre-departure training given by the company and self initiated training and asked to reflect on which was the most useful after relocation. They were asked to tell their story of how and why they decided to become a

trailing spouse, what factors affected them, what were their expectations, and whether those expectations had been fulfilled.

Using Portes' paradigm of communities of reception, I asked about quality and quantity of social interactions with the host society and with the expatriate community. I pre-tested the protocols on four international student spouses (all women). They were not American, and they were not in the same financial position as my participants; however, many of the socio-cultural and psychological issues are similar. A few questions were amended to make the questions clearer but more open-ended, therefore creating a more interesting dialog. Fig 2.2 Shows these ideas diagrammatically.

Target Population

This study is limited to American spouses⁸ who accompany employees on their overseas postings through company transfers. Spouses may be male or female; however, because understanding gender relations and how they may shift during overseas contracts is a critical angle in this proposed study, I only recruited spouses of heterosexual partners. Although widening my target group to include other nationalities would have provided a more diverse population, studies have shown that countries of origin can affect adaptation (Tzeng 1995; Selmer 2001; Waxin 2004), also gender relations tend to differ across nationalities (Treas and Widmer 2000; Smith 2004), therefore I limited my target population to American spouses.

⁸ I use the word spouse rather than partner because all my participants were married, but it was not a requirement to become a participant.

Fig 2.2 Road Map for Factors: Dual Frame of Reference Conceptualizations

Many studies on professional relocations overseas have studied the group “expatriates,” an encompassing concept that often includes diplomats, teachers, missionaries, and aid workers from myriad countries relocated to a particular context. I would like to suggest that spouses of international company transferees are a special type of expatriate because when they became spouses of business persons they did not necessarily expect to be asked to go overseas. Spouses of diplomats and aid workers are more prepared for the upheaval of moving overseas. Many spouses of business persons invest in their careers expecting to stay in the United States, therefore their attitude towards relocating may be affected differently.

Research Sites

Government policies, culture distance (a measure of cultural dissimilarity between expatriate/spouse’s home context and that of the expatriate experience), host country reception, and existing expatriate communities in the host country are all known to have an effect on adjustment (Black and Gregersen 1991; Black, Gregersen et al. 1992; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Copeland and Norell 2002; Drnevich 2004; Tihanyi, Griffith et al. 2005; Caligiuri and Tarique 2006; Fechter 2007; Selmer 2007). In order to examine these factors for group held constant by nationality of origin, I conducted interviews in two very different locations, one in Europe and one in Asia. The first site was Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, a country considered to be of a high cultural distance from most Americans (Hofstede 1980). The second was Brussels, Belgium, considered to be of a low cultural distance for Americans where they are less easily identified as foreigners, where religion and culture is similar to American religion and culture, and global economic power

structures are similar. The two regions were chosen because of their reported cultural distance and similarities. However, after living in each research site for four months, I found that cultural distance was not as definitive as I at first presumed.

Historically the two cities developed very differently and, although both now are considered alpha world cities (GaWC 2009), their infrastructures and cultural environments are quite distinct. Yet, there are some similarities in the two countries in that they both have multiple languages as official languages and both countries do not issue visas to accompanying spouses.

According to previous literature on cultural distance (Hofstede 2001; Drnevich 2004; Tihanyi, Griffith et al. 2005; Selmer 2007) American expatriates find adaptation in South Eastern Asian countries more difficult than European countries because of the difference in economic development and cultural distance. Yet the physical environment in Kuala Lumpur turns out, perhaps counter-intuitively, to be less of a cultural jump for most expatriate Americans than Brussels. This reflects its recent highly globalized development. Kuala Lumpur is a relatively new city and has expanded exponentially since the early 1990s, undergoing a reorientation from federal capital to a globally oriented city (Bunnell, Barter et al. 2002).

Shopping centers in Kuala Lumpur have undergone a change from being primarily shop-house based, to department stores, to large shopping malls often located near newly erected expressways and interchanges, duplicating similar structures in the United States (Dick and Rimmer 1998). The ambitious and newly developed Suria Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) was developed by the Malaysian government as a symbolic space to connect with the global economy (Olds 1995). It includes extensive office space

for global companies, a concert hall, five star hotel, a luxury shopping mall with restaurants, all housed in the tallest building in the world⁹. The Suria KLCC is full of European and American high end stores and typical of many of the malls around Kuala Lumpur, American chain restaurants and outlets such as Starbucks, Chili's, Cheesecake Factory and numerous others. This western fare brought status for the Malaysian and a familiarity for the American, acting as a hub for expatriates and middle class Malaysians. Many of the embassies are housed in the beautiful old colonial buildings that line the road leading to KLCC with large upper middle class residential homes close by, many of which are rented by expatriates.

The old city center located around Bukit Bintang has Malaysian-style shopping malls with lower-end clothing stores, open markets, food courts, many of the tourist hotels, and is a center for nightlife. Few expatriate families live in this area so they have little contact with the more "exotic" aspects of Kuala Lumpur, but some visit the numerous restaurants and bars there.

There are three major cultures on mainland Malaysia, the ethnic Malay (called *Bumiputras*) who follow the Islamic faith, speak Bahasa Malay, and are considered to be the dominant culture, with many laws and regulations in place to keep them in their powerful position. These include better educational opportunities with scholarships to overseas universities, hierarchical pricing on housing, and quotas for companies to employ them. The Chinese community follows various religions and speaks local dialects as well as Mandarin, Bahasa Malay, and many also speak English. Although

⁹ At the time of building (1999) it was the tallest building in the world and built to bring prestige to the Malaysian nation. The Taipei 101 tower was completed in 2004 and became the tallest building.

discriminated against by laws and regulations, they still tend to be the middle class bankers and merchants. The Indian population is comprised mainly of followers of the Hindu religion and speaks various local dialects, Hindi, Bahasa Malay, with some of the better educated also speaking English. Many are shopkeepers or manual workers.

The expatriates living in Kuala Lumpur do not live in expatriate compounds shut off from the host society, but they do tend to cluster together around the international schools where many activities take place for expatriate children and adults. In these “expat areas” are supermarkets selling imported goods, expatriate bars and restaurants, the American Women’s Club, and some recreational facilities (fitness center, golf course, tennis and squash courts) mainly used by expatriates. The transferees that work in the financial sector or for an oil company tend to live with their families in the American style luxurious and extremely expensive apartments that are still being built close to Suria KLCC with easy access to American style malls, movie theaters and cultural events. Much of the expatriate’s social life will be centered in these areas.

Conversely the expatriates in Brussels tend to live in the suburbs interspersed with Belgians. There is no expatriate “hub” in Brussels although there are particular communes that have more expatriates than others. A small town about 30 miles south of Brussels has become a small American enclave because of the proximity of a school with an American based curriculum. This is also where the American Women’s Club meets, which is inconvenient for Americans living in Brussels, therefore it does not have such a wide appeal as the American Club in Kuala Lumpur.

Unlike Kuala Lumpur, Brussels has preserved its medieval city center with its government buildings, Grand Place and Royal Palace and many of its historical houses.

However the post-war modernization efforts caused the demolition of many architecturally important buildings outside of the old walled city. It was exacerbated in the 1960s by the establishment of Brussels as the administrative site for the European Union and the European Parliament (Papadopoulos 1996). This caused an outcry from local residents at the destruction of many fine buildings with the result being the passing of the 1979 Regional Plan to preserve many old buildings from destruction. It also established parks and green spaces limiting the establishment of a Kuala Lumpur style global space from being developed (Baeten 2004).

Brussels provides a very different physical environment from Kuala Lumpur for the American transferee. On the one hand it has very few American chain restaurants, virtually no large shopping malls or department stores, does not have a modern infrastructure and does not cater specifically to expatriates. But it does have beautiful spaces for recreation, many fine local restaurants and coffee shops with alfresco dining. The Belgium government has resisted the establishment of restaurant chains and foreign department stores therefore Americans rarely find generic American stores or eating places. Similar to Malaysia, Belgium has two major cultural groups, the Dutch speaking Flemings and the French speaking Walloons. Brussels is mainly francophone, with 85 percent of the population speaking French and 15 percent speaking Flemish (www.newworldencyclopedia.org). Unlike Kuala Lumpur, English has not become the language medium for these two groups to communicate, but with great contention the Flemish are expected to learn French. Therefore, although Belgium is similar in its political, religious and economic development standpoint, it could be considered more

difficult than Malaysia for American spouses because of the difficulty with the language. In addition, the “American oases” are not as easily found as in Kuala Lumpur.

Although very useful for comparison, the two specific cities were chosen largely for practical reasons. To find the community of American expatriates can be difficult, particularly if the researcher is not affiliated with a transnational company. It is important, if possible, to have one or more key informants to introduce you into the target population. Trust is important for the participant to give information that is reflective and as close as possible to their true experiences and desires, and that is rarely possible without an intermediary that affords an introduction to the community. I did not know any inter-company transferees, but I did know two teachers at the International School of Kuala Lumpur who were willing to introduce me into the expatriate community. I volunteered in their classrooms and lunched in the staff room, so I was able to talk to other parents and teachers to find participants within my target population. In Europe I did not have any connections but through internet searches I found a male trailing spouse club called STUDS (Spouses Trailing Under Duress Successfully) which was important considering male trailing spouses were a necessary sector of my target population and would be much more difficult to locate without specific societies or clubs. Through this club I was assured of a larger male trailing spouse population than in other European cities.

Sampling

Given the lack of formal records on the expatriate population, random sampling was unfeasible. In previous studies on international company spouses, women’s clubs

and international schools have been a major source of sample recruitment (for example, Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003; James, Hunsley et al. 2004; Yeoh and Willis 2005). These studies enroll mainly spouses with children or those who join women's clubs. Because I wanted a cross-section of spouses that included parents and non-parents, host country language speakers and non-speakers, spouses that participated in the expatriate society, and/or the host society or became isolationist, I could not limit myself to just the international schools and American Women's Clubs. Although I utilized these resources, to find spouses who were not part of this typical social expatriate community I found many different clubs, societies, and interest groups from internet sites such as www.xpats.com, www.newcomersclub.com, www.alloexpat.com, www.halfamind.com, from the school bulletin, local newspapers, The Bulletin (the only English language journal in Brussels), and American Club magazines. To meet expatriate spouses I participated in activities that they attended so I could recruit as diverse a group as possible. These activities included the Malaysian Cultural Group, various book clubs and a book swap, and two sports clubs. I learned how to play Mahjong and how to pole dance, practiced yoga, learned Tai Chi, and joined a running club called the Hash House Harriers that ran twice a week in both Kuala Lumpur and Brussels. I attended two churches and took Bible study classes, observed in three language schools, volunteered and taught at the international schools. I attended various cultural events where expatriates were present, helped with the local amateur dramatics society, attended and gave a presentation to the Imagination Club of Brussels, hiked with the Irish Society every Sunday, and met with the Brussels male trailing spouse club STUDS every Friday.

These sources gave me a cross-sectional pool of spouses who were mainly active in the expatriate community.

To find participants who rarely participated in the expatriate community was more difficult. The American Embassy and American Chamber of Commerce would not give names or telephone numbers of any spouses or employees. I was able to get some referral sampling by running various searches and finding e-mails of key organizers within expatriate communities. I contacted the presidents of three company spouse associations for interviews, and they, in turn, introduced me to some willing spouses and advertised my study on their websites. I also contacted Parent Association members from four international schools who recruited interviewees for me. I observed in three language schools which introduced me to a group who were able to communicate with the host society, and this helped with my analysis on host country social contacts. Using snowballing techniques from these sources I interviewed spouses who were less active in the expatriate community or participated more in the host community.

Demographics of Participants.

All together I recruited forty-two participants, thirty-five women and seven men. All were middle class and white except one who was third generation Asian American. Ages ranged from twenty-eight years old to sixty-two years old with the average age of forty-three years old for the women and forty-nine years old for the men. The female spouses were decidedly better educated than the male trailing spouses; all were college educated except one; eight with masters degrees, one with a doctoral degree and three with law degrees. Of the males, one had a law degree and a PhD in philosophy, two had

an undergraduate degree, while the rest had completed high school and were in blue-collar jobs. All of the male spouses who relocated with children were on their first posting and were stay-at-home fathers at least two years before they relocated. Consequently none of the male trailing spouses had given up a career to relocate, they were either stay-at-home fathers or in non-career tract jobs. In contrast only 40 percent of women who relocated with children were stay-at-home mothers before they relocated, over half of the women were not following careers because they were trailing spouses on a previous overseas posting. The majority of women had given up what they considered a career to become trailing spouses.

Figure 2.3. Demography of Participants

	Total # Participants	Female	Male	Children at Location	Employed Prior to Relocation
Kuala Lumpur	22	20	2	17	14
Brussels	20	15	5	15	12
Total # Participants	42	35	7	32	26

Data Collection

As indicated above, most previous studies on expatriate spouses have collected only quantitative data on adjustment (for example, Black and Gregersen 1991; Brett and

Stroh 1995; De Verthelyi 1995; Takeuchi and Hannon 1996; Caligiuri, Hyland et al. 1998; Copeland and Norell 2002; Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003; Copeland 2003; Copeland 2004). Quantitative studies typically test those factors previously identified to affect adjustment, particularly cross-cultural communication, social support, and satisfaction with the company. This study compliments such quantitative data with qualitative data garnered via in-depth interviews and participant observation, a useful data collection technique to uncover factors such as integration into social networks, changes in identity and gendered relationships (for example, Nash 1969; Haour-Knipe 2001; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Beaverstock 2002; Willis and Yeoh 2002; Yeoh and Willis 2005; Cole 2009). Adjustment and gendered relationships can often be difficult to self-assess, and self-reporting questionnaires do not perceive the in-depth relationships possible through ethnography. The flexibility of qualitative research allows for modifying the interview instrument as warranted by new data and concepts that emerge with data collection (Fetterman 1989; Patton 1990; Lofland and Lofland 1995; Corbin and Strauss 2007).

Before collecting data a conceptual map was constructed to show factors to be examined. These factors were garnered from an extensive literature review on adjustment and data analysis of expatriate blogs on the internet that identified possible areas for exploring adjustment of international company transferee spouses. I also used Linn's Social Dysfunction Rating Scale (1969) to guide questions on socio-cultural factors. The conceptual map was used to develop the interview protocol which included questions regarding pre-relocation and post-relocation circumstances that could affect adjustment and explored the presence of gendered relations and cultural distance. The conceptual map was also used as a guide in analysis of the data.

Four types of data were collected: (1) comments from blogs and listservs set up by expatriates for expatriates, (2) participant observation of the environment, situations, activities, and lifestyles of trailing spouses, (3) in-depth one-on-one interviews (4) spouses' self-reporting on the Rosenberg Scale of Self Esteem (Rosenberg 1965). To prepare questions for on-site research data were collected from four expatriate blogs and listservs: *aportableidentity*, *trailingspouseNetwork*, *trailing-husband*, *expat woman*. Adaptation issues were noted, specifically gendered relations and structures that could affect adaptation.

To collect data as a participant observer I travelled first to Kuala Lumpur where I stayed for fourteen weeks (the length allowed on my visa) with two Canadian friends who were teachers at the Kuala Lumpur International School. My second location, Brussels, I stayed for 13 weeks and rented a room from a French speaking Belgian. Often people describe their world not “as it is” but “as they make sense of it” (Babbie 2002:288). Therefore participant observation notes are a rich source of data that augments information collected from spouses, who may not articulate or even understand some of the gender issues that affect adaptation and therefore will not become apparent in interviews. By living in the community, observing and listening, subtle nuances are perceived in attitudes and behaviors that add to knowledge about gender relations and adaptation.

Living in the same physical environment as my research subjects provided an overall context for the data where I could describe the physical setting and observe the way in which people behaved toward each other, their body language and their dress codes. By participating in the many activities alongside expatriate spouses – outlined

above - I was able to take detailed field notes of the activities, interactions, and cultural milieu that surrounded the expatriate community and gather rich data that helped with my understanding of the daily lives of my participants. Some of the spouses were a little reluctant to talk at first as a rather unflattering documentary had just been aired on British television about expatriates. Although myself being part of the activity tended to alter the conversations (the conversation initially was about me and my study), after a few weeks I became more invisible as an observer. By directly observing, it was possible to develop a holistic perspective and an understanding of the context that participants may be unaware of or that they are unwilling or unable to discuss in an interview. A field diary was kept and updated each day.

At both locations I had to find willing participants to be interviewed. In Kuala Lumpur, because of my contacts within the expatriate community, I quickly found some agreeable participants through the International School of Kuala Lumpur. In Brussels, not having any personal contacts made finding American spouses much more difficult. My first contact came with the Belgian STUDS group who were reluctant initially to allow me into their group. I visited the International School of Brussels but they would not give me any contact information. I signed up to substitute teach which gave me access to the school directory. It took me over three weeks before I obtained my first interview in Brussels through a contact I made in church. The expatriate community in Brussels was spread over a much larger area than in Kuala Lumpur, with a large portion of the American community centered around the town of Waterloo about thirty miles from the city center. It was near Waterloo that the American Women's Club was located and I had to quickly learn to navigate the public transportation system to participate in many of the

social events. Using public transport proved critical to later understanding the role of the physical environment in spouses' adjustment.

When given contact information about someone who met my criteria of being an American trailing spouse of an international company transferee, I emailed them or telephoned them and explained the purpose of the study and if they agreed to talk to me, I scheduled an interview. For the interviews I used a protocol (see Appendix A) I developed and pre-tested which explored different spousal adjustment themes based on expectations for and preparation before the relocation, continuity/discontinuity of life, exposure to and interfacing with receiving communities and satisfaction with life abroad. Interviews normally took place in the interviewee's home where they felt comfortable, the atmosphere was usually quiet, and I had an opportunity to see the environment in which they lived. All except two interviews were one-on-one, the length varied between 45 minutes to four hours.

During the interviews I collected data according to the protocol but I also encouraged open responses and used probes to elicit more in-depth information. Because I was of a similar age to many of the participants and had lived overseas for many years as an expatriate, most of the spouses felt very comfortable answering the questions. Many of the spouses were willing to share much more information than I asked, describing their experiences and eloquently analyzing their situations. For many, telling their stories was cathartic. It was almost always the first time anyone had troubled to get their perspectives. However, the female spouses were more willing to share their complaints and their inner feelings than the males. Whether this was a gendered difference between

male and female's comfort level or whether it was because I was a different sex, is difficult to know.

At the end of each interview and in order to be able to relate my work to previous research on trailing spouses, I asked all interviewees to fill out the Rosenberg¹⁰ standardized assessment of self esteem (Rosenberg 1965).

Data Analysis

All participant observation notes were typed and saved daily. Interviews were recorded on a digital recording device, after acquiring the interviewee's permission. After the interview I amended the interview by recording a description of the physical surroundings, a description of the participant, and additional information that I deemed important. Summaries of the participants' biographies were written while at the location. All the participants were given pseudonyms to assure anonymity. I transcribed the interviews after I had returned back to the U.S. which helped me revisit the interviews and hear the Belgium and Malaysian participants in close time proximity, at the same time I added memos to help with analysis and coding.

I imported each transcript into MAXQDA 2007 under one of four groups of texts – female Belgium, female Malaysia, male Belgium and male Malaysia. This enabled me to activate and examine separately sex and place in order to investigate differences between host countries and male and female trailing spouses. Fourteen attributes were identified and data for each participant was entered. In the data analysis I initially looked

¹⁰ Rosenberg Scale (1965) is a 10 question self evaluating instrument that each judged on a four point Likert scale of high/low self esteem that is assessed by a high score after item reversals.

for two main strands. The first was spouses' levels of adaptation (socio-cultural and psychological) and the circumstances that encouraged or discouraged this adaptation. The second analyzed how sex (male versus female trailing spouses) and gender (relationships, structures or attitudes) affected adaptation. Applying qualitative theme identification techniques (Ryan and Bernard 2003), eight themes were identified and a provisional code-book was developed using analysis from four transcriptions, a Belgian based male and female and a Malaysian base male and female.

After several refinements the code book was completed with descriptions and parameters for each code (for code book see Appendix B). All transcriptions and daily journals were then coded.

Evaluation of Spousal Adjustment

To be able to contrast the two main comparison groups of male and female trailing spouses and those living in Brussels and those living in Kuala Lumpur I used the indicators in the Measurement of Spousal Adjustment to evaluate the spouses' socio-cultural adjustment (social interaction, acceptance of diversity, manageability of life) and their psychological adjustment (identity, locus of control, self esteem, satisfaction with relationships) in Fig 2.1. For every dimension I recorded whether each spouse was well adjusted, adjusted, or not well adjusted. Because these evaluations were subjective to the researcher's perception of the spouses' adjustment, as an extra verification, one of the dimensions, self esteem, was checked with the Rosenberg self assessment test of self esteem that the participants had completed after their interview. The results correlated remarkably close.

The level of adjustment for the different dimensions was entered as attributes in the MAXQDA program. Using the attribute comparison tool in the MAXQDA program, the evaluations of spouses' socio-cultural adjustment and psychological adjustment were compared to important pre-relocation attributes, for example motivation, residential mobility, parental status, first posting overseas and career status, and post relocation attributes such as club memberships, volunteerism, and language fluency. It was then possible to explore relationships between levels of adjustment and attributes as factors, location, and male and female spouses.

From the themes and codes an outline for the dissertation was developed. Data retrieval enabled analysis that developed the chapters and their sub-headings. Once relationships between adjustment and factors were established three main analysis chapters were outlined: Chapter 3 explores the motivations of the participants to become trailing spouses and examines the amount of agency exerted in their choice and to what extent that agency affects adjustment. Chapter 4 explores three major environments that spouses adjust to, the physical environment and its social structures, the host society, and the expatriate community. It analyzes how the attributes such as parental status, sex, and language acquisition can affect socio-cultural adjustment. Chapter 5 explores the ways that sense of self and rootlessness affects psychological adjustment, how spouses cope with the stress of relocating and the strategies used to aid adjustment. Throughout the chapters there is an analysis of how gendered social structures affect adjustment and how these are different for male and female spouses. Throughout chapter 4 and chapter 5 are comparisons between Kuala Lumpur and Brussels to explore the effect of cultural differences on spouses' adaptation.

CHAPTER III - MOTIVATIONS TO MOVE

An overseas experience as a trailing spouse can be an interesting, exciting experience, and it can also be a frustrating, disempowering experience. Many factors influence the location on the expat spectrum an experience will be; however, few studies have investigated the spouses' reasons for agreeing to become trailing spouses. With dual earners being the norm in American families, why would a spouse give up their career to move overseas where they probably cannot work? Black and Gregersen (1991:464) consider motivation to be a critical anticipatory variable. "The greater the individual's motivation to make the transition to the new culture, the greater will be his/her subsequent efforts to adjust to the culture." However, much of the literature on spousal adjustment has focused predominantly on pre-departure training and adaptation after relocation. While this dissertation also addresses this question, it examines not only the reasons that are related to overseas stays but also examines conditions *prior to* moving abroad. To do this I use a dual frame of reference (Suárez-Orozco 1989; Ogbu 1990) to examine spouses' pre-relocation and post-relocation experiences. Although such analyses are ubiquitous in the migration literature, few researchers of international company transferees have considered this comparison.¹¹ This chapter engages spouses' pre-relocation experiences along several lines of inquiry including what stage they are in their personal and family lives, their employment status, and their parental status.

In terms of conditions of exit, I am particularly interested in examining the to-be trailing spouses' life conditions—if they were married, had children, were employed and in what types of work—that would affect how much these spouses would have to loosen

¹¹ Briody and Chrisman (1991) is an exception

the moorings they have to their own society in order to move abroad. I also investigated how these conditions affected the decision-making power or agency (if any) that the spouses had and could exert vis-à-vis the employee who was asking to be relocated abroad. Are there patterns in these conditions of exit and, if so, does gender play a role?

The Trailing Spouse – Thirty Years On.

It is critical to note at the outset, that the first decade of the twenty-first century does not look very much like the 1980s when research on international company transferees began. At that time and despite the “Feminist Revolution” of the 1970s, the business research on trailing spouses still held quite fast to what are now widely recognized as gender stereotypes. Thus, many of the initial approaches to spousal adaptation among expatriates were based on middle-class, middle-aged women who came of age in the 1950s when functionalist ideals of the breadwinner husband and stay-at-home housewife were normalized. Many of these early trailing spouse women, although educated, rarely had careers or professional identities of their own. They had been groomed to marry, take on the identity of the wife and mother and assume a supportive role to their husbands. Studies conducted around that time did not examine the decisions to become a trailing spouse, presumably because the researchers assumed that the wife would follow her husband; after all that was the “natural” and “normal” thing to do at the time. Consequently, it makes sense that research did not engage in examining the processes of deciding to relocate abroad as it was considered that wives had relatively little exertion of power in decision making in the marital relationship (Zvonkovic, Greaves et al. 1996; Brescoll and Uhlmann 2005).

Huge social, political, and economic changes have occurred since those first studies, drawing married women into the paid labor force. Women's opportunities for paid employment expanded greatly during the 1960s and 1970s with the help of legislation such as the 1963 Equal Pay Act, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the 1972 Education Amendments. Legislation began to break down legal barriers for women to pursue careers in professions that had largely excluded them before, such as law, medicine, and management (Reskin and Roos 1990). Although these opportunities were only available for a privileged few, they created a precedent and provided role models for later generations to aspire to. Moreover, the transformation of the U.S. economy from a male-oriented industrial manufacturing economic base to a more female-oriented service economy drove up demand for women to enter the labor force. Average male "family" wages after reaching a peak in the 1970s declined therefore families needed to find ways to increase their income (Mishel, Bernstein et al. 2001).

The feminist movement and controversial books like The Feminist Mystique by Betty Friedan (1963) brought awareness to American women that the glorification of domesticity above self fulfillment did not bring happiness but dissatisfaction. Women were urged to seek a better education, with the emphasis on pursuing subjects relevant to careers rather than being content with the previously offered "women's" curriculum (Weitz 1977). The percentage of women with college degrees rose substantially. In 1971, eighteen percent of women had a college degree increasing to thirty three percent in 2007 (www.census.gov) thus widening women's options in the paid labor market. Another factor contributing particularly to married women's labor market participation was the availability and social acceptance of birth control. In 1965 the US Supreme court made

birth control legal for married couples, allowing couples to have more choice about the number of children they had (Shaw and Lee 2004). Being able to control the size of the family had a tremendous impact on the potential separation of women from the home, and meant they had more time for paid employment. Women's participation in the workforce was also influenced by the fact that they were getting married later and divorcing more frequently, which often propel previously unemployed women into the workforce (Newman 1999). Thus economic, legal and social forces combined in the 1960s and 1970s to provide a vehicle for change. Not only did more women enter the workforce, but more married women and more mothers gradually expanded the population of working women. Figure 3-1 shows this growth.

Figure 3.1. Percentage of Mothers in the Workforce

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics www.bls.gov)

As more women enter the workforce the dynamics within the household have altered. With relatively more economic independence, women have a greater influence in family decision making (Gerson 1993; Goode 1994; Zentgraf 2002) which has led to a

marked decrease in the migration of professional couples where two careers need to be negotiated before a move is made (Boyle and Halfacree 1995; Green 1997; Nivalainen 2004). This is borne out in the fact that despite more companies going international and needing additional overseas personnel, they have reported difficulty in recent years in recruiting employees to relocate overseas (Global Relocation Trends Survey 2009).

“Family considerations” is one of the major reasons given for not pursuing an overseas assignment including spouses not willing to sacrifice their careers by going overseas where finding appropriate employment is unlikely (Harvey 1997; Pellico and Stroh 1997; Harvey and Kiessling 2004; Adler 2007).

The middle class trailing spouses of the first decade of the twenty-first century have been raised with very different socio-cultural norms than the trailing spouses of the generation before. Many of them are highly educated women with professional statuses that challenge the sex role stereotypes which dominated the first trailing spouse studies. The struggle by women to acquire all the advantages of the feminist movement are not given up lightly: many are not willing to forfeit them to follow their husbands overseas. Although the feminist revolution is far from complete, women today have greater economic independence and dual career couples often have a much more egalitarian marriage, allowing women greater decision making powers within the marital relationship (Potuchek 1997).

The participants in this study are people who have decided, for various reasons, to follow their partners overseas, often putting their careers on hold, isolating themselves from family and friends, and agreeing to live a domesticated life in a strange culture where many find difficulty communicating with the host society. It is necessary to

examine why these educated, professional women should still agree to become trailing spouses and, seemingly, revert back to the 1950s breadwinner and domestic housewife model of the “traditional”, pre-feminist movement marriage. Is the female trailing spouse the victim of gendered social expectations where she trails her husband because she is bowing to the traditional breadwinner role as the name suggests, or is she using the opportunity to become a willing trailing spouse to liberate herself from some of the gendered societal expectations that have persisted even in the post-feminist era? Likewise, when a husband decides to follow his executive wife overseas, is it purely an economic decision if she earns more than he does? Has the feminist movement created enough change in gender role expectations that he is comfortable relinquishing the traditional breadwinner role, or does he use the opportunity to abstain from some of those responsibilities? How much agency does the modern day male and female spouse have when relocating, what are the gender bound issues, and how do the reasons for relocating affect adjustment overseas?

This section will examine the data to identify the primary reasons behind decisions to transfer abroad, how much agency the soon-to-become trailing spouse had in the decision to relocate, and explore gender differences between male and female trailing spouses. To anticipate, two different types of trailing spouses emerge from the analysis of the data: (1) those who agreed to relocate not because they wanted to but in order to improve the family’s economic position and enhance the partner’s career and (2) those spouses who, in their words, were “ready for a change.” Gendered societal expectations weave throughout the decision making process and are discussed within both. These two patterns are not monolithic nor are they mutually exclusive. Many participants expressed

more than one reason as to why they decided to relocate, but the two categories are useful in analyzing gendered differences and similarities in what at first glance appears to be a disempowering experience. Finally I discuss the differences between male and female trailing spouses and examine the degree of agency in the choices they made.

Decision Time

It is widely known that most people in the world do not move far from where they were born and many fewer still leave their homelands for life abroad. Although the U.S. population is more mobile than most, it is still uncommon for Americans to travel abroad, let alone live abroad. Therefore, when couples are presented with the opportunity—indeed in many cases the obligation—to relocate abroad for job reasons, it is understandable that not everyone jumps at this “opportunity.” Rather, when the situation presents itself, couples engage it and make decisions. Do men and women exert the same amount of power over the decision? Does their agency relate more to their gender or to their position within the family, particularly if they are the main breadwinner?

Does Money Matter? Relocating for Economic Gain

For many years migration scholars have expounded theories to explain the relocation of people, by appealing to economics, arguing that people weigh the economic benefits of the move against the detriments (see Massey 1999). The microeconomic theories applied to migration were developed to explain the relocation of low skilled, low paid migrants to areas needing that type of labor and where wages were higher; nevertheless, financial gain is still important for highly skilled professionals planning to

move overseas. Migration initiated by transnational companies has elements of rational choice that the independent migrant generally does not take into consideration. The experiences of Lillian and Kathleen help illuminate how pursuit of better economic opportunities affect the relocation decision making processes experienced by couples as they contemplate relocation.

A petroleum engineer by profession, Lillian had already felt the effects of becoming a trailing spouse when her husband was transferred from Alabama to New Orleans. Although she quickly found a new position after that move, when the company downsized she lost her job due to the “last in-first out” policy. She was given a year’s severance pay and involuntarily became a stay-at-home parent which, to her surprise, she really enjoyed. It gave her time to be involved with her children’s school and volunteer at a local non-profit organization. She admitted that during that time she only half heartedly looked for another job. When her severance pay came to an end, she felt pressured to find another job as her household relied on her income to continue in the lifestyle they were used to--not extravagant but comfortable. It was at the time when her severance pay was running out that her husband was offered a job overseas with an increased salary. Lillian knew she had to go because they needed this job. “I lost my job in downsizing, and I had two kids at home and I thought that I really didn’t mind if I didn’t go back to work. I actually had a full year severance pay so I did some projects here and there. It was Charles who decided to come overseas, I mean, it was good for us because I didn’t have any job ties or anything. And it was really good for us from a financial point of view because my severance had just run out when the job in K.L. came up, and he was going to earn a good salary, so it was just a good time to go.”

Another example is that of Kathleen and her husband. They epitomized the dual career couple with an egalitarian marriage and similar careers. She was an executive in a chemical engineering company and led an upper middle-class lifestyle in the States. They had a large mortgage on their house, sent their three children to private school, employed a nanny and ate out often. They both needed to work to continue their chosen lifestyle. However, they were saving very little of their income and that worried Kathleen. When her husband was offered a posting overseas she assessed the relocation package as a whole and decided that, even though they would lose her wages, they would still benefit financially, so she agreed to relocate. This was not an instant decision but involved some calculations. She knew the likelihood was that she could not work after relocation because trailing spouses are typically not given visas authorized for work; therefore the total household income would decrease. Nonetheless, the couple reasoned that there were other financial advantages. The package that her husband's company was offering was generous, (fairly typical of most of the participants). It doubled his salary, paid rent for a house in K.L., the children's school fees at an international school, and helped them buy a car. After assessing the relocation package as a whole, she rationalized that after relocating they would not need a nanny as she would be at home all day and the company would pay for the children to go to the international school. The total amount of expendable income would therefore increase. When she figured she could rent their house in Florida, Kathleen also calculated a way to save money for her children's college expenses and invest some for retirement. Although the net wages after relocation were not significantly higher, the cost of living would be reduced therefore they still considered themselves to be financially better off overseas.

Lillian and Kathleen's experiences are two typical examples of families that fit one of my two predominant patterns: relocation decisions taken not because the participants wanted a change in their lives by going overseas, but because they desired and/or needed greater economic opportunities. Their experiences also illustrate one of the most ubiquitous theories used to explain the reason people migrate. The neoclassical economic theory was developed by Jacob Mincer (1978) into a model to explain decision making in family migration. Mincer's model uses rational choice decisions to maximize family income using a straightforward calculation that the income after migration would be higher than income before migration taking into account the cost of migration. When considering skilled professional migration, particularly that which is employer sponsored, benefits that allow more spending or saving power have to be considered by the families in their rational decisions about whether it is financially beneficial for them to relocate.

There is no denying that money and benefits were a major consideration for the participants when deciding whether to relocate, but many of them used a different type of cost-benefit analysis; they assessed the potential gain in the employee's human capital that moving abroad would bring. For trailing spouses this meant looking toward the future of their partners' careers and see either job security or the potential of the overseas experience to improve their résumés and enhance career aspirations. Rona and Jerry are typical examples.

Rona had two small children and worked as an executive assistant for a pharmaceutical company. She enjoyed her job and felt that she was valued by her employers, and decided to continue to work after the birth of her children. She placed them into day care while she was at work and on the weekend her parents came to stay

with them and help her with the children and her husband do work on the house and garden. When her husband was offered a job overseas it became clear to her that “my job is not the important one; he is the breadwinner. When he was offered this job [in Brussels] we felt it would be good for the family. It was a really good move for him; he is in charge of the office here. It really is building his résumé, so that is a good thing.”

Despite considerable liberalization, the presumption that female jobs are not as important as male jobs in a marital relationship is still widely held. Studies have found that women with traditional gender ideologies have lower educational and professional aspirations and give less importance to their careers (Markham 1986; Phillips and Imhoff 1997; Moya, Exposito et al. 2000; Harvey and Kiessling 2004). Wives are often co-conspirators in privileging their husbands’ careers, particularly when children arrive on the scene. In the negotiation for their respective responsibilities, the “hegemony of the male career” (Pyke 1996) is reinforced culturally and institutionally and therefore is accepted.

Although Rona had a career, she felt it was inferior to her husband’s because she did not earn as much but also he was considered the “breadwinner.”

In contrast, to show that the hegemony of the male career is not always the case, Jerry agreed to relocate overseas for similar “human capital” reasons, even though he would become a male trailing spouse. Jerry had worked as a mechanic before giving up his job in Colorado to become a stay-at-home parent for his two daughters. He was a drummer in a band and had aspirations to become a professional musician. “I got so tired of mechanics, I was already working on getting out of that. I was done with that, and I had started working on potential career type things. The music was something I kept on the back-burner; I kept that up for a long time after I quit actually working. I was

renovating the house we were in during the day and playing at gigs at night. When my wife was offered the job in Brussels, we had to go. It was one way she could get ahead.” His wife was an executive in a large financial company where he told me she had reached the proverbial “glass ceiling.” She had been passed over for promotion even by the people she had trained; they were all male. The job she was offered in Belgium she accepted as one way of climbing the career ladder. Jerry thought it was important to support his wife and saw the move as a way of helping her overcome some of the barriers that professional women have to face in the workforce.

Neither Rona nor Jerry calculated the financial package of going overseas like Kathleen or Lillian, but they rationalized that their partner’s career would benefit as a consequence, that in the long run moving overseas would also yield financial gain. Rona and Jerry’s cases are not unique. Trailing spouses spoke frequently about the importance of moving to help development of their partner’s career. This is particularly true among the spouses who were not on a career track, especially the stay-at-home-parents. Jerry was representative of most of the male spouses whom I interviewed in that their main motivation to agree to become a trailing spouse was the belief that an overseas posting would help their wives’ careers. Sandell (1977) developed a model for family migration decision making taking human capital into consideration. It is also an economic theory but presumes the partner with the greatest human capital, including education, training and wage earning capacity has more bargaining power. This was certainly the case with the majority of the participants in the study where both male and female trailing spouses earned less than their partners.

The discussion of Rona and Jerry's experiences, most notably their agreement to relocate so that their spouses could further their careers—their human capital-- gives the impression that such decisions might be gender neutral. That is, both men and women trail when their spouses are primary breadwinners. However there are many more female than male trailing spouses¹². Why, particularly given the momentous shift in women's employment? Although many of the trailing spouses I interviewed had climbed the career ladder in traditionally masculine careers, it has been well documented that women at work are rarely considered as successful as men, are often stereotyped into the roles considered "suitable" for women¹³ and rarely earn as much as men¹⁴ (Kimmel 2004; Shaw and Lee 2004; Wharton 2005; Stone 2007). Therefore, even in dual career couples the male is more likely to have better developed human capital than the female, making it more likely that the female acquiesces to her husband's career and follow him on a relocation (McDowell 1999).

In some dual career families the wife earns a similar salary, as in the case of Kathleen introduced earlier. Therefore, it is not always structural inequalities in the workplace that produce trailing wives. William and Denise Bielby (1992) conducted a study on dual career couples and found even when wives have equal or better salaries, they tend to be unwilling to consider a move to improve their own career prospects if it means their husbands have to find a new job. Conversely, husbands tend to be more

¹² None of the expatriate surveys give accurate figures on male trailing spouses but 20 percent of expatriates are women. The proportion that are married with trailing husbands is not yet known.

¹³ For example, in 1990, 20.7% of physicians were women while 94.4% were registered nurses. 78.4% of elementary teachers, 80.3% of librarians and 98.7% of secretaries were women compared with 14.5% of electricians, 2.5% of firefighters, 1.9% of mechanics and 1.4% of plumbers (Roos and Gatta 1999)

¹⁴ The average female wage is 77% of the average male wage in 2008 (U.S. Women's Bureau and the National Committee on Pay Equity).

willing to uproot their families if it means their own career prospects will improve. The Bielby's conclude that the husband is fulfilling his functionalist role as the "provider" by perceiving economics to be the most important aspect of the move whereas the wife is fulfilling her role as nurturer and taking responsibility for the welfare of the family above her own desires. They explain this gendered decision making by positing a "gender ideology and the provider role" perspective which suggests that gendered inequalities in the social construction of marriage create an asymmetry into the process of migration. Decision making about migration with dual career couples depends on ideologies of who takes the role of provider. Once the role of provider is established, by de facto the role of the nurturer (or the one in charge of domestic duties) is established.

As the majority of the male participants in the study were stay-at-home fathers prior to relocation overseas, the roles in their marriages had already been established with the wife as the breadwinner. The two male participants who gave up employment both earned considerably less than their wives and did not consider themselves to be on a career track. The provider role perspective explains possibly why there were no males in the study who had given up a career track employment, although half the women had.

This study found that the decision of families to relocate for economic reasons was important to many of the families. In virtually every interview the spouses reasoned that the move was motivated to "help his/her career" or "it would look good on his/her résumé" or "it was a great opportunity for him/her." This facilitated the working employees to further their careers while the spouses had to temporarily abandon theirs. Although these spouses were not against change as such, it was the financial and human capital advancements that drove their "choice" to relocate intersecting with institutional

and societal gendered expectations for the female trailing spouses. Issues that arise from these concerns are: (1) how did spouses deal with the widening of the human capital gap between worker and spouse? (2) how did this affect their adaptation after relocation? (3) do gendered forces come into play between males and females when the human capital gap gets wider? (4) if the spouse wanted change would the answers to these questions be different?

Ready for Change

Although enhancing income and human capital are important considerations to most if not all spouses deciding about a relocation, other, less commonly known yet often articulated issues affect these decisions as well. They can be heard when listening to the individual histories of the pre-location decision making process such as those of Dorothy, Jessica, Lain and Noreen.

Dorothy had studied anthropology as an undergraduate and had travelled independently around the world before she was married. Before relocation she was an international advisor at a local university. She really enjoyed her job, especially meeting students of different nationalities, but she found her life to be too predictable. Her husband worked extremely hard and he took very few vacations. She had discussed going overseas before they married, and she said it was a “requirement” to their getting married, although she had to wait nearly ten years for it to happen. The quest for adventure, travel and a desire to continue her travels that she had started before marriage were a huge push for her to go overseas. Marriage had held her in the U.S. and because of her husband’s work load she found she did not have vacations or travel she had when she had been

single. Her husband's relocation was, thus, a longed for chance to experience new cultures and places.

Jessica, one of the younger participants at twenty-nine years-old, had been a pharmacist for seven years in the States. She was aware of her lack of success compared with her male counterparts recognized there was little opportunity for promotion and began to feel burn out. When her husband asked her if she would move overseas she was excited about starting a new life and thought it would be a good time to start a family. She would then not have to make a decision about whether to continue working while also being a mother, so she encouraged him to apply for overseas jobs. Jessica rationalized that by moving overseas she could start a family (which she did) and become a stay-at-home parent without the stigma of "wasting" her education. Jessica represents a growing number of women who would like to stay home when their children are born but feel the social pressures (in the United States) for them to continue to work (Walzer 1997; Belkin 2007). The feminist movement strongly argued that paid work equated to financial independence, a vital ingredient to the equality of women. This meant leaving the workforce or "opting out" was problematic for Jessica, but relocating overseas was a strategy she and others used to solve her "problem."

Lain had lived in Houston most of her life, even on the same street for thirty years. She had been a dentist in a group practice her whole working life and had only taken a few months maternity leave with each of her three children. Now her dental equipment needed to be updated, which meant she would have to apply for loans and familiarize herself with the new equipment. At fifty-six years-old she felt she did not want to "start again" in her dental career; but what could she do? When her husband was

offered a job in Malaysia, the path became clear: she would become a trailing spouse. Instead of being detrimental, this would be liberating, because her career had run its course and she needed a change. Her three children had finished college so she thought it would be a good time for a change in her life. She explained, “If I had been happy in my work situation, I probably would not have come out here.” Lain had to make a decision about her career and she did not really know what to do. Only a few years away from retirement she did not want to invest a lot of money in her dental practice, nor did she want to train for a new profession. In retrospect she felt she had held back her husband’s career in the oil industry by tying him to the location where her practice existed. She was excited that going overseas would solve her dilemma about her business and also allow her husband a chance at widening his experience and building his human capital.

Noreen and her husband were a high powered dual-career couple who had a nanny, gardener, cleaner and always ate out when they were living in the U.S. Noreen was a highly successful litigation lawyer for more than twenty years, earned more than her husband, and confessed to working too many hours. They had a wonderful nanny to look after their son who Noreen felt did a much better job than she could have done. When her son started school she felt she was not participating enough in parenting. Her husband travelled a lot with his job and she found it hard to take time off to go to school to watch him in performances or take him to tee ball practice on a Saturday. She said she felt she was not being a “proper” mother. This worried her so she tried to cut back on her work, but in her position found it was impossible. When her husband had an opportunity to go overseas she had to persuade his company that she would give up her job to accompany him. It took about a year to close all her cases before accompanying her

husband in Belgium. Noreen was very happy for a nanny to look after her baby, however when he started going to school she realized there were certain things that a nanny cannot do, and she felt the tug of motherhood.

Although their stories are varied, there is a common motivational theme that runs through the stories of these four participants: something in their lives needed to change, some in much larger ways than others, but a longing for change was a factor in many of the participants' stories. Dorothy wanted to return to her days of travel and change her stable environment; Jessica was ready to change her focus in life from being a pharmacist to being a mom; Lain was not willing to start afresh in her old profession but was looking forward to the next phase of her life, making a change from being a full time dentist and mom; Noreen felt she had to change her lifestyle if she were going to be the best mom for her son. For many like Jessica, Lain, and Noreen their change was linked to motherhood. They were using relocation to move from one life stage to another, starting a family, having school age children, and the "empty nester" whose children had become independent.

What is obvious to social scientists however is that this desire for change is gendered. Women agreed to relocate because they anticipated that the change would reap benefits to their families having to do with nurturing, not just economics. Moreover, in several cases the need for change itself arose out of gender operating in the larger society. For example, Jessica felt she had reached the glass ceiling in her career and was being ignored when it came to promotions. Her company had "mommy-tracked" her even before she started a family. Noreen had overcome many of the gendered hierarchies in the legal profession but was expected to dedicate her whole life to her work and had

definitely been “male streamed”. She effectively outsourced her domestic duties, the proverbial second shift (Hochschild and Machung 2003), but still felt the responsibility of parenting was hers more than her husband’s. After proving she could be successful in a man’s world but at the high cost to her mothering role, she looked to relocating overseas as a “trailing” spouse to escape feeling like a failure at the job of motherhood.

The desire for change was not only expressed by working women who became trailing spouses. Quite in contrast, this desire arose as well among many stay-at-home-mothers. They felt their lives had become too predictable and mundane. For them, the overseas transfer offered travel and adventure, things lacking in their lives in the States. “I thought it would be interesting and exciting,” declared Deanna an industrial chemist turned stay-at-home mom. “I had given up my career, willingly I might add, to look after my children; but life as a housewife can get very mundane at times.” Carol had worked in a congressional office in Washington, D.C. until her husband was transferred to South Carolina. She found life there rather parochial after the big city. “My husband asked me if he should apply for this [overseas jobs] and I said yes, I thought that was great. I said I would love to live overseas. I was definitely ready for a change out of South Carolina.” Dorothy, the anthropologist, encouraged her husband to go overseas because “when I met my husband he told me he wanted to work overseas so that was a definite attraction, because I didn’t want to be stuck in the United States for the rest of my life, but it took a while to get overseas for various reasons. When it actually looked like we were going to go through, I was so happy; at last I get to live in another culture.” Irene, like Dorothy, established that her partner would be willing to work overseas before she agreed to a long term relationship with him. She did not want to stay in one place because “I have always

had an adventurous spirit. I like not knowing what is around the next corner. So I kept pushing [my husband] to apply for an overseas posting. A lot of my friends are going to be in California their whole lives. I definitely did not want to do that.

In the case of Claire, it was not exactly she who thought that the change would be a good idea, but her children. She had a comfortable lifestyle in Houston with her family; she had her friendship group and a Bible study class. Her “calendar was full.” She went to the company orientation about living overseas just to please her husband as he said the company expected them to attend. When her middle and high school children found out that going to live overseas was a possibility they became very excited and started searching on the internet to see what the schools were like overseas. She explained to them she had only gone to “show her face” and the family was not moving. The girls had investigated the international school online and told her that she would be depriving them of an experience of a lifetime if they didn’t go. Her children argued very forcefully that to go to a private international school would be a good change *for them*. They would make lifelong friends with children from different countries and it would be an amazing experience for them. Eventually Claire agreed to go just for two years. “I can put up with anything for two years” she said, “But I never wanted to leave the United States.”

Why did Claire agree to move even though it was for “only two years”? A third factor becomes obvious here that separated the men from the women. The societal structures of the workplace and marriage and parenthood still have inherent gendered expectations that make the motivations to become trailing spouses different for males and females.

Should I Stay or Should I Go? Push and Pull Forces

At first the decision to move overseas would appear to be a “choice” that these trailing spouses made. In different circumstances many would “choose” not to go abroad if there truly were a choice. They feel compelled to “choose” to leave for a variety of reasons, most of which are gendered. A few, those largely seeing this “choice” as opening up the opportunity, however unplanned, for the change they wanted in their lives, feel more excitement than pressure. In other words, “choice” can and should be plotted along a continuum between endpoints of coercion and desire. In theorizing international migration scholars often use a similar framework; they talk about the factors that compel or “push” people to migrate and those factors that entice or “pull” them (Ravenstein 1885; Sjaastad 1962; Lee 1966; Sassen 1988). The particular location along that continuum that best characterizes any given trailing spouse’s situation is determined in no small part by institutional factors and social expectations such as the workforce, family needs, and approaches to parenthood that exerts push and pull forces in the decision to relocate. In this section of the chapter, I explore these forces in greater detail.

Get Me Out of Here: The Unequal Playing Field

The pull of travel and adventure was interwoven by many of the career minded women with the pushes from the gendered structural forces inherent in the workforce, marriage and parenthood. Although great strides have been made in the last few decades to equal the playing field between the sexes, there are still structural and cultural barriers that interfere with females’ parity. Hegemonic sex role expectations have remained remarkably unchanged since Talcott Parsons (1951) articulated his functionalist ideas on

spousal relations and parenting. It is recognized that women are still socialized into the importance of their role in domestic family life and the nurturers and men in their role as breadwinners (Olson, Frieze et al. 1990; Potuchek 1997; Kimmel 2004; Lorber 2004).

The traits that have been socially constructed for males and females affect behaviors and attitudes of all members of society including employers, managers, teachers, spouses and parents. They also affect the behaviors and attitudes of other people towards those behaviors. Such constructions create boundaries that help to define behaviors as gender appropriate and lead to societal expectations for men and for women (Risman 1987; West and Zimmerman 1987; Potuchek 1992; Thompson 1995).

These expectations have repercussions for men and women in the workforce, but are particularly salient for married women of child rearing age. A career can be a source of power for women; however, it tends to exacerbate traditional gender inequalities since women—much more so than men—are expected not only to work (the first shift) but to do the vast majority of domestic work (the second shift) and also play the emotional nurturer for husband and children as well (the third shift) (Hochschild 2003; Bolton 2000). In each shift there are factors that constrain women, the workplace and parenthood in particular (McDowell 1999). Over the last thirty years there has been an increase in the number of women in the formal labor market who pursue careers previously considered the preserve of men, yet once there, they still are given fewer opportunities and lower wages (Budig 2002; Padavic and Reskin 2002). A single woman in the workforce should be as successful as a man however many of the gendered inequalities in the workplace

are based on the expectation that the woman will get married and have children, which the majority still do¹⁵.

Despite the entry of so many women into the paid labor force, many employers still view women as the primary caretakers and not the breadwinner; wives are often considered primarily responsible for family and home, and therefore considered less committed than men to the work force (Rosenfeld 1980; Moen and Smith 1986; Bellas 1992; Blair-Loy 2003; Galinsky, Salmond et al. 2003). Just as males are expected to be the breadwinners (which is problematic for some males, particularly male trailing spouses), so females are expected to be homemakers and nurturers which can be challenging for career women. Employers also consider married women to be a flight risk anticipating them moving if their husbands are relocated and interrupting their careers when they have babies (Rosenfeld 1980; Moen and Smith 1986; Williams 2010). Because of these expectations, women in the workplace are frequently not treated equally with their male counterparts; they do not get the promotions they often deserve, and are sometimes treated with less respect (Williams 2000; Crittenden 2001; Galinsky, Salmond et al. 2003). This can catalyze a “push” out of the workforce for spouses like Jessica the pharmacist who felt she had been overlooked for promotion. “I just kept applying, and all these younger, less experienced men would get the jobs. My boss was convinced that I would soon have a baby so he didn’t want to give me any more responsibility. It was really frustrating.” Jessica felt she was unable to fight the discrimination in the workforce so used the strategy of leaving her job to become a trailing spouse as a way of opting out of the system. If she had stayed in the U.S. she felt it would have been very difficult for

¹⁵ 81% of American women between the ages of 40-44 years-old are mothers. U.S. Census Bureau 2008.
76% of the American population were married or had been married National Center for Health Statistics, 2002.

her to have given up her job having gone to university for many years at great financial cost to her parents. “I needed a change from what I was doing but when your parents have paid for your education it’s not that easy. What do I say? It cost them thousands of dollars to put me through school, I couldn’t just give up like that. Then when Alan asked me to go overseas it was just a good solution.” Jessica’s lack of parity in the workforce was a huge motivational push for her to go overseas, giving her a choice of giving up work that she did not feel she could have made if she had stayed in the U.S. Although within the workforce Jessica felt relatively disempowered about her situation, being able to choose the option of going overseas displayed an agency that many women do not have.

Women have increasingly taken on breadwinner roles across different races and classes, their time devoted to income-generating activities typically has not been reciprocated by their male partners increasing their contribution to the domestic shift. Arlie Hochschild (2003) exposed the way that men and women play out their respective “gender strategies.” She found that women still perform the bulk of the housekeeping--equivalent to about an extra month of work a year—even as their contribution to household income has reached or exceeded parity with their husbands. In addition to this unequal domestic division of labor, women are treated unequally in workforce as well. Many organizational structures, images and practices are configured towards masculine lifestyles presented as the norm, and described by Tony Fielding and Sandra Harding as the “male-stream” (1999:31).

The “ideal worker model” in many high-status professions is totally committed to his (as most people will think of it) employer or company. He works demanding hours,

has a devotion to duty and is unencumbered by family (Williams 2000). Blair-Loy (2003) observes that women have internalized this model, accepting it as intrinsic to their high-status profession. However, the “ideal worker model” is based on a gendered role model that was constructed after World War II when many middle class, white wives, who had worked during the war, were told to go back to the home where they belonged and leave the breadwinning to war veteran men (Rapoport and Rapoport 1971; Filene 1974; Rapoport and Rapoport 1976; Skolnick 1978; Papanek 1979). Women were told to take care of their children and to support their husbands; they were to organize social functions and be domestic managers while men were managers at work (Kotin 1983). The ideal model worker continues to model itself on the breadwinner who leaves domestic and parental responsibilities to others. Within some dual-career households many of these “wifely” duties, particularly the cleaning and child care duties are outsourced, which should create a more even playing field. However the functionalist breadwinner/nurturer role is still very evidently male.

These gendered expectations still live on and they create pressures on women today, especially true for those who juggle jobs as well as the second and third shifts. Such is the case of Kathleen, cited above, who relocated primarily for household financial purposes. Before relocation, her salary was used for childcare and the children’s education. Yet, even though she worked full time like her husband, the children were still considered her responsibility and she took on the financial responsibility for work that “she” was outsourcing. Hochschild (2003) found that although men are now doing more domestic and childcare duties, women still do the overwhelming majority of domestic work and manage the home even though they work full time, creating the “supermom.”

This often leads to role overload where women try to do it all: support their husband, manage the household and raise their children. This is a role that many women in America stay with until their children are adults.

American working women's psychological and emotional pressures of holding down so many shifts lead many to feel that they do no shift exceptionally well or if they do one shift well, they cut corners on another shift. Many of my interviewees who worked before relocation expressed this personal dissatisfaction; they, in effect, ranked themselves mediocre in most if not all of their shifts because they could not spread themselves so far without becoming so thin. And this dissatisfaction plays into their attitudes toward relocation; at least for some, the move becomes an opportunity to rebalance their priorities by cutting out one of their three shifts. Male trailing spouses, in marked contrast, never characterize their relocation in these terms. Though the numbers interviewed were small, their experiences were quite uniform. As with Jeff, the men never were primary breadwinners and never truly were expected to be the primaries on the third shift. The principal role they played was in the second shift—taking care of the domestic front—and even that they could share with their working spouse.

Gendered social structures such as the workplace and marriage explain why experiences vary between females and males. When a couple decides to have a family, the gender gap becomes a chasm. The mother has to make choices about employment and childcare and these decisions often reinforce and emphasize gendered societal expectations at home and in the workforce. Stone (2007) highlights that the structure of the workforce is not set up for parenting and working and often creates a conflict of interest in a mother's priorities. One set of gender norms portrays the female as the

primary care provider, the nurturing mother who wants to be with her children full time. On the other hand, the female is required to strive for economic independence and follow a career (Etaugh and Moss 2001; Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007) what Martha Beck (1997) has dubbed the myth of androgyny. Michele Bolton (2000) calls this dilemma between home and career responsibilities the “third shift” where women are battling over their family responsibilities with their career aspirations, but rarely feel they are doing either to their own satisfactory level and can lead to a negative self image (this is the same term but a different concept to Hochschild’s third shift). This was particularly true in my sample of participants with the female spouses who were high achieving in traditionally male occupations such as lawyer, engineer and financial analyst.

Let us examine the case of Noreen, the litigation lawyer. Both she and her husband worked long hours and her husband tried to participate in some of their son’s school activities, but it was Noreen who needed to play an active interest in his life. She was being pulled both by work and by motherhood. “I didn’t have a life. Well, I did but it was focused on work. This is what I did; I couldn’t see me doing anything else.” Yet she also worried about her son in school. “I had a young child and I would be getting home after 10 o’clock at night and it was rare when I didn’t work on weekends. It just wasn’t a good situation. I was missing his childhood. I would talk to him going to school in the car to catch up on his day; that is not enough for a six year old.” Going overseas meant Noreen giving up her identity as a professional woman and her status as a lawyer but it gave her the impetus to leave her work and concentrate on her son for a few years. For Noreen, this change was perhaps not ideal but it was opportune. Kathleen, the executive cited above, also felt the demands of her multiple shifts—job and home, but not enough

to completely give up her job. “I had lots of responsibility; I didn’t need to be working like twenty two hours a day, not with a child. So I said to my son, ‘Would you like mommy to be home with you?’ and he looked so happy! It made me feel so bad for all the times I was not there for him. So I went to my boss and asked for a leave of absence. He didn’t want to give it to me, but when I threatened to quit he gave me two years, so it is kind of a neat arrangement.” Kathleen was looking forward to doing some courses in French, volunteering in school and being a mom for two years with her career still relatively intact.

I Do It For You: Societal Expectations

In addition to trailing spouses who reflected on their decisions to follow their husbands abroad and found an opportunity therein to rebalance their work and family lives, there was another group of wives who trailed along because it was expected. These women, largely women who were not career-oriented in the U.S. prior to relocation but instead played roles as stay-at-home mothers, would tell their husbands, “I did it for you, dear.” Half of the female participants in the study had been stay-at-home parents before relocation; however, all but one had a college degree and had been in a professional career before leaving the workforce. Their decision to go overseas was not affected by gendered structural forces operative in the workplace, although these might have played a part in their decision to become stay-at-home parents. However, other gendered factors including marriage and parenting involve largely implicit expectations for these “dependents” to leave home and live in a foreign land away from family and friends. Sometimes this “decision” was couched as love or the need to keep the family together “I

did it for you.” or “I did it for the family.” Sharon had been living in Alaska as a stay-at-home mom living close to her parents. When her husband was offered a job in the Middle East she really didn’t want to go and leave her parents behind. “I didn’t want to move. I mean I could have stayed, but is that a choice?” Others such as Nicole felt her role was to support her husband and family “no matter where that takes us.” In both these cases there is no notion of desire to go abroad, so the needle of the continuum points in the direction of compulsion. However, compulsion comes in different degrees.

The case of Nelly exemplifies the compulsion endpoint of the continuum. Nelly, an executive at Comedy Central and truly happy with her job, wanted to continue working and did not want to relocate abroad at all. But she was handed an ultimatum by her husband; she felt she had to move if her marriage was to survive. Although she “chose” to follow her husband overseas she was angry and bitter about the loss of her career. What seemed to make matters worse was that her husband was becoming more successful and quickly climbing the career ladder while her career stalemated while she stayed home with the children. She lamented, “What choice did I have? If I wanted my marriage to survive I had to move.” Rose, a potter, was put in a similar position. Her husband had wanted to work overseas and she had resisted for many years. She thought her job of being a potter was not easily transportable because she needed studio space, kilns and an outlet to sell her work. When her husband was offered a job in Belgium she felt she could not resist any more if her marriage was to survive so she reluctantly agreed to move to Belgium with him. For both of these women they saw their choice as their marriage or their career. They both chose their marriage. These women felt pressured to

leave when they really would not have chosen to go if it were not considering their families.

None of the male participants indicated they had been pressured to choose between their career or their marriage like Rose and Nelly. As stay-at-home fathers, the male trailing spouses I interviewed were already an anomaly in the United States. What is interesting is that for them, following their wives to another country where the visa issues would not allow them to work, these trailing husbands were moving to a more *socially acceptable status* than they were accorded in the U.S. They had a *reason* for why they were not working, while in the U.S. there is the expectation that men go to work and not to stay home with the children (Moya, Exposito et al. 2000; Hochschild and Machung 2003). Psychologically and emotionally, the “choice” to relocate was much less stressful. This is not to diminish the significance of these men’s gender boundary crossing. Societies around the world expect the man to be the breadwinner; it is often considered deviant for a husband to make the choice of becoming a stay-at-home parent or following his partner if they are relocated. Literature argues that there are many social and gender barriers to break before a non-employed father is accepted in the same way as a non-working mother (Frank 1996; Brescoll and Uhlmann 2005; Winter and Pauwels 2006). R.W. Connell (1987) deems that society rewards conformity and punishes departures from sex roles, encouraging each sex to stay within the expected boundaries. The doctrine of separate spheres expects the man to be a worker, a “good provider” (Bernard 1992:207) and when he stays home he is generally classed as unemployed rather than a stay-at-home parent (Moen and Smith 1986; Moya, Exposito et al. 2000; Winter and Pauwels 2006).

The male trailing spouses in this study did not have high flying careers, in fact all but two were stay-at-home parents before relocation and all asserted they felt no pressure by their wives, friends, or society to follow their executive wives although Jerry admitted his father expressed reservations about him “living off his wife” when he gave up his job to look after his two daughters. Regardless, these men had to live their lives among people who expected different of their roles. It could be that these men are self-selecting and that only a few can survive as the antithesis of the “typical” husband. Yet a recurring theme for the male trailing spouses is that they had relocated in order to strengthen their wives’ human capital. They emphasized how hard their wives worked and accepted an international move as a sign of recognition and a means of climbing the corporate ladder. The male trailing spouses were vocal at asserting how proud they were of their wives’ success and pointed out that they, the spouses, had significantly helped their wives’ careers by agreeing to relocate with them as trailing spouses. They are, in other words, the most nurturing of men in a social system expecting this third shift to fall onto the shoulders of women.

On the other hand, the female trailing spouses were not so adulating about their partners’ careers and successes, or at least they were not so vocal about being proud, some even showing resentment. Nelly was aware that her husband was “a big shot here [in Brussels]. People open doors for him and let them slam in my face. This experience will help him his whole life. Where is my career now?” Nelly, and many of the spouses who had been working before relocation, felt their husbands were progressing in their careers, building their resumes and enjoying a high status while their own careers had been put on hold. They felt the gap in their resume would most likely harm their human

capital and they worried about their career prospects when they returned home. Many missed the status and identity that their career afforded them and this negatively impacted their adjustment to the domestic life overseas.

How Much Choice Do I Really Have? Structure v Agency

This chapter started out by asking “Why do spouses choose to become trailing spouses?” The data suggests that “choice” is not a single quantifiable factor, but can be analyzed along a continuum according to agency.

Figure 3.2. The Continuum of Agency

When spouses are confronted with the possibility of going overseas, what they consider is “do I want to change?” Moving overseas is about change. Some of the spouses were very resistant to change while others embraced it; some pestered their

partners to apply for overseas postings while others did not even imagine it was possible. How much agency is in the decision to change? Agency is affected by the supra-family structural issues that affect most women, such as the second and third shifts in the home, inequalities at work and the gendered societal constructions of the good wife and mother.

Spouses with high agency acted as the catalyst for their partners to apply for overseas postings. They saw it as an opportunity to travel and learn about different cultures by living in a foreign environment. Other spouses wanted change, not necessarily because they were adventurous or even wanted to move to another country, but because change was needed. This was a choice among options; a change in employment status, their partner becoming unemployed, they had hit the glass ceiling in their profession, or a change in their parental status. They make the choice to go overseas based around these gendered social structures to “solve a problem.” Problems such as: “I want to be home more with my child but I can’t afford to give up work,” or “I’m stagnating in the workplace,” or “I’m missing my son’s childhood.” These spouses exerted agency in their choices to move overseas, but very often did not have agency in the gendered social-structural issues that instigated the need for change. Spouses with the least agency were the ones who were content with their lives, their friends, their jobs and leisure activities in the United States and did not want to change. There was a certain amount of coercion to their decision, through gendered societal expectations and constructions of marital relationships and motherhood.

Using the continuum above, how would Noreen and other professional women like her, fit? What I found was that conditions in their workplaces pushed the meter simultaneously toward compulsion and desire. The women suffered through an

unfavorable change in the administration or culture at their workplace, they encountered an unmet need for more training or equipment, or they were laid off from their job. All these required a change in the workplace whether they stayed or relocated. In migration terms, they were feeling “uprooted” and thus more likely to be pulled in a new direction. The gendered structure of the workforce is seen in opposition to parenting; however, many professional women have invested a great deal of time and energy into their careers, and often a great deal of money while training. To “opt out” is not a choice that many of these women would make; however, facing the transfer of their husbands opens up a palatable, even desirable alternative where they, themselves, do not “choose” to give up their work. Instead, they justify this largely structured “choice” by appealing to gendered expectations that they be good wives. As Noreen told me “it’s not like I was fired or I just gave up; it was the best for us all. It gave me permission to leave the workforce.” Giving up work in the U.S. was something they would not do, but relocation gave them a reason or “permission” to become stay-at-home mothers without some of the social stigma they perceived they would feel in the U.S.

How much real power or agency is operative in a “choice” when, in order to pay more attention to your children, you forfeit your career? Pamela Stone (2007) argues that there is a disjuncture between the rhetoric of choice and the reality of structural constraints when women decide to leave their career for their children. Both of my interviewees Kathleen and Noreen understood this but nevertheless looked forward to having time to be a stay-at-home mother. They had been working for over fifteen years and felt they had established themselves in their careers and proved themselves to be successful as professional women. They now wanted the opportunity to prove they could

be successful as mothers. So although gendered structural issues had pushed them into becoming trailing spouses, they believed they had exerted a reasonable amount of agency in doing so.

It is important to underscore again that none of my male participants were in a situation of having to give up a career to become a trailing spouse. The very limited stay-at-home father literature has not yet addressed whether fathers choose to stay home because they are negotiating their family responsibilities with their career aspirations. Bolton (2000) asserts that the third shift, emotional nurturing, is overwhelmingly women's work, that men do not have a third shift of their own. Women multitask while men mono-task. Men can concentrate on their jobs while at work, putting family responsibilities to the back of their minds until they get home. There is some evidence this "balance" is shifting so further research in this area is needed.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have argued that there are two major reasons why interviewees agree to become trailing spouses: financial enhancement and a need for change, both of these are interwoven with gendered societal expectations. Much of the international migration literature has concentrated on the financial "pull" of moving to a new country where economic opportunities are expected to be better. This is definitely a compelling force. However, according to the data in this study, for many dual earning couples there was also a big "push" factor; the (highly gendered) need for change. This category of change covers two motivations to become trailing spouses: a few interviewees looked forward to the change because they saw in it adventure, travel, and widening horizons.

The second, more frequent, desire for change reflects spouses' responses to gendered structural reasons: to escape problems in the workplace or constraints there for getting ahead; alternatively, to seek and hopefully find a better work/family balance.

In the next chapter, I begin the discussion of whether these different conditions of exit—feeling compelled and thus less desirous of leaving versus wanting a change—affect trailing spouses' actual experiences of adaptation abroad. I did not expect that the conditions of exit would be so important to their stories before I started the research. But logically, those spouses who saw relocation as something positive might approach adaptation with greater zeal than those who were unenthusiastic to begin with. I set out to explore, qualitatively, how spouses adapt to the different environments while overseas, and examine the different experiences among male and female spouses.

CHAPTER IV SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Since time immemorial, people have moved away from their familiar surroundings to start a new life in different environments, with different climates, amongst people of different cultures. Inevitably, they have all had to adapt and learn to interpret their new situation. This can be an exciting but difficult and stressful time as adjusting to new environments is rarely smooth or entirely pleasant (Handlin 1941; Adler 2001). This is because relocating is disorientating. People leave their usual familiar spaces and go to places where perceptions of “normal” often have to be realigned. Primarily their socio-cultural adaptation takes place outside the home but, nonetheless, it involves re-orienting to new places of everyday life such as housing, schools, and shops and building new social networks and friendships. When the relocation is overseas the changes are greater. Not only is the adjustment to a new physical environment, but a new cultural environment where the adaptation means dealing with different social structures and bureaucracies, being surrounded by a new language, and being confronted by different cultural norms of behavior, ethics and values. This is why relocating is so disorientating.

It is obvious but still merits stating explicitly that some people make the changes involved with international company transferee relocations easier than others; some quicker than others, some more willingly than others. In Chapter Three I examined some of the familial and personal factors that are implicated in this adjustment; particularly the motivations behind the moves and the attitudes toward moving accompanying spouses related to me. Some spouses, for various reasons, desired change and looked forward to their anticipated relocation while others resisted change and therefore did not have such a

positive attitude. In this chapter I will examine the role that motivations play (if any) and whether the agency exerted in the decision to move is translated into better pre-departure preparation and in-country adaptation strategies.

As I already discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, adaptation is a complex phenomenon affected by a multitude of factors that have been studied by many different scholars including anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, geographers, interculturalists, business and migration scholars. Each discipline studies adaptation from a different perspective and theories of adaptation and incorporation are still being developed and revised. Despite so much attention, there is little agreement and certainly no single theoretical approach. No one perspective or discipline's work is sufficient to provide a comprehensive analysis of the adaptation for spouses of international transferees.

The bulk of scholarly literature on adaptation for expatriates is from business studies; however, all of the theoretical business literature in the 1980s and early 1990s focused on the adaptation of the employed expatriate with little acknowledgement that most employees relocated with their families. When it was recognized that poor spousal adaptation was the most frequently cited explanation for employees returning home, studies exploring spousal adjustment increased; however, very little work has been completed on theoretical understandings. Black (1988) identified three facets of in-country adjustment for the expatriate worker: adjustment to work, adjustment to interacting with host nationals, and adjustment to the general environment. When he extended this to spousal adjustment (1991) he presumed the spouse's adjustment would be similar and simply left out the work adjustment part of the equation.

The data for this study indicate that spouses have very different experiences from the employed transferee, starting with the “choice” to move, through to the different communities that they interface with. These experiences are parallel but different because of gendered forces, social structures and cultural milieus that the spouses negotiate in their day-to-day lives which I will examine in this chapter. Through interviews with the international companies’ spouses and the author’s personal experiences this chapter investigates the role of the host environment and the trailing spouses’ interaction within it. In particular it explores day-to-day living adjustments in Brussels and Kuala Lumpur, and examines how the participants of this study adapted to their new physical environment, the social structures of the new country, the communities into which they integrated and the strategies participants used to help them adapt. To gain a more holistic understanding of the spouses’ experiences I have utilized theoretical perspectives from different disciplines as appropriate throughout the analysis.

Following the organizational framework of Stewart Black (1991), this chapter examines two types of adjustment: (1) anticipatory adjustment which includes individual and organizational factors toward accurate expectations, and (2) in-country adjustment which includes adjustment to the general environment and adjustment to interacting with host nationals. Although Black’s framework is used extensively by scholars researching expatriate adjustment, it does not emphasize the role of the expatriate community in spouses’ adjustment. For this I turn to Shaffer and Harrison’s (2001) social interactional constructs that divide social networks into host country nationals and non-host country nationals. My data indicate that Shaffer and Harrison’s construct of social support from non-host country nationals (the expatriate community) is an important factor in

adjustment, particularly for spouses of transferees. Therefore I use a third facet to in-country adjustment--that of the expatriate community itself. This chapter will explore how the expatriate community affects spouses' socio-cultural adjustment and ascertain whether it should be added as a facet to the spousal adjustment framework.

To anticipate, my data indicates that some trailing spouses expected to experience stress adapting while others did not; some found the cross-cultural experience interesting and helpful toward becoming more worldly while others were less receptive; some enjoyed the camaraderie of the expatriate community while others did not. How does having realistic and accurate expectations assist in a successful adjustment to the new environment? What is helpful to acquire those realistic expectations and how do the spouses access that information? Are there factors that predict which way spouses will most likely tilt? There are clues in the previous chapter, but as always, reality is quite complicated. The following section scrutinizes these questions and seeks an understanding of the issues.

How Do I Prepare? Anticipatory Adjustment

Realistic and accurate expectations for life in the new context are important for spouses in order to be able to make informed choices and anticipate changes even before relocation (Black, Mendenhall et al. 1991). There are numerous ways that spouses can build more realistic expectations, including having overseas experience, collecting information from books, the Internet, or people with experience living overseas, and/or participating in an inter-cultural training program. What I found important to study was not so much the information itself, but rather the attitude of the spouse to pre-departure

preparation and the effort that was put into finding information about the cultural milieu, history, facilities, and opportunities in the city they were to live in. This could be delivered to the spouses in the form of training, typically training offered by the company prior to departure, or spouses taking the initiative to do their own preparation. Of course these are not mutually exclusive categories. However, it *is* an important distinction to make—the distinction between being the *recipient* of another's attempt at relocation preparation and being the *agent* actively seeking such preparation. Additionally, it is important to study the content of the training received or found. Company initiated preparation ranges from sending the employee and spouse to the location for a visit before the job is accepted to merely providing a booklet with information about the country. I will address this more passive form of preparation first and then turn to the more active forms spouses spoke about.

Company Initiated Pre-Departure Preparation

Business scholars have investigated different ways that companies can and do assist spouses to prepare for their overseas sojourn and have consistently found that employer support programs including spousal counseling, language training, career counseling, networking information, and intercultural training help reduce early assignment withdrawals (Trager 1987; Selmer 2001; Copeland 2003; Pascoe 2004; McNulty 2005; Miser and Miser 2009; Cole 2010). Despite these consistent findings, employers have been slow to implement programs for spouses and families (Takeuchi, Yun et al. 2002; Selmer and Leung 2003; McCaughey and Bruning 2005). The program most frequently offered by companies is a course of intercultural training. Pre-departure

knowledge and preparation for the international transferee is geared toward specifically understanding the host society by providing them with a knowledge of cultural differences and an awareness of the expected norms and behavior in a culture. They are coached on how to interact socially, but more importantly, professionally with the nationals of the country they are to be living in (Black and Mendenhall 1990; Evans, Pucik et al. 2002; Gupta and Govindarajan 2002; Briscoe and Schuler 2004; Dowling and Welch 2004).

Intercultural training was first implemented for western businessmen during the 1970s, not out of concern for their welfare but because business contracts were being lost through a lack of cultural sensitivity, particularly toward the emerging Asian market (Tucker 1973; Teague 1976). Using the theoretical work on cultural sensitivity by Edward T. Hall (1956), cross-cultural training classes were designed for American businessmen to learn the business etiquette of the host culture to give a favorable impression in order to win contracts (Baker and Ivancevich 1971; Misa 1975). As globalization drove businesses to establish overseas offices and transfer personnel, intercultural training became more sophisticated. Rather than merely learning cultural behaviors, there was more emphasis on the culture itself and gaining general respect for social and cultural diversity. Interculturalists developed programs and curricula that foster skills to identify and translate cultural behaviors, often based on the cultural distinctions of a specific country. In recent years, spouses and families have been included in intercultural training; but with a paucity of research on the interaction and adjustment that the spouses undergo, trainers have generally presumed that the training for the spouse is similar to the training for the transferee.

According to Global Relocation Trends Survey (2009) 81 percent of companies that require employees to relocate overseas provide intercultural training for the employee, and 56 percent for the whole family. GMAC's (2007) figures are similar and much of the business literature recommends and presupposes that the majority of expatriates have some form of intercultural training before they relocate. However, this was not reflected in my sample. Only 28 percent of spouses were offered pre-departure intercultural training of which 20 percent had the time or the inclination to take advantage of.

All of the participants who had undergone intercultural training said it was useful, some more than others, but the training varied widely from informational facts about the country, to cultural diversity training and couple counseling. Reanne's training included information about the geography of Europe, an explanation of the different cultural behaviors that she might encounter and counseling about the spouse's role overseas. Reanne initially was reluctant to give up her teaching post to follow her husband to Brussels. She decided to go to give her children a more global outlook but she was worried about becoming a housewife and losing her professional identity. However, after her intercultural training she felt much better prepared about what to expect and recognized her husband appreciated more clearly what her role would be. "We had a weekend in New York to give us some real intensive training about what to expect," she recalled. "That was where the trainer said the assignments will fail if the wives are not happy. So it was really drilled into our heads that it was your [the spouse's] job [to make things work out] and it was a very valuable job. And it helped my husband understand some of the difficulties I might have." Reanne's training was the exception, not the

norm. It helped her, and her husband, have more realistic expectations of what her life would be like after relocation.

Most of the participants who had received pre-departure training, quite to the contrary of Reanne's experience, described it as a combination of some historical and geographical knowledge about the new country/city they would relocate to with a discussion of behaviors to expect and how to respond to those behaviors. "It [the training] was two days and a lot of it was talking about Belgium itself and the country's history," Rona told me. "A lot of it was about what to expect, what people wear, and how to behave when you get there. It helped me know what is and is not appropriate and tips about things to do and not to do. This was really important for me because everything they told me was very accurate." Once Rona had made the decision to follow her husband overseas so he could "build his resume", she was anxious that she was successful at making the adjustment. She appreciated any help that would make the transition a smooth one.

While overall the percentage of my interviewees who received pre-departure orientations was only 20 percent, almost half the male trailing spouses I interviewed said they had participated in intercultural training. There are too few men in my sample, (I only had seven), to feel confident about this difference as a gendered trend. On the other hand, the men felt that few accommodations were made for them as male trailing spouses. James, a stay-at-home father of three children was on his first posting overseas. He found most of the training oriented toward the employee and *his* trailing spouse. "A lot of it was directed towards my wife as the moving professional. The training covered what she was going to potentially see in the business element, how she might get treated,

how to handle this, and so on. They didn't do that with me, but I didn't feel left out; I thought that was very appropriate. The two [trainers] that talked to us didn't know how I, as a male, would fit in so it was hard for them to give me much information." The fact that he thought a male "fitting in" would be different from a female shows that there is a presumption of gender differences and different needs for male and female trailing spouses to adapt. Martin et al. (1995) called this "gender-centric reasoning" where characteristics are associated with each gender, in this case James' belief that stay-at-home mothers do one thing whereas stay-at-home-fathers will want to do something different. Although James was very comfortable in his nurturing non-breadwinner role, he was reluctant to cross the gender boundary line of being interested in the leisure activities for women. As discussed later in this chapter, women were also reluctant to allow males into their traditionally women's activities. Until there is more research on the adaptation of male trailing spouses, intercultural trainers will find orientation for male trailing spouses problematic.

Four of the female trailing spouses I interviewed who were offered intercultural training did not have time to take advantage of it as they were in a very busy period of packing up their homes and the children were finishing up in school. Deidre was a stay-at-home mom and a farmer from Illinois with one pre-schooler and two teenage daughters. Her husband was travelling frequently to Kuala Lumpur to begin work in the new office which left her the task of closing down the farm and the home and organizing the move. She complained that she did not have time to spend a week having intercultural training. "It was a benefit that was offered to us but I had to do all the packing and find homes for all of the animals. We were only given eleven weeks to do everything, so there

wasn't time. They would have taken us somewhere, Chicago I think for a whole entire week, our whole family, it was part of the package but what would I have done with her [the pre-schooler]. We just didn't have time to do it, so we didn't get it."

Although only four of my interviewees were unable to make the training offered, it is not a stretch of the imagination to understand that particularly for the employed women, there was tremendous need to tidy their careers—not to mention prepare their families—prior to departure. They would work virtually up until the time they left, making it very difficult for them to take time out for pre-departure training if offered. Companies still largely presume that the wife (or husband) is available to pack up the house and travel to another city for intercultural training. They often fail to recognize that this is often the busiest time for professional women (or men) who will become trailing spouses but who, prior to moving, must vacate actual jobs, close down client portfolios, or finish a project before leaving. Companies still largely base their policies on the "traditional" family model that presumes the wife is available to pack up the house while the employee continues with his work unhindered by the domestic aspects of relocating.

Many of the male executives started work overseas before their family joined them, whereas none of the female executives left their husbands to pack up their houses on their own. They managed the packing and moving. Jerry, the mechanic turned stay-at-home father told me, "We had a company come in to do the packing up, but she [his wife] was the one who knew where she wanted things. I helped but she was the one in charge." Comments like this were typical from the male trailing spouses who acquiesced to their wives' "better" judgment when it came to managing the household. Women taking on this role reify the gender ideologies of the household division of labor where

“managing” the household is a woman’s job, even when childcare and domestic jobs have been designated to the male (Berk 1985; West and Zimmerman 1987; Ferree 1990; West and Fenstermaker 1993; Coltrane 2000). The gendered expectation that women take on the role of managing the household, whether they are the breadwinners or not, was also evident in the self initiated preparation that many of the wives (trailing or working) execute.

Spouse Initiated Pre-Departure Training

As indicated before, it is one thing to be offered and to attend pre-departure training; it is quite another thing to take onto one’s own shoulders the responsibility of preparing for the move. There is a difference in levels of individual agency. I found that almost all of the spouses, regardless of having attended a training, had been given and made use of orientation material provided by the company’s human resource department, and 60 percent used the Internet to extend their knowledge. The literature on immigrants points to their social networks to find information about the country they will move to, although that information is not necessarily accurate (Mahler 1995). Indeed, immigration has been shown to be all about networks; people migrate to places where they already have relatives or friends (Kearney 1986; Boyd 1989; Massey 1990; Portes 1995; Vertovec 1999). This was not true for the majority of trailing spouses; not only did they not have social networks in Kuala Lumpur or Brussels who would help them anticipate what to expect, the spouses also had little to no knowledge themselves about countries in Asia and Europe. To compensate for lack of information from social networks, over half

of the spouses did their own research from books and websites to collect information about the geography, history, and culture of the country they would be living in.

Today there is a multitude of ways to acquire knowledge about a country, its size, population, climate and even the physical layout of a city, but not everyone takes the initiative to seek out the very information that would make adjustment easier. With the Internet, social networking sites such as Facebook, listservs, blogs, and specialized websites being used so ubiquitously, it seems logical that people preparing for a major overseas experience would solicit help and advice. The fact that twenty-two of my interviewees did not seek such information was explained by four, non-mutually exclusive reasons. Firstly the spouses who were not ready for change tended to have an overreliance that the company would “provide” for them when they arrived in the country. They were in the mode that the company “owed” them for what they were giving up and did not feel it should be left to them to find information. Secondly, many of the working spouses were stressed about leaving and just felt they did not have time. They were packing up their houses and their offices, and helping the children have closure in school. They felt they would have lots of spare time once they relocated so why use up valuable time before. Thirdly, they felt the materials the company had given them were adequate. Fourthly, the spouses who were on their first posting overseas and had no contact with trailing spouses were unaware about the various clubs and societies that had websites to give them more information. Nor did they realize that there were numerous listservs that had been set up by trailing spouses for trailing spouses as a forum to ask questions and share information (Cole 2010).

The spouses that did take the initiative to seek out information did so mainly for two different and opposing reasons. (1) They were excited and wanted to know more about the place they were moving to. These tended to be the spouses who exerted more individual agency about the move, in particular the ones who wanted adventure and a cross-cultural experience. (2) They were worried and stressed about the move (scared is a word that was used six times). Consequently, they wanted to know more about the place they were moving to. These tended to be the spouses who exerted less agency about the move, and moved for the sake of their husband or family. Rose is an example of this. Rose, the potter who was given an ultimatum by her husband, was worried about how her profession would transfer to a new continent. Her first step was to find a community of potters in Belgium, which she did through the use of a discussion list on the internet. She was able to find contacts that advised her about setting up a studio in Brussels. "I found studio space through an international ceramic discussion list," she told me. "So I wrote 'Hi I'm coming to Brussels. Anybody know anybody who is a potter there?' I instantly got several answers with an 'Oh, you should contact this person' and so on one lady wrote back. She knew a woman who had a studio who told me to call her. So I called the woman and found a space before I arrived. It made me feel less concerned about moving out there."

More commonly, the internet was used to find websites relating to schools, churches, clubs and societies which helped several of my interviewees once they moved to their new location. Molly was a fifty-four year old librarian and mother of two college students. She went overseas for the cross-cultural adventure and had already lived in three other countries as an expatriate spouse. Having lived overseas before, she was well

prepared with what she wanted to do when she first arrived in Kuala Lumpur. “I found the Malaysian Cultural Group and contacted the American Women’s Association before we got here,” she recalled. “Thank goodness for the wonders of the Internet. I joined both groups immediately and, you know just kind of got involved.”

Certainly the Internet has facilitated finding the information that trailing spouses need to assist with their adjustment. That does not mean that Internet activity is the same for all. On the contrary, my research studying the information flows across listservs oriented towards trailing spouses (*aportableidentity*, *trailingspouseNetwork*, *trailing-husband*), reveals some gendered differences in the questions that were asked by the male and the female trailing spouses. Their questions reflected what they felt they needed to know to prepare them for an overseas move.

On Wednesday November 28th 2007 there was a question that reflected many to-be trailing wives on the *portableidentity* listserve. “Hi, my name is Terri and my husband and I are moving with our 2 boys to Lusaka, Zambia in two months. I am incredibly excited by the adventure of it all, but overwhelmed at all the stuff to do. Sell the house or rent it out? When to ship out? How to live with two boys [8 and 5 years old] without any stuff for six weeks? What will my picky eater eat in Africa? See, tons of stuff just running through my head.” There were nine replies from women already living in Africa giving her advice and information about life as an expatriate. A more serious concern before the decision to relocate was made appeared on the *trailingspousenetwork* listserve on Thursday 26th June 2008. “Hi. We are considering taking on an expatriate posting. Nothing has been offered yet but we are keen to try and make something happen within the next year or two. My question is about special needs education. We have two young

children: our 4 year old has dyslexia and the youngest, 2½, has just been diagnosed with autism. I am torn with guilt between wanting to go abroad and jeopardizing our children's education. Is it unrealistic for us to consider an expat posting at this time?" In contrast the *trailinghusband* listserve posted different types of questions. This one from August 7th 2008 "Advice needed. My wife has just accepted a posting in Jakarta and I will be accompanying her. I don't know what to do about getting a car. I have a 2003 GMC Yukon XL Denali 4WD. Is it best that I ship the car over there, it's great on muddy roads which I hear is a bit of a problem, or should I sell it and buy something out there? Can you get spare parts for foreign cars? What's the insurance like for foreign cars?" Another question on communication from the same listserv Saturday 9th August 2008, asked about technological communication. The man is moving to Dili, East Timor and was hoping to continue his business over the internet once he had moved. "I have been told that international phone calls in Dili are prohibitively expensive. I'm wondering if anyone has ever used Skype on a cell phone to make an international call. I have heard this is possible but wondering what phone it is and if the quality of the call is very good. Should I buy a good cell phone before I leave the States or wait until I get out there?"

Questions that female trailing spouses asked were mainly focused on the schools, the medical system, and what families should pack to bring with them. In other words, the questions women were posing related to general concerns about the health and well being of the family. Contradistinctly, questions on the *trailing-husband* listserv were not about family but about jobs, electronic devices, availability of the internet, and numerous questions about cars. These questions were totally absent from the women's listservs. Not surprisingly, the questions reflect rather than contradict prevailing gender roles in the

home country, the U.S. Men fixated on resources to get jobs done while women slipped into their second and third shift: of taking care of the family and fulfilling the role of nurturer.

The participants of this study perceived pre-departure preparation helpful in formulating more realistic expectations. Information was collected from books and the Internet, by participating in dialogue with someone who is living or had already lived in the location, or undergoing intercultural training. Contrary to most studies on intercultural training, Black and Gregerson (1991) in their study of spouse cross cultural adjustment observed a negative relationship between company-provided training and adjustment but a positive relationship between spouses' self-initiated training and adjustment. They explained this by suggesting that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing" and possibly the quality of the company initiated training was not very high. Although this could be a factor, I would like to suggest that the reason the self-initiated training was more helpful was because the spouse exerted more agency towards their own pre-departure training, therefore it was more effective.

The fact that some spouses are motivated to actually research about the country, join listservs, and contact social clubs ahead of time shows a willingness to learn about the changes that they will experience and a readiness to try to adapt to a new environment and become involved in the communities in that city. The motivation for doing research may be because they are enthusiastic about the changes, looking forward to the adventure and new environment, or they are anxious about the change and need more information so they can be better prepared, or in many cases both. Whatever the reason this self-initiated research does show an acceptance of the changes ahead.

Of course the research a spouse will conduct depends on his/her previous experience of being a trailing spouse. If a spouse has already completed a posting overseas, he/she has already given up his/her career and become familiar with the “expat” culture and therefore anticipates the changes more accurately. For the spouse who is relocating for the first time, expatriate information will be more difficult to access because you “don’t know what you don’t know” and the changes will be more difficult to predict. However, other factors can be helpful in predicting a receptiveness to change. I found that the trailing spouses varied in terms of previous experience with mobility and/or degree and type of preparation for life abroad. What I found particularly salient was the degree of rootedness to a location prior to an overseas relocation.

Previous Mobility

Not surprisingly, interviewees who had trailed spouses abroad before *expected* to encounter differences in the new country. Donna, a 49 year-old mother of three on her third posting overseas, explained it to me this way. She said, “*Don’t* expect you are going to move half way around the world and its going to be just like the place you left because it’s not. Maybe that is part of some people’s frustration. They expect it to be just the same; they want it to be just the same. They resent any changes they have to make. If you move to any big city that you are unfamiliar with, even if it was New York City, [you] still wouldn’t know where anything was either. You’d still have to figure it all out.” Donna’s quote highlights the importance of previous mobility, of experience adapting. On moving from a familiar to an unfamiliar space there is a change in *habitus*, the cognitive internalized structures through which people perceive, understand,

appreciate and evaluate their world (Bourdieu 1977). This cognition unconsciously provides the principles by which people make choices. When people stay within the *habitus* that is familiar they feel comfortable but when people move into a new *habitus*, though their cognitive internalized structures are generally expanded, they can feel quite uncomfortable. The first time a person is surrounded by a different milieu they feel disoriented, but when, as in the case of Donna, moving abroad has been experienced before, then the strangeness is both less striking and less daunting.

Freda, a fifty-one year-old learning specialist had moved six times within the United States as her husband's job was transferred. Then they moved to Kuala Lumpur. She firmly believed that all the previous relocations had helped prepare her for the life overseas because she was used to change and had learned that some of the cultural characteristics of her home town were not universal. "Because I moved a lot in the U.S. I got used to expecting things to be different, so I think that helps, you know just not expecting things to be the same. You are in a different place. Get used to it. It will eventually feel normal." Moving, even within the United States, can be disconcerting requiring a realignment in an understanding of what is acceptable. Jenny, in contrast, was brought up in a small town in South Carolina. When her husband was transferred to Boston, she felt lost in the *habitus* and very alone. "When I moved to Boston it was hard. I was used to a small town but Boston was big. It was scary having to find new schools for my children, finding out where I could buy food and clothes, learning different road systems, the drivers were very unforgiving. There was no one there to help me. I had a lot more help when I moved to Brussels. If I had come here straight from South Carolina I'm not sure I would have coped." Jenny's comment underscores that much of the expat

experience is about relocation, not necessarily relocation abroad. When people who will move abroad have at least moved before, they gain experience which helps them adapt into even more different *habituses*. The social distance traveled by Jenny from small town South Carolina to major city Boston may actually be as great or greater than for her to travel from major city (Boston) to major city (Brussels). For Jenny, in any case, she certainly felt this way. And her experience serves to highlight an under-examined area in studying trailing spouses—their degree of rootedness in their country of location/origin prior to any overseas relocations.¹⁶

The data in my study suggest that the participants who had moved within the United States before they relocated overseas had *more* realistic expectations of the changes they had to adapt to when living in another culture. They arrived in the new country with a different perception of what is meant by “foreign” as they had already been through the process of adapting to a new environment. The 10 percent of participants who had never moved away from their home town found it hard to distinguish between the changes caused by moving to a new context within their country and the changes caused by moving to a new country. However adaptation to an overseas setting requires more adjustment than a domestic move because there are the added stresses of living within a different culture, learning different social norms, and using a different language as well as the changes made because of a different environment.

While it does seem logical that previous overseas experience would lead to more accurate expectations and these, in turn, to better adjustment abroad, the business

¹⁶ Degree of rootedness can be thought of as the strength of connections to cultural traditions, to the community in which they live, and their strength of connectedness with their immediate and extended family.

literature finds that this is not always the case. Naumann (1993) and Takeuchi and Hannon (1996), for example, found that previous experience of living overseas was positively related to work adjustment for employees, Black (1988) found that previous overseas experience was significant for work adjustment but not for general adjustment and Torbiorn (1982) found the quantity of previous experiences does not facilitate the adjustment process. These studies, however, involved examining work adjustment experiences by employees. The spousal experience is very different from that of the employee and having some previous experience is an asset when finding information about the day-to-day living conditions and forming realistic expectations. This study reiterates what Black and Gregerson (1991) documented that previous overseas experience for spouses was positively correlated with adjustment.

Forty-five percent of the participants in this study had previously lived overseas and they expressed feeling better equipped to form accurate expectations of the new location. They knew the right questions to ask, were more adept at collecting information from the internet and people, and had more realistic expectations of the life they would lead. Such an example is that of Norma. She had already lived in Italy and Jakarta before she and her family were relocated to Kuala Lumpur. When she knew about this move, she proactively contacted other mothers at what would become the children's new school; she also e-mailed the director of the American Club and learned about the Malaysian Society. "Because we had lived overseas before, because I had been in other places, I knew about things like that. I also knew that it was O.K. to call someone up completely out of the blue and say, 'Hi, my name is Norma; I'm here on a house hunting trip. I'll be moving here in June, and I wonder if I could ask you a couple of questions

about the school’ and I knew that they would be receptive or that I could walk up to the office at school and say could you give me the names of two mothers who live in this part of town so that I can call them and ask them about where to live.”

No matter how much research, cultural training, or previous moves that spouses have experienced, the anticipatory adaptation is just that – anticipating the changes. No internet site or training course or travel book can fully prepare people for all the changes they will encounter when moving overseas to a new location. In-country adaptation has to take place in the physical environment, the social structures of the new country, interaction with the host society, and integration into the expatriate community. The next section addresses how these different environments affect the adaptation of the transferee trailing spouse.

I’ve Arrived – What Do I Do Now? In-Country Adjustments

Yes, it’s the unknown, and when you walk into a new place you have to sort of figure out what the rules are. All the normal things, where are the grocery stores how do I get to the grocery store, where is the doctor, where is the dentist, how do I get from point A to point B? But it is more complicated because you are not familiar with the city or the country, there are different rules here to home, it’s just a lot of unknowns all at once.

Nicola, a mother of two who has lived in Russia, Latvia, Thailand and France.

When families first move overseas it can be very disorientating for everyone. The new country can present a drastic change of environment particularly for the American who is used to a high standard of living, convenience, hygiene, and safety while in the States (Harvey 1989). It can also be a time to widen horizons and experience the unknown and adjust to the change in virtually all areas of life. The biggest change is

experienced by the spouse, whether male or female. Much of the work of orienting is left to them where they have to quickly learn to navigate their new environment to implement their family's needs. The employee, in his work environment, is sheltered from many of the direct interactions with the foreign environment that spouses have to deal with on a daily basis.

There is a plethora of new services to organize, bureaucracies to deal with as well as navigate the geography of the area to find facilities to fulfill their role as executive of the household. The spouse is left to find stores to buy food they are not familiar with, use a currency they do not yet understand, buy food in weights that are alien, in a language many do not understand. It takes months to get oriented to their new surroundings and familiarize themselves with the day to day running of a home in a foreign country. The constant unknowns can be exhausting, so how does the spouse adjust to the general environment, the physical and social structures and the social structures that they interact with every day? Does their motivation to relocate or previous mobility predict their level of socio-cultural adaptation? These are some of the questions I will be examining in this chapter. First I will address the role of the physical and social structures in the spouses' adaptation to the new country.

Physical Environment and Social Structures

The two cities where I conducted my research, Brussels and Kuala Lumpur, have very different infrastructures, influenced by different outside influences; therefore, the challenges for spouses in each city are not the same. However there are a remarkable

number of similarities in their adjustments to their living environments, transportation and safety.

Brussels has not catered so blatantly as Kuala Lumpur to the corporate expatriate community and conspicuously absent are the luxury shopping malls, corporate offices blocks and apartment buildings that are a landmark of the Kuala Lumpur skyline. Instead there are many old houses, green open spaces and forests which are easily accessible and accommodating for dog walkers, joggers and cyclists. Only 6 percent of Belgium's retail is franchised with the government restricting many large companies from operating in Belgium (www.usatradeonline.gov). There are very few American chain restaurants, supermarkets or department stores and little accommodation from the Belgian populace to American needs. There is no English language newspaper, few local television programs in English, no drive through coffee shops, not even a place to put a coffee cup in the car.

The Belgian way of life is very different from the American, being much slower paced with a guarded reluctance to change. In Hofstede's ranking Belgium has a very high uncertainty avoidance index which indicates a low level of tolerance for uncertainty. This, Hofstede posits, indicates that the society is very risk adverse and does not readily accept change (http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_belgium.shtml Accessed 11.05.09). This hypothesis was borne out by the interviewees living in Brussels when they likened the social structures of the city to America in the 1950s. The stores tended to be smaller, non-franchised, specialty stores that were closed before 6.00pm and were not open on a Sunday. The participants bemoaned the fact that Brussels had not yet entered the twenty-first century as there were few department stores and no one-stop stores

similar to Walmart or Target that are so ubiquitous in the United States. Household services tended to be small businesses and most utility companies were government run. Ellen, a fifty-year old neuro-technologist, had to visit the doctor and was surprised when she entered the office. “It was like I had walked into the 50s. I mean, his office was something else entirely. He was secretary, clerk, and receptionist. He had files on every, every, every surface and was totally surrounded by stacks of files on the floor and on the desk, I mean it was amazing. And they have this little waiting room with magazines stacked up from 20 years ago that are still there for you to enjoy. But on the other hand they take their time; they do not over schedule like they do in the States where you have 15 minutes of their time, if you are lucky. So that was one good thing.”

Even though the old fashioned lifestyle could be frustrating, for the majority it was often seen as a wonderful change from the uniformity of American “McDonaldization” (Ritzer 1993). Earl was a retired NATO worker married to a much younger woman working for the European Economic Community. He still travelled extensively but enjoyed the individualism of Brussels. “The United States is becoming more and more homogenous and it doesn’t mean that some of the homogenization isn’t comfortable and chic. I mean Cheesecake Factory is a very nice place for you to eat anywhere in the United States, but chains are so boring, I prefer more innovation, more creativity in the service line, look at this coffee shop, better than Starbucks any day.” Deanna lived in the countryside, way south of Brussels. Our interview took place in a gorgeous Belgian deli-come-coffee shop in an old barn. After the initial reluctance to move overseas, she now did not want to return home. She commented “Please! When you have a place like this, why would you want a Starbucks? I mean honestly, look around,

this is cool I mean we have homemade butter and bread. Look at those farm-made cheeses and meats, why would you go to Starbucks?” Although Starbucks had not yet infiltrated Belgium, to many spouses in Belgium it represented the American homogenization that was criticized by Deanna and Earl. They both preferred the small individual corner cafes, reminding them of earlier times in the United States. However in Kuala Lumpur, Starbucks and American chains like Einstein’s and KFC were seen as a welcome familiar place to hang out and buy lunch. Local alternatives were alien foods like *burbur ayam* or *gado gado* and cardamom tea was the common beverage in local street cafes.

Some of the spouses enjoyed the non-Americanized world of Brussels that reminded them of the 1950s, while others craved the convenience of stores open twenty-four hours and one-stop shops. Most realized it was a compromise where the retail individualism came at a price of convenience; sometimes they enjoyed the individualism, but sometimes they wanted the convenience. Malaysia had built up a structure of capitalism that was more similar to American style consumerism where shops were open until late and services were easier to find. In Kuala Lumpur it was very easy to live in an Americanized world, only eating American food shopping at American supermarkets and franchises and living in Americanized apartments. One could avoid much of the elements that felt alien to Americans (such as open sewers in Kuala Lumpur) by living in the expatriate “bubble.”

The Ethnic “Enclave”

The expatriate bubble can be compared to the ethnic enclave that has been used to explain immigrant settlement in the United States (Duncan and Lieberman 1959; Wilson

and Portes 1980; Portes and Jensen 1992; Sanders and Nee 1992; Portes and Stepick 1993; Logan, Zhang et al. 2002). The expatriate bubble is not an economic enclave as described by Portes and Jensen (1987), (although it could be argued that American transnational corporations employ Americans to be in charge over host nationals), and it is not a transitory stage before moving up the social scale (although it could be argued that these people are wealthier when they leave than when they arrived), but it is similar to the one suggested by Sanders and Nee (1992) where an enclave can be defined by a place of residence rather than by purely economic terms. Logan, Zhang and Alba (2002) defined these residential enclaves as “ethnic communities,” and argued that they are not necessarily a transitory stage before spatial assimilation into the host society; rather, they form an immigrant cluster of people with high levels of human and financial capital who want to live in a culturally familiar environment. They argue that, unlike the ethnic enclave, ethnic communities are made up of immigrants who chose to live with like members of the community to enhance social and cultural connections. The expatriate community has been characterized as being exclusionary, an “environmental bubble” (Cohen 1977; Thompson and Tambyah. 1999). However, expatriate clusters form around language and not just nationality; so Americans, Europeans, Canadians, Australians and British tended to be in one area while Japanese or Indian would be in another.

It was not always the choice of the transferee’s family to live in the expatriate enclave, but social forces tended to push newcomers into living where others had lived previously. Relocation companies, often outsourced by the human resource departments, knew the facilities that most American families requested. The relocation companies and real estate companies catering to expatriates were instrumental in creating the

environment into which the expatriate community adapted. They tended to presume that expatriates *wanted* to be surrounded by other expatriates and therefore took them to the areas where there was a high concentration of professional foreigners, usually around the international schools. This was not always the case. For example, Abigail, a mother of two who was on her first posting in Brussels, had heard about the “golden ghetto” and did not want to be part of it. “And we physically told them when we came, no, no we don’t want to look in Waterloo, we don’t want to live in Little America, and so we got here and we didn’t realize until we got there it was a little Europe.” The relocation company had found them a house away from the American community but in the European community where the British and German schools and clubs are located. The international schools are a strong organizing factor, with nationalities clustering around the different schools. The International school is the most cosmopolitan, molding an expatriate community of Americans, Koreans, and Europeans. The location of the international schools in both cities dictates where many of the expatriate clusters form, even for those without children, because it is in these areas that clubs and societies meet and activities are organized.

With the concentration of foreigners in certain areas, specialty stores and restaurants catering to foreigners have developed that are similar to the ethnic communities described by Logan, Zhang and Alba (2002). Much of the local economy in these areas rests on the expatriate community; from women coming to the houses to clean and do laundry, to the greengrocer and the fishmonger who drive around the neighborhood to sell their wares at twice the market price. Western-style restaurants are prolific along with pubs and bars that specialize in entertainment for expatriates, for

example quiz nights, folk evenings and special events. These expatriate communities are far more common in K.L. than in Brussels (except for E.E.C. workers) with Brussels having a more dispersed expatriate community, most living in the suburbs incorporated with Belgian homes.

Another factor in forming these clusters was that American families expected certain facilities in their homes that were not standard in Kuala Lumpur, such as sinks in the kitchen, and a stand up shower (rather than *mandi*). Belgian kitchens are small with small appliances. Moving into a house that had previously been rented by an American company, or one of the new modern apartments in downtown Kuala Lumpur, usually provided the facilities and appliances that most American families wanted. Even the most adventurous spouses who wanted a cross-cultural experience did not want to “go native” when it came to their homes. They were now professional housewives/husbands and needed the facilities to perform that role as “normally” as they could.

Does my hypothesis that spouses who exerted more agency in their decision to relocate find it easier to adapt hold true for the physical environments? Is Kuala Lumpur with a centralized, modernized, Americanized, city center and clusters of expatriate bubbles, easier or more difficult to adapt to than Brussels with its slower-paced, more traditional way of life where expatriates tend to be more interspersed with the local community? Does having lived overseas before help to prepare a spouse for the changes in the physical environment each time they move? There aren't any simple answers to any of these questions because there are pros and cons to having an Americanized or more traditional way of life, of living in the local community and building certain

expectations about a city. Sometimes the newness of a city can be exciting, at other times debilitating, as one spouse told me “It depends on which day you ask me.”

Norma, who had already completed two expatriate postings and was very proactive about finding social networks before she arrived, still found getting used to the physical environment in a new city challenging. “Just because you have already lived overseas, doesn’t help you know where to buy bread or how to connect to the internet, or get from A to B. You have to learn those things again and again: it can get wearing. Sometimes a lot of your energy gets used up with the stress of going out and finding the places you *have* to find, so it takes the shine off some of the exploring that you do for fun because it is hard work. It makes me sad though but it is true, it is hard work, and you have to convince yourself even though it is hard it is fun, and after a while it’s just, it’s just hard.” Norma had relocated because her husband was in shipbuilding and had to move where the jobs were, but she was also excited about living in another country and learning about another culture. Now on her third posting, she had come to terms with the realities of change and the difficulties of adapting to a new environment.

If adapting to a new environment is difficult for someone who has already experienced an overseas posting and has relatively accurate expectations, imagine the difficulties for someone who is on their first posting. Irene and Dorothy both encouraged their husbands to go overseas so they could satisfy their needs to have a cross-cultural experience. They both idealized a sharing of cultures and expected inter-cultural exchanges with host nationals that would enrich their lives. They had not considered the day-to-day frustrations and stresses of finding their way around a foreign city, dealing with the bureaucracy, navigating poorly signed roads, and coping with unreliable

communications infrastructures. Dorothy explained her situation. "I was so excited about coming overseas, I didn't think things through. I came here thinking like a tourist, but when you live here there are the things you have to do like driving and shopping, that are just as boring as at home but much harder. I just didn't think things through." Rona had relocated because it was an opportunity to build her husband's resume and thought it would be "fun." She had completed two days of intercultural training but had done very little of her own research. She enjoyed travelling and saw this as an opportunity to see some countries in Europe, but she found that living in a country was not the same as travelling and being a tourist. She echoes the feelings of many of the spouses as she describes her first few weeks. "I mean we were in a temporary apartment for a couple of weeks and I cried because I was scared. It was like what did I get myself into in this country where the people are mean and I don't know where to go or how to get there. I stayed in because I was scared to go out." For Rona, this experience was not fun at all. These expatriate families did not have the social networks accessed through kin, so spouses like Rona found herself lonely and isolated the first few weeks in the new country. Even the most enthusiastic of spouses had times when they were worn down by the demands of a different physical and cultural milieu; in some ways the spouses who were not ready for change and knew this was going to be hard for them were less disappointed. They were much more skeptical in the beginning, therefore had fewer illusions shattered. That is not to say they were any happier, but their expectations had been met.

Some spouses took on the initiative and treated getting to know the environment and adapting to the changes like a job that had to be completed. Jenny was on her first

overseas posting but took it on herself to discover different places each day so she would have something to write in her blog. “Asking me how I discovered everything? Taking her [the dog] for all day walks to discover the neighborhood, taking the trams going out to all the shops and seeing what is in every store and coming home and saying this is what I did today, so that is how I discovered areas.” She also went through a difficult first few weeks. “The first few weeks I didn’t have TV or internet. I could have gotten depressed; it could have been my downfall. But I had made the decision to come out here and I had to make it work. I could have stayed home and just felt sorry for myself. I needed to get out. You have to make a conscious effort to get out and try to do something every day.” After each escapade she would sit down at her computer and write a blog, making light of her adventures into the unknown to share with her family at home which gave her an incentive to discover her new environment and get over her fear and feeling scared. Jake, who had a ten month-old adopted Malaysian baby, also used discovering the physical environment as a purpose for his day. He would read a local guide book each morning then walk the baby around the neighborhood to find places of interest for his wife to visit on the weekend. He took his role as local tour guide very seriously, studying the local paper and checking the internet for special events that the family could participate in on the weekend. However, spouses with an adventurous spirit to explore on their own were not the norm. Most sought some sort of support from an organization or community to help them through the first few weeks.

Recently companies have recognized that recently located families need for support in the first few weeks and have contracted relocation companies to help families orient to their immediate environment. Supporting Cole’s (2009) findings families in this

study were offered the services of a relocation company representative who generally drives them around certain neighborhoods, takes them to schools and takes care of most of the bureaucracy that is overwhelming for a foreigner, particularly in Brussels. This type of orientation to the physical environment was given at the beginning of their stay and most said it was indispensable, that it really helped them to find a house, get the children enrolled in school and helped them in the geography of the area particularly where to buy necessities.

Jerry, a stay-at-home father on his first overseas assignment explained the role relocation companies played in his orientation. “We started off in a hotel and they helped us look for houses,” he recalled. “They took us to the commune and got us set up with all the basic paperwork and all that, and although we could have done it ourselves, they already knew what we should pay attention to. They made sure we had all the right stuff and it was one kind of clean swoop, it was pretty much taken care of. We went house shopping and they picked us up and took us around looking at houses for about a week, so once we figured out which house we wanted to live in they helped us with all the negotiations and they helped us with all of that because they know the rules, they helped us with figuring out the bureaucratic stuff, they helped a lot.”

Each country had its aggravations that the spouses generally were not prepared for. In Brussels it was the hassles of the red tape for residency visas, driver’s licenses, opening a bank account, and the requirement of registering at the local commune which needed a proficiency in the local language. Elliot, who could speak French and was a lawyer before he became a stay-at-home father, aired his frustration at the bureaucracy of

the *Rathaus* [Town Hall]: “We went to the commune¹⁷ three times, each time they found something wrong with our application. We took our original birth certificates and they said it had to be certified. ‘What do you mean?’ I asked, ‘It’s the original!’ Trying to navigate the visa and work permits was just not logical, they were not consistent.” Spouses complained about the inconveniences of stores closing at 5 o’clock and not being open on weekends, about having to go to four or five stores to do their weekly shopping and generally the inefficiencies of customer service. Rona, who was learning that living overseas entailed more than “seeing new places,” was frustrated by the restrictive opening hours for most stores and offices. “It’s very frustrating not being able to go to the grocery store in the evening, after six o’clock, and not being able to go to the store or shopping mall on a Sunday. Sunday afternoons is a perfect time to go to the shopping mall, but they are not open on a Sunday. Why would they be open all week when people are working then not open on a Sunday when people aren’t working? It doesn’t make sense. They don’t even have the pharmacies open. What would happen if you wanted medicines urgently? It just doesn’t make any sense to me.”

Kuala Lumpur was a very different story. Although there were the conveniences of virtually twenty-four hour shopping and familiar products, there were two major concerns that often restricted spouses’ ability to travel around the city. The first was transportation, the second safety. The transportation system in Kuala Lumpur was intimidating for many of the spouses and all of them cited some frustration with the roads, navigating the city, driving on the “wrong” side of the road (as American drive on the right side), the other drivers, and in particular the motorcycles. Participants in Kuala

¹⁷ A commune is like a municipality.

Lumpur had main concerns regarding the motorcycles and their lack of respect for the rules of the road. Lynn would not drive on her own for fear of hitting one of these motorcycle that weave fearlessly in and out of the traffic. “It’s pretty intimidating, learning to drive on the other side of the road. That’s not so bad; it’s the motorbikes coming up on the side of the car and all around you and everything. One thing I have learned while driving here is don’t change lanes quickly or often, stay straight as much as you can. It is intimidating, I don’t like to go anywhere on my own, you never know what might happen. Even if it isn’t your fault they come after you.” Rumors abounded about what these motor cyclists do if a car hits them, or even if they hit a car. I heard the same story from many people about the expatriate who was beaten up by a group of cyclists after there had been an accident. Sharon, a forty year-old who was a veteran trailing spouse with 5 other postings behind her still felt daunted about driving in Kuala Lumpur. “You know I have never driven on the left hand side of the road, never driven a manual, and this place messes me up. The roundabouts mess me up. I get on them and can’t get off, I end up going around and around and around um so I am afraid to drive. But now I have finally managed to get myself over and back to the Melawati campus [about three miles] and I am really tickled about that. Now I can volunteer at the school; it makes a big difference.” Not being able, or not feeling comfortable to drive, severely restricted the social activities and social contacts for some of the spouses, making them feel isolated and lonely. Many in Brussels felt uncomfortable about driving on the narrow roads, but public transportation or taxis there were safe and reliable, unlike in Kuala Lumpur.

Public transportation to the suburbs of K.L. where many of the expatriates lived was sparse or non-existent, but also considered unsafe. I can testify to that as I used the buses regularly (much to the amazement of my participants) and I was mugged on one of the buses by two men who grabbed my purse while the bus was stopped and jumped off. From the lack of reactions of the people on the bus I presume this was not an isolated incident. Taxis were really the only other option but the taxi drivers made up their own rules about who they took, where they went and how much they charged. It was not just the female spouses but also male spouses had problems getting taxis to go to where they lived or to come and pick them up. Jake had a small baby; his wife had the use of a car and a driver during the day which left Jake to use taxis. Because he lived away from the city center he had problems getting cabs to arrive at his house or take him home. “One thing here, it is hard to get around. The traffic is awful and they [taxi drivers], they just play dumb, they are lazy here, they won’t always drive you where you want to go. When I say where I want to go, they say ‘I’m not going there.’ And I say, ‘What do you mean you are not going there? That’s your job, you are a taxi driver.’ But they don’t take any notice, I mean, what do you do? Then they ask for double the meter rate, so that is frustrating I mean just not being able to get around. I miss the freedom of being able to get in your car and drive somewhere, you know. I just miss that here.”

Safety was a big issue in Kuala Lumpur, both on a national security level and a personal level. Pre-departure orientation often included talks about personal safety which some of the spouses, particularly the ones who had lived in big cities before, took as just sensible information. Michelle, who had previously lived in Jakarta saw the warnings as sensible precautions for any big city. “They wanted to make sure that we were safe, and

they gave us warnings about motorcycle purse snatchings and various other things, where not to go, don't do these sort of things at night by yourself and I mean a lot of it was common sense but I think if you are new to K.L. initially it looks safe and comfortable that you might make a mistake and something happens to you." Conversely others like Claire who never wanted to leave the U.S., found the safety aspect was yet another reason to leave K.L. She had lived in Houston and felt very safe there living in a very white and middle class community. She had convinced herself that anywhere outside of the United States was dangerous for Americans, particularly a Muslim country like Malaysia. "Because of how unstable I thought the world was, I wanted to bring nothing that I couldn't bear to, that I was unhappy about leaving. If I had to leave here, I could grab my passport and get out. And that was the mindset I came with."

The issue of personal safety was a big concern especially for female spouses. Kristen had not been in K.L. long when she took a taxi that veered off the main highway and drove down small unfamiliar roads. She was convinced that she was being kidnapped by a taxi driver. She was extremely frightened and eventually jumped out and ran away. All of the participants I interviewed in Kuala Lumpur had either been involved in a personal safety issue or knew someone who had. It was felt that Americans, or white people, were targeted because they were thought of as being rich. Claire seemed anxious about her own personal safety and that of her daughter, whereas she had not been too concerned in the U.S. "I don't really carry much in my purse, I carry my money down here in my pocket. My husband has his phone right on his pants right here and he was standing on the corner, they came by and tried to steal it and they ripped his pants. Many of the house jobs are inside jobs. I live in an apartment I feel safer. There are a whole lot

of American embassy people that have moved from a house into an apartment and that is a sign to me that they are not feeling so safe, they are abandoning their houses. In the houses now they have a metal door that locks upstairs, so when they go to bed they are locked in upstairs. I don't understand – there are often break-ins, and this is very common – that they will take things from downstairs and leave the family safe. I am always worried about my daughter. She calls me when she gets in a taxi and gives me the taxi driver's number. I'm always worrying about her, I wish she would not go out at night, I don't go out unless I absolutely have to.” The issue of safety in K.L. was everyone's concern and restricted some spouses from participating in evening activities on their own.

Strategies Towards Adapting to the Physical Environment.

The weather, transportation systems and safety are things that are an inherent feature of the city which the spouses felt they had very little control over. Other aspects such as housing and food offered more possibilities for spouses to adapt their environment to be more like home or minimize the aspects that made them uncomfortable. Analyzing the participants' responses to managing the physical environment, three different strategies emerged from the data: (1) they isolate themselves as much as they can from the host environment, living in a “mini America;” (2) they adapt to certain aspects of the environment but also change their environment to make it more similar to their home environment; and (3) they themselves adjust until the foreign environment becomes their home environment. These strategies can be seen on a continuum from one to three, with most using strategy two, some closer to strategy one, some closer to strategy three. Spouses can also change where they are on the continuum depending on the circumstance. Some adjusted better to the open sewer system but not to

eating local food while others used the public transportation system but only read American newspapers.

Claire, cited above who never wanted to leave the U.S., was indicative of those spouses who tried to isolate themselves from the foreign environment as much as possible, often buying clothes and food online from the US. “I just don’t buy clothes here, they don’t have any of the familiar brands and everyone is so small, nothing will fit me and I mean I am not huge. And they have small feet, nobody has a shoe bigger than an eight, so I just buy online, send them to my sister and she sends everything out to me.” She rarely went out, but when she did she chose as far as possible an American franchise restaurant, or a company function held at a Western owned hotel. She told me that the local food made her break out in a rash and “You never know what they will give you. I’ve heard some restaurants sell dog. I’m not going to eat dog.” Claire was not the only spouse who was wary of anything local, but she was the most vocal, telling a multitude of stories about things she had heard and read about food poisoning in local restaurants, muggings on the transportation system and dangerous venomous snakes and spiders that inhabit gardens. Interestingly enough there were also two spouses in Brussels who also isolated themselves, even though the public transportation was very safe, the restaurants were wonderful and there were no venomous snakes and spiders. It was more the fear of the unknown and unfamiliar that kept them as detached as they could from the foreign environment.

The majority of spouses use the second strategy, that of adapting to some aspects of the local environment, but manipulating other aspects to feel more like home. They found American-style houses, shopped in the American-style stores but ate at local

restaurants, occasionally used public transportation, and often surrounded themselves with furnishings and art from the region. Donna is one of the spouses who lives in this bicultural world. She encouraged her husband to apply for an overseas posting because she was looking forward to learning about a new culture and she has little patience with spouses like Claire who want to reproduce a “little America” while they are living in a foreign country. Even so, trips back to the States for her and most families were held up as the restocking time for American food, clothes, and school supplies.

Often houses were chosen or renovated by the company to resemble American homes by altering kitchens and bathrooms. Near KLCC the old Malaysian-style houses have been “Americanized” by converting the old style wet/dry kitchens into American or European style kitchens, some with larger refrigerators, ovens, washing machines and dishwashers. Bathrooms which originally had the squat-type toilets and *mandi* showers now have overhead showers and washbasins with European-style toilets. Many homes rented to expatriates in Brussels tend to be large town houses where landlords are more resistant to American style renovations. Many complained about small refrigerators “only as big as bar refrigerators, washing machines that only washed half the load of American washers, driers that were inefficient and stoves that couldn’t cook a turkey.” However many adapted to the different facilities, living a more European way of life, shopping for small amounts of fresh food instead of bulk shopping, doing laundry everyday and cooking smaller portions.

The third strategy, where people adjust until the foreign environment becomes their home environment, was not a common strategy even though two spouses had applied for Belgian citizenship and considered themselves as permanent immigrants.

Daphne was the only participant that strived for this third strategy. Malaysia was their first posting overseas, she had three children whom she home schooled, and she lived in a neighborhood away from the expatriate community. She and her husband had been Peace Corps workers in Africa before they married and wanted to give their children a similar cross-cultural experience of being immersed in another culture. She had worked at a university in the States and had some Malaysian friends there, so used those social contacts as an introduction to ethnic Malays who helped them to find a house to rent, and enroll in a language school to learn Bahasa. After four years they all spoke fluent Bahasa Malay, studying the language during home schooling sessions. Daphne had renovated the kitchen to have hot running water and exchanged the bathroom porcelain with more western style toilet and shower, but this was very much the trend for wealthy Malaysians too. They generally ate local food and participated in local cultural events.

Daphne and her family were the closest I observed to an international transferee's family living a Malaysian lifestyle, but it certainly was not the norm. At the other end of the spectrum five of the participants, all female, three living in K.L. and two living in Brussels, isolated themselves as much as they could from the physical environment. They had things delivered to their door or only shopped in the American-style supermarkets. They had American satellite T.V. and read their American newspaper on line. All desperately wanted to go back home.

Gender Differences

Unlike many other sections in this study, physical environment did not appear to generate many gendered differences. Both the male and the female trailing spouse had similar adjustment strategies, both having comparable frustrations and insights into their

new foreign environment. For the trailing spouse the physical environment is something that is very immediate, that is tangible and something that the participants were eager to talk about. Male trailing spouses complained equally about the small refrigerators and washing machines, the taxi drivers, the unusual cuts of meat and inconvenience of stores closing early. Their explorations into the local neighborhoods were so they could share their information; they learned to play tour guide for their working wives whereas the female trailing spouses' motive was more often than not for the purpose of "fun" shopping. Female spouses tended to explore with an organized group or a couple of friends while the male trailing spouses generally went alone. This could possibly be explained by the low density of male trailing spouses or lack of organized activities; however, they implied that they did not need other people to accompany them, that they preferred to do things on their own.

In summary, Stewart Black (1988) uses the general environment as a factor in his framework for adjustment; however, few studies have detailed analyses of the challenges that the physical environment poses. Both in Brussels and K.L. the spouses described the city with its perceived peculiarities and idiosyncrasies as they contemplated the changes they had to make, as they had to adjust to things that were different from their "norm." It wasn't necessarily that all the spouses wanted to create a "little America" as evidenced in Brussels where the parks, the small specialty shops and restaurants were different from "home." Many embraced the differences and some even criticized the U.S. for its McDonaldization. In K.L. many of the spouses enjoyed the historical architecture, the opportunity to see mosques and Chinese temples. It was more in their day-to-day excursions that they missed the conveniences of the States; they wanted to feel confident

to find their way around safely so they could do their “job” more efficiently. The willingness to adapt to change in physical surroundings and social structures was positively related to adjustment; however, adjustment did not necessarily mean the complete acceptance of the host society amenities. The majority of the spouses blended the American-type stores and restaurants and amenities with local markets and food courts and transportation so their day-to-day living became a blend of the home and host environments.

Spouses who came looking for a real cross-cultural experience were often frustrated at first with the difficulties the environment posed, but as they became more confident in their abilities to navigate their way around the city, enjoyed the local architecture, museums, churches and mosques that the cities had to offer. Spouses who wanted change because of their third shift, because they wanted to be “good parents” found the physical environment frustrating, as in some instances it limited their abilities to be good parents, in that they did not always feel comfortable driving, or finding new places. It was not easy to shop for ingredients they were familiar with, or clothes that the children wanted. Spouses who exerted low agency in relocation were not surprised how difficult it was to survive in an alien land.

Surprisingly the most difficulty in adjustment to the physical environment and the social structures was cited by spouses in Brussels, not in Kuala Lumpur. Given that Brussels is a European country, one would expect the physical environment and social structures would make an easier adjustment, but because Kuala Lumpur has recently had influences from the States, many of the spouses felt at home in the big shopping malls and American franchises and overcame the transportation issues and many of the safety

issues by hiring local drivers. Spouses in Brussels sometimes felt entrenched in the past with a lack of choice and convenience.

Intimately linked to the foreign environment and social structures is the society that inhabits the cities. Interviews with the spouses revealed there were two distinct communities in most of their lives; the host community and the expatriate community. How do the spouses interact with the communities in the two cities, and how does this affect their adaptation? Are there any factors that determine which community is the chosen one to integrate into, and how does this affect their adaptation? The next section examines the communities with whom the spouses interfaced, firstly examining interaction with the host society and secondly the expatriate community.

Interaction with the Host Society

Companies are aware that contact will be made with the host society and that transferees need to understand cultural behaviors to interact successfully with their host business partners (Evans, Pucik et al. 2002; Gupta and Govindarajan 2002). Spouses also need an understanding of the culture they are living in, but companies often do not take into consideration that their *spouses* contact with the host society is typically very different from the transferees'. According to Nancy Adler (1987; 2002), spouses have a more difficult time adapting to the host culture than transferees. Employees have organization and job structure that continue from the home country, children have continuity and routine of school, whereas spouses leave behind the most important aspects of their lives, friends, relatives and meaningful activities, which for many include a job. Not only do spouses lose continuity in their lives, they are also immersed in the

culture far more than the transferee or their children, so their adjustment is different. The questions that arise from Adler's assertions are: if the spouses' contact with the host society is different, how is that contact different and do the different nationalities and cultures alter the interaction of the spouses with that culture? Does more interaction or less interaction affect adaptation? Does a wider or a narrower cultural distance affect adaptation, and how? These are the questions I now turn to.

The intercultural literature cites cultural distance as being a major factor in adaptation (Mendenhall and Oddou 1985; Black, Mendenhall et al. 1991; Selmer 2007). Cultural distance, sometimes referred to as "culture novelty" or "cultural toughness" (Mendenhall and Oddou 1985), is a measure of how culturally different a host culture is from the home culture. The pursuit of establishing characteristics to define and measure these distinctions has been an ongoing focus of many research efforts in the business and intercultural literature. Geert Hofstede (1980) developed a pioneering and widely accepted¹⁸ classification scheme which breaks national culture into four¹⁹ dimensions of national culture: power distance which assesses the acceptance of power (in)equality within the culture; uncertainty avoidance which examines the extent to which people feel threatened by ambiguous situations; collectivism versus individualism which examines the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups; and masculinity versus femininity which examines the extent to which a culture has "male" characteristics such as competitiveness versus female characteristics such as cooperation. "Masculinity

¹⁸ Hofstede is widely accepted in the business and intercultural literature; however, his assumption of a national culture is problematic for social scientists.

¹⁹ A fifth dimension was added in 2001; long term versus short term orientation: the need for short or long term gratification, but this is not often used in training sessions.

stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” (Hofstede 2001:297). These four dimensions are used as a basis for comparing the dominant value systems between cultures to assess cultural distance.

The cultural distance hypothesis posits that the greater the cultural distance, the more adjustment is needed (Church 1982; Torbiorn 1982; Mendenhall and Oddou 1985). The cultural distance construct was popularized by Kogut and Singh (1988) who created an aggregate quantitative measure based on Hofstede’s (1980) work that has been used extensively in international business and human resource management to determine how “difficult” a posting will be for a transferee and his family. Because the cultural distance construct is used widely in the business and intercultural literature, for this study interviews were conducted in two very culturally distinct countries, one in Asia and one in Europe. According to Hofstede’s dimensions, Brussels is less culturally distinct for Americans than Kuala Lumpur therefore the premise is that American transferees and their families would find adapting to the Belgian host society easier than the Malaysian host society. In this section I will examine the role the host society plays in the adaptation of spouses of transferees comparing their experiences of cultural distance in Kuala Lumpur versus Brussels.

My data indicate that there are three significant factors when examining trailing spouses’ adaptation to the host society which are both directly and indirectly linked to

cultural distance: (1) their motivation to integrate with the host society, (2) the quantity and quality of contact with the host society, (3) participation in activities with the host society. I will now explore each of these factors while investigating the degree to which spouses' pre-relocation motivation to live abroad (wanting to make a change versus resisting the relocation) affects their attempts to interface with the host society.

Motivation

Using the vocabulary and concepts from John Berry's (1991) social identification model of adaptation, I argue that some spouses strive for integration while others prefer separation. Integration, Berry posits, takes place when immigrants show a preference for and positive attitudes toward retaining their home culture while also showing an interest in exploring the new culture. Separation, in contrast, entails a preference for maintenance of the home culture, often accompanied by a rejection of the host society's culture. These differences are captured in the narrative of Norma, a stay-at-home-parent who had lived in Kuala Lumpur for two years. She summed up Berry's ideas with her assessment of spouses' adaptation, "I think people come overseas for different reasons. For some folks it's just for the money or for the advancement and for some folks it's because they are not getting the adventure that they want. They want a chance to learn about another culture, and I think that makes a huge difference. We have a joke, my husband and I, about what comes over in the shipment. If it's 12 cases of Kraft macaroni and cheese then you're probably not going to be here for the cultural adventure (laughs). I am not really exaggerating when I say this. There are people that come overseas and want still to be in America. It's just a different mindset, a different way of looking at what your life is going to be like."

Spouses who experience lower degrees of choice over their relocations from the United States have little desire to embrace the host society culture and tend to cling to their home country culture whenever they can. One such person I interviewed is Claire. Claire who moved to Kuala Lumpur because her daughters wanted to go to an international school yet she “never wanted to leave the United States,” tried to keep to her American style of life as much as she could. She complained to me that the children were “forgetting what it was like to be American” and went home at least twice a year to celebrate holidays with her family. Even the Americanized shops of Kuala Lumpur were not American enough for her. “You can’t get the quality of food here, the dairy products as not as good, and there is no low calorie food. And everyone here is so small that I can’t find underwear or clothes or shoes. I buy them all when I go home. You should see us; we have our luggage just piled high when we come through the airport. The Muslims here, they don’t even want to touch our things. They just wave us through.” When I asked her if she had contact with any local people, she told me stories of her encounters with taxi drivers and shopkeepers that were not very positive. Although Claire has travelled and involved herself with the American Women’s Association, she has little desire to participate or embrace the host culture. She just wants to “go home.”

Those trailing spouses who had a greater degree of choice or agency in their relocations overseas tended to be more excited about fostering cross-cultural connections with the host society. They arrived in the new country with the expectation that the sojourn would be an interesting, exciting, cross-cultural experience that could be experienced through local friendships. One such case is that of Reggie. Reggie had grown up in India as the son of missionaries where he had integrated somewhat into the

culture, going to an Indian school and having many Indian friends. He had similar expectations of his sojourn to Brussels. “I was really looking forward to being in a place where I could learn about a new culture,” he recalled during our interview. “It was exciting that we were going to have friends and neighbors that could share their different experiences.” Carol, the mother of three children, found their Midwest lifestyle rather mono-cultural and encouraged her husband to apply to go overseas so that their children could have a more global understanding of the world. She enrolled them in a Belgian school so they could “get a better overseas experience, make some Belgian friends and become proficient in another language.” However, neither of them had significant friendships with the local people.

Although motivated to learn about the culture and the host society, the majority of spouses who were looking for a chance to foster cross-cultural friendships when relocation became an option did not translate that interest into many actual social contacts abroad. Very few had meaningful relationships with host country nationals as they found barriers to their hoped for cross-cultural experience. Many were apologetic about not having host country friends and expressed views such as “I’m afraid I don’t” or “that is one of my goals next year.” The single largest hurdle was how to make contact with host country nationals.

Contact

According to the cultural distance paradigm, Brussels should have been easier to find host society friends for these adventuresome spouses over Kuala Lumpur; however, this was not as straightforward as the theory suggests. One of the major liabilities to estimating cultural difference derives from the difficulty in measuring a *country’s*

culture. Hofstede's classification of different national cultures presumes that national borders act as a boundary for a group of people with similar behaviors, codes of conduct, etc.—that is, a people presumed to have a homogenous culture. However, although people who share a territory may enjoy some similarities such as some common history and traditions, few countries can be said to be homogenous culturally. Malaysia and Belgium are extremely good examples of why it is problematic to presume a common culture for a nation's peoples. Malaysia has three major cultural groups on the mainland: Malay, Indian, and Chinese, all speaking different languages, practicing different religions and having a very different set of cultural and moral values. Belgium has two major cultural groups, Flemish and Walloon, again with different languages and generally having different religious beliefs demonstrating how difficult it is to analyze cultural distance for a nation. Americans found social networks with the Flemish in Belgium and the Chinese in Malaysia because these groups tended to know English and many followed the same religious beliefs, so church and Bible study groups became an environment to forge friendships. Very few Americans had social contact with the Walloons in Belgium or the Indians and Malays in Malaysia.

There is ample literature about how immigrants moving to a new country rely on their social networks to people who have migrated earlier in order to begin the processes of adaptation to the new culture (Mahler 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Vertovec 2002; Portes and Stepick 1993; Horowitz 1983). The nature of intra-company transferee relocation is very different; it is not a continual process whereby people travel the well-worn paths of their family and friends. Rather, it is a much more individual and nuclear

family process. There were few, if any social contacts made through the companies, leaving trailing spouses alone to build their own bridges.

In relatively rare occasions, trailing spouses brought with them contacts to members of the host society at home before they relocated and this gave them an opportunity to meet their friends or relatives. One such example is that of Daphne, an ex-Peace-Corps worker who came overseas for “an immersion experience for my children.” She home-schooled her children, with the major focus on them all learning to speak Bahasa so they could integrate with the host community as much as possible. She had known some Chinese Malaysians when she lived in Chicago and they had given her names and address of family and friends to contact. This gave her ready-made connections into the host culture that many expatriates do not have.

Even the most highly motivated spouses have found that members of the host society of both countries are resistant to forging social relationships. For example, Gloria, a thirty-five year-old property lawyer with three children had chosen to live in the countryside outside Brussels away from the expatriate areas with the purpose of integrating into the Belgian community. “I came here because I wanted to experience another culture. We were taken out by the boss and his wife before we came and I said ‘How many Belgians have you met in four years?’ She said ‘None.’ I mean that is a frightening indictment.” Gloria had taken French classes to help her integrate into the French-speaking community and now after eight years of living in Brussels she considered herself reasonably fluent but this ability, nonetheless, had not really helped her to foster friendships in the local community. “I have two Belgian women I could consider as friends, but I am not close. People are very private and you do not get invited

into homes very easily.” She wanted to get to know her neighbor but it took two years before she had the opportunity. “We chatted in French, I introduced myself and she did not tell me her name, so I tried again, and still she did not tell me her name.... And it wasn’t until two weeks later there was a flower delivery and it was for them, I said to the man let me see that name (laughs). So that is how I learned her name, but she has never invited me to her house.”

Even Carol, the spouse who sent her children to the local Belgian school, found it hard to make connections with Belgian parents. She made friends with the other female expatriates at the school, a Polish and a Czech, but the Belgians were reluctant to enter into a social relationship. “We haven’t really particularly made any Belgian friends and for a while I used to think, ‘Oh gosh I am really not succeeding.’ But I realize these people from Northern Europe don’t want to know us Americans, and that’s O.K. I’m O.K with that now.” One reason Elliot, a male trailing spouse in Brussels, gave for the Belgians not being open to making friends with expatriates was the temporary nature of their stay. “I mean why would you? When 40 almost 50 percent of their city is expats, something like that, why would the Belgians try to get to know you when the likelihood that that person is going to move is well over 50 percent. It’s not worth their effort.” Elliot’s insight points to a conceptual problem with Berry’s social identification theory. That theory assumed that the immigrant has the freedom to choose how to interact with the host community. Clearly reality is not as straightforward as that. The host society’s perception of immigrants and its expectations for adaptation to their country are important factors in the immigrants’ acculturation. More recent modified models based on Berry’s original examine the role that the host community plays in immigrant

integration but have yet to be empirically tested (Bourhis, Moise et al. 1997; Ward and Rana-Deuba 2000; Navas, Rojas et al. 2007).

In addition to the temporary nature of their stay, expatriates found language to be another major hurdle to having host country friends. Over 80 percent of those spouses I interviewed had taken at least one course to learn the local language but only two of the participants in Kuala Lumpur were fluent in Bahasa, and four of the participants in Brussels were fluent in French, three already having studied French before they came to Brussels. It was not a lack of *wanting* to know the language--as many of the participants wished they knew the language better and were embarrassed that they knew so little. Their problem was a lack of sufficient level of language ability needed to participate in locals' activities, to meet more local people. Jerry was an avid cyclist who had belonged to a cycling club in Colorado and wanted to find other cyclists in Brussels. "I found one club here, a good one that went into the hills every weekend, but I didn't understand what they were saying. It's no fun if you can't communicate. I don't do much here with the locals because of the language."

What is the reason for this lack in language skills when most expressed the desire to be able to communicate and hoped it would give them access to more host society activities and friendships? One of the main reasons given is that the participants are surrounded by English speakers in their daily lives. Their friends, school, church, social organizations are all English speaking. Not only did this expatriate bubble life diminish the need to learn another language; it made it harder to practice what they had learned. Irene had learned French in high school and was fairly confident in her language skills when she first arrived. She said one of her goals when she came here was to become

fluent in French. She was taking a masters degree in political science and had become heavily involved in a running group that took up a lot of her time. She told me, “I am kind of between beginner and intermediate but I feel like my French is getting worse. I feel like when I first got here I was studying French a little bit. I thought I would get more confident going out and conversing with people, but since I have been studying in English and we have things like the English speaking running group, I find myself just associating with a lot of English speakers. I have had no [French] practice in the last year and a half.” In another case, this time in Kuala Lumpur, Jackie worked hard at her Bahasa skills, reading the local newspaper every day; however she found it hard to practice her skills. “Whenever I try to speak Bahasa the people are always adamant that they want me to speak English because that would help them get ahead and get better jobs. They considered it kind of insulting to speak Bahasa. I think it is a class thing.” Jackie’s comment highlights an issue that became apparent while interviewing the spouses and underscores the differences of host societal interaction between the spouse and the transferee.

Although about 25 percent of the spouses were able to make some social contact with the host society mainly through church organizations or sports clubs, their primary contact group was with members of the society that tended to be of a different “eth-class” to them. As Molly regretfully commented to me, “The contact I have had has been with people in the shops and taxi drivers. They are on a totally different socio-economic plane; I haven’t really met many middle class Malaysians.” The concept of the eth-class was developed by Milton Gordon in his seminal book Assimilation in American Life (1964) where he posited that since social structures are multi-dimensional, sub-societies

are around groups of people holding the same ethnicity and social class. He found that differences in social class are more determinative than differences in ethnic background. “This means that people of the same social class tend to act alike and to have the same values even if they have different ethnic backgrounds” (Gordon 1964: 52). Very often this important point is overlooked when examining the adaptation of spouses to the host society. But when taking a specific look at the eth-class relations among overseas transferees and their family members, it is clear that the trailing spouses are the ones who are required to cross eth-classes. The employee works in an office which is staffed generally by educated, English speaking, middle-class westernized locals along with other expatriates. The children who generally attend an international school where if there are host country nationals they are from upper-class families who want their children to speak fluent English and acquire a Western style education. However, the spouse does not have this “ready- made” class (if not ethnic) homogenous society of host country nationals with whom to socialize.

The spouses *do* have contact with the host society, but these contacts typically cross eth-class lines. They interface with shopkeepers and workmen and maids and drivers who are doing a job for them rather than building a social relationship. Nicola, a veteran trailing spouse who gave up a career for the benefit of her husband’s job, is on her fifth posting overseas. She explained that although the intercultural training they were given before they moved was virtually the same, she was having a very different experience from her husband and children in adapting to Kuala Lumpur. “My husband works in the office with a fairly normal Western environment. Obviously, that’s normal to do what he does. My kids go to an international school where it is fairly similar from

place to place. But for me, I'm out there on the beaten path meeting people who don't speak English, who don't respect me because I am a woman. I have to battle the taxi drivers and struggle with customer service and the endless idiosyncrasies of the big world out there that is not the expat bubble that the rest of my family survives in. So I'm the one who comes back with, 'Oh you'll never believe what happened today' stories. My family just doesn't go through that."

The spouses' adaptation to the host society is harder because they are dealing on a continual if not daily basis with service personnel of a different "eth-class". Rona, herself an executive in the U.S., felt her contact with the Belgians was not as agreeable as her husband's and it was hard for him to understand her frustration. "I was like what did I get myself into in this country where the people are mean, but if I said anything, he would always say, 'What are you talking about?' He never saw it the way I did because he worked in an office which was completely English speaking, even though everyone was Belgian. He just loved walking around sitting in the cafes. I mean he just loved everything but he didn't experience the same things as I did, because I was the one who did the grocery shopping and had to deal with learning that they don't give out shopping bags and how to recycle the bottles, and try to find the laundry detergent when everything is in French. I was the one who had to find out how to pay bills or deal with the plumber or the electrician, who didn't speak English. I had to deal with most of that, but it's a different situation for him." Although the employees had contact with middle-class, Westernized host country nationals, very few cultivated friendships with them, or encouraged their spouses to do so. Within the companies there was a lot of politics and most employees did not want to mix business with pleasure, or their wives with their

employees except for the occasional “duty” contact for weddings and festivals. As Donna explained, “My husband is the boss. For me to socialize with the Malaysian employees can sometimes be difficult; they can’t treat me as a friend.”

Because the major point of contact for the spouses was with service personnel, many got to know them on a personal level and some thought of them as friends. Freda, the retired teacher whose main reason for coming overseas was to have a cross-cultural experience, made a point of using her shopping sprees as a point of contact with the culture. “I think that I have made acquaintances with people in certain positions; most of them are shop keepers; because that’s what I do. I furnish the home, I take care of the home, I buy things that my daughter might need for school, or whatever. I am out there dealing with local Malaysian shopkeepers, and so they know me. I know them; I know their children and I enjoy them.”

In Kuala Lumpur the spouses actually had more contact with the local citizens than in Belgium as many employed drivers or maids. These local employees were often used as culture brokers; people who could offer them a deeper understanding of the host society cultural world. Molly, the librarian, purposely became involved in the Malaysian Cultural Society to try to understand the history and culture of the country she was living in. She sought more contact with the host society and a deeper understanding of its working, but did not have any host country friends. However, she considered her driver to be her “cultural bridge.” “I have Zak, the driver who really is my window into a lot of Malay things, but it only goes so far because sometimes his English fails him, and don’t think it is language so much as concepts.” Trying to communicate interculturally is not

just about having a common language, but about understanding each other's cultural concepts.

Milton Gordon (1964) posited that there are two different levels of culture, extrinsic culture, which is that which is visible by outsiders and intrinsic culture which cannot be so easily detected nor understood by outsiders. One theoretical idea used by interculturalists and intercultural trainers is where culture is metaphorized as an iceberg floating in water which has three levels. The top level (the tip of the iceberg) represents surface culture, that which can be accessed through the five senses. Examples of "surface culture" include music, language, food, arts and crafts. These are easily observed and experienced by the traveler and tourist. There is often a sense of wonderment at culture experienced at this level, of experiencing the exotic.

The middle layer is just underneath the surface of the water and represents the unspoken assumptions that are not so accessible to an outsider and often need explaining to non natives. Examples of these assumptions are those governing modesty, cleanliness, etiquette, non-verbal communication, and friendship. When a foreigner comes across elements of the second level of culture, it can be a very different reaction to the first level. There tends to be a period of being uncomfortable with differences that are not so visible and tangible, differences which can lead to an aversion to delving deeper into the culture.

The third layer is the bottom of the iceberg and represents the values or unconscious assumptions of culture which even members of a society are largely unaware of. They include a sense of time, ethics, morals, degree of individualism or collectivism, and roles relating to age, sex, and occupation. These deep cultural traits are hard to

understand unless there is an extended immersion into the new society, which often leads to misunderstandings, frustrations, and dissatisfaction (Macfarlane and Robinson 2004). Using this model underscores the importance of participation to understanding a culture, but also highlights that more involvement in the culture can have a negative correlation with adaptation.

Participation

Although many of the spouses had the opportunity to see local cultural festivals like the Ommegang in Brussels or Taipusan in Kuala Lumpur, watch dances or listen to the music of the region, appreciate and buy local crafts, and sample the local cuisine, it was participating in the quotidian and not touristy in-depth cultural experiences of level two that separated spouses who wanted to “integrate” more into the host culture from those who chose “separation.”

The second level of participation in the host culture took place in various forms from being a family event when they were invited to a local celebration, or joined the local nature society to more personal activities such as volunteering at the local branch of the Salvation Army. The spouse’s social connections to domestic personnel gave them some additional knowledge about the political system and ethnic relations that helped them get a window into this other cultural world, but it was mainly through the employees’ connections with the middle-class host society that the second level of cultural contact took place. On her first posting overseas, Jessica was able to attend a Muslim wedding. This afforded her an opportunity to see the workings of the ethics code. “My husband works with a lot of Malay people and they invite us to different celebrations like Hari Raya, when they finish the fasting, and we were invited into their

house. We have also been to a Malay wedding and one of the women workers went with me shopping so they could tell me what to wear. They took me to some shops I had not been to before and showed me how to wear the sarong properly. It was really exciting but everything about it was just so different than an American wedding. It was in a hotel but the bride and groom were on display on thrones about eight feet high and you lined up to shake their hand, they sat there like that for hours. There was food and soft drinks for the guests but no music or anything so after about half an hour we left and went to the bar, and you'll never guess what- it was full of people from the wedding all drinking alcohol. There were these Muslims all pretending like they didn't drink alcohol, then they openly had a bottle of Johnny Walker in front of them. How bizarre is that?" For Jessica this was a cultural experience at many different levels that allowed her greater insight into Malay culture, one where she could compare the differences between her home and host cultures, but also gave her insights into some of the deeper issues of morals and ethics in the society. Even though there was a wider cultural distance between Malaysians and Americans than Belgians and Americans, (or maybe because of it), transferee families in Malaysia were invited decidedly more often to celebrations and weddings than those who lived in Brussels which meant that spouses living in Malaysia often became more familiar with the culture at a deeper level.

Some of these participatory activities were a very positive experience for the spouses while others were not so positive. Delving into the culture at a deeper level often highlighted the differences which caused unease for many of the spouses. This was more prevalent in Kuala Lumpur than in Brussels not only because there was more contact in Kuala Lumpur but also because the wider cultural differences became more evident. An

example of this was the volunteer work that some of the spouses participated in with the local schools, organizations and societies where they were made aware of different attitudes toward the handicapped. Donna is a fifty year-old mother of three who enjoyed horse riding and who, in the States, had participated in riding for the disabled. She tried to introduce a similar concept at her local stables in Kuala Lumpur, but found the attitudes toward physically handicapped people are very different in Malaysia. "It's difficult because the disabled are not treated the same here as they are in a lot of other countries. They are terribly shunned and not treated very well, even by their parents. They are not really understood very well. Just because some of their limbs don't work they presume their brain isn't working either. Parents keep them hidden away; they don't want them to be seen in public, so they don't really do much to help them or train them to help themselves." Donna was very frustrated at not being allowed to let the children be more independent, an American cultural inclination that she valued highly. Freda voiced the same frustrations when she volunteered to help at a learning disabled school.

Freda was a learning specialist in the States and was excited when she was asked to work with a local school for autistic children to revise the school's curriculum and do some in-service training; however, she soon found a big difference in the philosophies and values between the two cultures. "I volunteered last year; professional education is my background, so I was excited about volunteering at a special school in the area for autistic children. But I found it very frustrating because the culture here is such that there are so many family members, especially in the Chinese family, that don't understand why an autistic or Down's Syndrome child needs to learn to tie his shoe, or be independent or feed himself, to be toilet trained or anything. But in the United States that is at the

forefront of our teaching. From the time those kids are three years old and start going to school, we have to teach them to be independent, to ask for what they want, to feed themselves, you know and here they are resistant to that. I couldn't just stand by and see these ten year-olds being fed, I had to leave."

The deeper spouses delved into the Malaysian culture the more differences they found. The deeper spouses delved into the Belgian culture the more similarities they found with their own culture. This implies that concept of cultural distance is more precise and salient when expressed in terms of deep culture rather than the "tip of the iceberg" culture that most expatriates experience. Cultural distance between the American culture and the Malaysian culture in terms of safety, gender relations, and ideas of individualism and equality were commented on by virtually all the spouses living in Kuala Lumpur but not in Brussels. Norma, on her third posting, enjoyed the expatriate experience but found some aspects of Kuala Lumpur difficult to come to terms with. "Things you see in a new society that you are trying to become a part of can be very disturbing when it crosses that line of an absolute value; then it is really hard to accept it no matter what. The big example I found everywhere we lived is seatbelts and children. Because for me it is pretty much an absolute value that they should strap a child in. I mean why would you possibly do something safe for yourself but not for your child? So therefore it is really hard for me to come up with a good reason why anybody shouldn't put their kids in seat belts in the car on the highways that we drive on; it is pretty absolute for me. So when I see people driving around and their kids are hanging out the windows and jumping from back to front and standing up in the car, I feel angry and upset because they, they are doing something I can't understand, because its crossing that line. I feel the

same about Muslim women staying covered so that Muslim men are not tempted and the whole idea of making sure everything is covered makes me angry; to me it is such a huge double standard. The idea that you can have up to four wives, you can make up some excuse if one is ugly or doesn't do what you tell her to do, or misbehaves in some way, then you can get a divorce and have a new one. I don't know the right words for that...abominable. What makes it worse is so many women are really happy with having this. The Muslim women I have spoken with are choosing, they tell me they are choosing to wear a headscarf and dress a certain way because they wouldn't want to do it any differently, in the same way I wouldn't walk any place in America wearing a bikini, unless I am ready to jump into a swimming pool or at the beach. It is still hard for me to believe in these huge double standards. I believe the men are oppressing the women by encouraging them to completely cover themselves so they are not tempting the men.”

Norma's experience here is showing the frustration that can be felt when you discover a society you are living in has different standards and expectations to what you think of as the norm. Your *habitus* has changed out of the comfort zone, therefore you resist adapting into that society.

Conversely, the opposite can also happen. You can find that your *habitus* has changed, but you prefer your new *habitus* to what you thought of as the norm, therefore the desire to accept the host society's standards and expectations enhance adaptation. This was the case for many of the spouses living in Brussels. Over 70 percent of the spouses living in Brussels preferred the pace of life and family values in Brussels to the United States. The spouses that most highly valued the “piazza” world in Brussels were the professional women who were mothers who had left their profession to relocate

overseas. Reanne, a teacher with two small children, explained some of the reasons why she enjoyed the Brussels “lifestyle.” “I think it is a better quality of life than America. On Sunday you can’t make a noise; not only can you not go to a grocery store or the mall, but you can’t even make noise. You can’t mow the lawn and I just think that is so brilliant. You are forced to spend time with your family, I mean literally, or your friends. There is nothing else to do apart from hanging out with your family and friends. I think they separate their work life from their recreational life. They only work so they can live and I love that. They use their expendable income to go on vacation instead of buying new things for their home. It has taught us new values about our time together as a family.” Reanne was not alone in expressing a dissatisfaction with her own culture, rejecting the consumer, fast paced world she had left behind and accepting Belgium’s slower paced more traditional lifestyle. It gelled better with ideas of family values and quality of life. Gloria was an intellectual property lawyer who had a very difficult time giving up work, but had relocated because of the third shift; to have more time with her son. She appreciated the time her family was spending together and the emphasis in Brussels on family outings and Sunday strolls. She realized that the overseas environment had brought her and her family closer together. “Everyone in Belgium just goes out on weekends; they go for walks or to festivals, or they just sit and really enjoy a meal. At first we missed the malls, but now we have found much better things to do together.”

Gender Differences

There were remarkably few differences between the male and female spouses when it came to adjusting to the host society. There were comments from the male trailing spouses in Kuala Lumpur similar to Norma’s about the dress expectations in

Malaysia and the lack of gender equality in the Muslim community, but they had not had the opportunity, as Norma had, to talk directly to some of the women. They were very aware as Western men that they were targeted by certain Malaysian women as possible “boyfriends.” Jake commented that they sometimes used the baby as an excuse to come to talk to him. “It’s scary; I just try to walk away as quickly as I can.” He said with some embarrassment.

Female trailing spouses more than male spouses appeared to notice, or at least verbalize, the disparity between spouses’ and employees’ experiences within the host society. Comments like, “He just doesn’t get it, trying to make the Belgacom man understand what is wrong with our signal in sign language is not the same as negotiating a deal with the executive of Petrofina.” and “It’s alright for him, he doesn’t have to wait in line for two hours to pay a bill. He gets his secretary to do it.” It highlights some of the frustrations of the spouses who felt their husbands were having “an easier time of it.” Although the male trailing spouses complained vigorously about taxi drivers, workmen and customer service personnel, not one intimated that their experience was harder than their wives.

Another difference between the male and female spouses has to do with the closeness of the relationship that was felt between themselves and members of the host society. Female spouses were much more likely than male spouses to consider service personnel around them such as shopkeepers, maids and drivers as their “friends” or “acquaintances”, ignoring the power differential and eth-class differences. None of the male trailing spouses thought of service personnel as anything but service personnel. This reluctance may have been to avoid any misinterpretations about their relationship. As

Carlton explained “A male in a female world has to be very careful. There are people out there with nothing to do but gossip.” Consequently, the only host country people they considered to be a social contact were those of a similar social class whom they met through playing sports or through church groups.

In summary, issues like gender relations, attitudes toward the disabled, lack of safety awareness, and ethnic inequalities pushed the expatriate community away from socializing with Malaysians except for the ones who understood their American ways. For the spouses who wanted and were able to participate deeper into the Malaysian culture, the experience emphasized the cultural distance between Americans and Malaysians. In Brussels although values were similar, if not closer for some of the spouses, language and lack of impetus to socialize by the host society were the major barriers to integration. Although most of the preparation for an overseas move is geared toward the host environment and adaptation to the host society, it is often difficult for even highly motivated spouses to integrate into the host community because of reluctance from the host society themselves, language fluency, and differences in cultural values. Many embrace only the tip of the iceberg culture of the host society but it is language and common experiences that pull expatriates to socialize with people they have more in common with--other expatriates. It is with the expatriate community that they have the most contact, participation and common experiences.

Expatriate Community

The expatriate bubble, like the ethnic enclave, propels newcomers into an area where an established community exists that cushions them from the immediate shock of

adjustment to a new cultural milieu. It draws in people from different nationalities who can speak the same language to form friendships and forge social networks with others who have a shared common experience; that of living away from their homelands. The development of communities of people with shared experiences has been described as homophily. Homophily is the principle that occurs when social structures and cognitive processes make social communication between similar members of a community more likely (McPherson, Smith-Lovin et al. 2001). The concept of homophily was developed by Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954), based on the theoretical work of Simmel (1922/1955) and Park and Burgess (1921/1969). They studied the process of friendship and identified dimensions that determined the similarities that are most prevalent in friendships, and these include race, ethnicity, gender, religion and socio-economic standing. For the expatriate community the pull of homophily centers around the dimensions of language, the shared experience of living away from the homeland and becoming “the other.” Homophily is also strengthened by geographic space and activities that encourage contact, particularly in the workplace, volunteer organizations, and committee memberships (Feld 1984; Louch 2000; McPherson, Smith-Lovin et al. 2001). The expatriate community, particularly the group of trailing spouses, creates an ideal setting to reinforce personal networks which tend to be homogeneous with regard to socio-demographic, behavioral, and intrapersonal characteristics (McPherson et al 2001).

Although supportive and reassuring, the similarity in social relationships can limit a person’s social world and have serious implications for the information they receive, the attitudes they form, and the interactions they experience. As already discussed, the fact that many trailing spouses experience barriers to socializing with the host

community, live in areas where other expatriates live, and are part of English speaking institutions means they will have other trailing spouses in their social network of friends. The information they receive about schools, shopping, and social activities is usually from expatriate sources, so transferee spouses are plunged into the expatriate social environment that in many ways is divorced from the host country culture. To socialize with the host culture takes much more individual effort and energy, as there is a much bigger change from location to location, and also they have to resist the magnetic pull of the homophily from the expatriate community. James had lived in Brussels for ten years being a stay-at-home father for his son. Nevertheless, all his social networks and friends were other expatriates. “We do hardly any socialization with the local Malay population,” he explained. “I’m not quite sure why that is, that’s probably because it has been easier, more comfortable with people when you understand their behavior; you know how to read them. Also we got our friends through the school; they were familiar faces from around the auditorium. We were all parents of children from the international school, so that was our common bond.”

Unlike the differences between the host communities in Kuala Lumpur and Brussels, there was little cultural difference between the community of expatriate spouses in Kuala Lumpur and the community of expatriate spouses in Brussels. Both revolved around the international schools and the expatriate run institutions. The spouses with previous overseas experiences found the communities of expatriates similar in the big global cities around the world, despite the fact that the physical and cultural environments were very diverse. One could slip from one expatriate community to another—as I did during research—and continue in a lifestyle that was familiar. The American Women’s

Clubs were run along very similar designs; the international schools all had a familiar structure, and the feeling of otherness which built friendships permeated the expatriate communities. Although the expatriate communities for female trailing spouses were similar in Kuala Lumpur and Brussels, this was not the same for male trailing spouses. Because of the very few numbers of male trailing spouses in Kuala Lumpur, there were no organized clubs or meeting places for them. The two American male spouses I interviewed said they did not feel the need for social contact with other male trailing spouses. Jake had a newly adopted baby to look after and that took up most of his time, whereas James' children were in middle school so he taught some after-school sports. Conversely in Brussels there was a small community of male trailing spouses and some got together to form a loosely held together organization called STUDS, creating a meeting location and a social network with other male trailing spouses. This made the two locations a very different experience for male trailing spouses as they had the choice to form a social network if they so desired.

Although the expatriate "culture" would appear to be more familiar to an American than the host culture, there is still a significant adjustment. Some of this adjustment is positive, some negative with numerous factors interacting with each other, some acting as forces to return home while others acting as reasons to stay. Many would consider this group of people to be privileged (including many of the spouses), because of their extensive travel, household help, and time to pursue leisure interests; however much of the literature depicts them as isolated and lonely particularly if they have no children (Harvey 1985; Naumann 1992; Adler 2002; Ali, Van der Zee et al. 2003; Harvey and Kiessling 2004). To alleviate this loneliness many join women's associations, play

sports or involve themselves with international schools largely within the expatriate community.

The structure of the expatriate community facilitates the forming of friendships and social networks for spouses to support the travel widow or the bored housewife (Yeoh and Khoo 1998; Copeland 2003; Harvey and Kiessling 2004; McNulty 2005). Although some spouses resisted becoming part of the expatriate bubble, the ones that integrated and became fully involved made more friendships and felt better about themselves. Becoming integrated can mean passively taking advantage of all the activities that were organized and stereotypically sitting around and having “girls’ lunch” everyday, however I met few spouses who did this. Many of these “non-working” female spouses worked relentlessly to ensure that these life blood organizations served the community and acted as rallying points for social outlets and learning centers. The expatriate female spouse community acted as advisors, friends, tour guides, and surrogate families to newcomers and to each other forming strong friendship bonds for those who were responsive to their outreach.

The most significant force that affected adjustment was the quality of social networks which, in turn, was directly related to three other variables: (1) their reasons for relocating, (2) their parental status (i.e., if they have children or not and at what ages), and (3) the gendered structures inherent in the expatriate community. I have already discussed in Chapter 3 the motivations behind moving so I will now turn to parental status and gender.

Parental Status

With regard to parental status, participants fell into four different categories: (1) those with pre-school children, (2) those with children who were at school, (3) those who had older children who did not relocate but stayed in the States, and, of course, (4) those without children. Their status as a parent, or a non-parent, often decided the social networks that they built, their reason for relocating overseas, and their ties with their homeland. Parents who had older children in the States were in a similar position to non-parents in that they were excluded from the social networks of the international school—a very important institution for participants with school-age children. Their social networks had to be sought elsewhere, with many of them having a difficult time finding spouses in a similar position without the institution of the school as a central meeting place or children to act as a conduit for friends.

Participants without children with them could travel with their partners on business trips or arrange their own excursions out of the city with friends or visitors. Such mobility, in turn, constrained commitments to classes or volunteering. However, the difference between non-parents and parents of older children was that parents with older children still had the parental ties to their children and felt an emotional responsibility to them, even when they had left home (Sebald 1976; Pyke 1996). They felt the need to return to the States periodically to address issues with their grown children there. One trailing spouse was a grandmother and wanted to help her daughter with the two small children, others went home frequently for musical performances, graduations, and family celebrations. This was the group that had the hardest time adjusting abroad because of their weak social networks and the pull of parent-child responsibilities. Molly, a spouse

who had desperately wanted to come overseas and wanted to integrate more with the host community, had two grown children, one of them still at college. She loved the adventure of going overseas but felt she was neglecting her daughter. “There are times here when I have been surprised how much I have missed my daughters, we talk and we e-mail and all that but part of me is thinking I must grab these moments, while the other part of me is very glad to be going back to the U.S. so I can be there for her, give her a home to go to during the vacations, and just be more in touch.” Molly felt guilty about not providing a home base for her daughter even though she had flown her out to Kuala Lumpur for Christmas. “She misses her old high school friends, she doesn’t know anyone here. We thought because she had gone to university we could uproot. We didn’t think about uprooting her too; it wasn’t fair.” Molly was torn between wanting a cultural experience for herself and being a “good” parent, even though her daughter had left home.

Jessie who was sixty years-old did not want to move to Kuala Lumpur, but her husband wanted a rewarding overseas experience before he retired. She felt as a wife she had little choice but to follow him. She moved with him and set up a home, but had spent a lot of time back in the States. “My youngest son is going through college. He is a trumpet performance major and I want to see as many of his performances as possible. And then our other daughter got engaged so with a wedding coming up I have had lots of things I needed to do back in the States. We also have grandchildren, and so that is the biggest problem I have being here now, having grandchildren and not being there for my daughter. She could do with a hand to help out because she is working full time and it’s really tough trying to raise children and be a full-time mother if you don’t have a good support system. I feel I am not there for her. I go back in June and I won’t be back until

August, then I'll go back in November. I try to make it for the grandchildren's birthdays but they are not close enough that we can celebrate them both at the same time. It is something that really worries me, I want to be there with them, but I have to be here with my husband. What can I do?" In Jessie's case lack of adaptation has little to do with Kuala Lumpur and much more to do with her family obligations – the pull of emotional mothering ties at home that made it difficult for her to make Kuala Lumpur her home.

Conversely, families who relocated with children helped them to see the advantages of staying over the disadvantages. When they talked of advantages, they invariably focused on the children; the excellent education they were getting, the international friendships, broadening of the mind, lack of prejudice, and their development into world citizens. Many chose to stay so their children could graduate from the international school. Nicola was a veteran sojourner and had been living overseas for ten years. When I asked her how much influence the school had on her staying overseas she replied, "Good question. We have been overseas for a long time now and the younger one, who is in grade 8, was 3 years old when we left the US. She has seen her sisters go to exotic places for many exhibitions and competitions and enjoy the privilege of being high school international students. Now that she is going into high school she expects the same, but we have only one more year left on our assignment. She is begging her father to extend so she can complete high school here. This is the dilemma that many families go through which is another stress level that people don't think about when they are deciding whether to go overseas." Nicola wanted to go home, but she felt her professional career could not be salvaged after ten years, therefore staying for her last child's education was important.

Another factor is the high standard of education and many students would return, not to private school but to an American public high school, which worried some parents. Carlton had been in Brussels for twelve years and was very happy that his son had not been “subjected” to American high schools. His perception of them was very negative. “There is a lot of social life in American high schools that I would like to spare him from. ISB [International School of Brussels] is not as drug oriented, no one brings guns to school, there are no knives. There’s an international group that he is friends with. He played on a baseball team with Germans, Israelis, Japanese and Koreans. He has none of the stereotype prejudices that you hear all the time in American schools. He is much better off here.”

Spouses who came overseas “for their families,” focused on the school as their new *job*. It was a way they could make a difference, particularly for their children. The setting of the international school gave spouses a focal place for volunteer activities and a place of contact to establish social networks. Overwhelmingly parents of school-age children established their friends through their children’s school friends and through volunteering at the school. Jobs they were asked to do range from sweeping up after a medieval fair to serving on the board of directors. Some were room parents, library helpers or small group facilitators, regularly helping their child’s teacher throughout the year while others spent three or four months organizing an event independent of the teachers. Sports groups, an organic alternative café, an arts week, drama productions, quiz bowl, Girl and Boy Scouts, and a talent show, were just a few of the activities that parents organized, and ran throughout the year.

These activities gave the spouses an outlet for their talents and energies, a meeting place for friends and community and a role in their children's lives that many would not have had if they had stayed in the United States. This was particularly true of the group of wives who had given up their careers and relocated because they were feeling the pull of the "third shift." Many threw themselves into being professional mothers, volunteering, organizing and participating in events that centered around the school because it put them in contact with other women in a similar situation and gave them an outlet for their intellectual needs. Noreen had been a lawyer in New York, working over sixty hours a week and decided to relocate to have more time with her son. She was used to a manic lifestyle and turned her energies into the school. There she encountered a like-minded group of people and founded an Arts Council to organize an impressive week-long event that took many months of planning and executing. She admitted it was almost as much work as her paid job back in the States, but it gave her an opportunity "to help my son, to enrich his environment and make his education better. I also got to hang out with these incredibly smart, wonderful women. I.S.B. gave me an outlet."

Two of the male trailing spouses, one in Kuala Lumpur and one in Brussels, also volunteered at their child's school. Jack served as basketball coach and Carlton, less predictably, organizing an "Underground Café," a healthy eating alternative to the school cafeteria. Some of the female trailing spouses tried to get the male trailing spouses involved in volunteering on committees but they resisted; the homophily concept emerging again, this time along gender lines. James who had three children at the international school explained, "I find here a lot of the women are eager to include me in their volunteering activities and I feel myself pushing away from them. You know, really,

I don't want to sit down with a load of women and organize a craft fair; it's just not my thing." Elliot the ex-lawyer felt it was demeaning to "go and do some photocopying or such stuff for a teacher; they pay staff to do that!" Jeff was in a similar frame of mind when he had been asked to help in his daughter's classroom, "We pay extortionate amounts of money to send these kids to school. Why would I give my time for free?" In contrast, none of the mothers expressed similar ideas, but volunteered because they wanted to help their children. Even though both the male and female trailing spouses were the primary caregivers, women exerted their emotional third shift, giving their time to give their children more experiences, as in the art fair, or to satisfy their desire to be "good mothers" that they had given up their careers for.

Spouses without the international school outlet for social and intellectual discourse found it much harder to find their niche. Dorothy, an anthropologist without children, was finding it hard to establish a social group in Kuala Lumpur. "Part of the problem with K.L. is if you do have kids you have a ready-made social network, you don't even have to look for it, it happens naturally. If you don't have kids it is hard to find other people. I joined the American Club but even there everything seemed to revolve around children. I have felt very isolated here." For people like Dorothy without children there were a few other options for finding social networks within the expatriate community including the Malaysian Cultural Society, the Hash House Harriers²⁰, the American Women's Club mainly for women, and STUDS in Brussels for the male trailing spouses. These groups were generally run by expatriates for expatriates and did not require children for access to membership. However there were gender biases in most

²⁰ An expatriate running group with many social activities

of these organizations, many premised on the expectation that the trailing spouse would be female. How do trailing husbands deal with this highly gendered scenario of women's associations and lunches; by crossing the gender boundary line or finding their own adaptation niche?

The Gendered Community

Considering the change in women's lives over the past thirty years, many of the social structures set in place for trailing spouses have not changed dramatically since their first conception. The American Women's Clubs still have a strong focus on creative crafts, indoor exercise, domestic topics such as cooking while most of their outings focus on shopping. Although the American Women's Club in Kuala Lumpur has been re-named the American Association of Malaysia, it still has a gender-biased schedule with little incentive for male trailing spouses to attend. Many of the female trailing spouses, particularly the ones who did not have access to the international school social networks, participated in the activities and volunteered to man the front desk, collate a telephone directory, edit or write for the newsletter or keep the account books. In both cities the American clubs were important sources for networking, learning new skills, and feeling useful for the females, but not for the males.

Although it was labeled a Women's club, they did allow men to join their activities. One of the male trailing spouses, Elliot, attended the "hints" class; a ten week long orientation class for newcomers to Brussels, but he felt tolerated rather than welcomed and was not encouraged to get involved. He told me, "It was very useful, and we were sort of welcome to a point, but they didn't really want us around. Most men I guess wouldn't go to something like that, but as I say, they didn't really encourage guys

to go there, you know it was for women, that was sort of their take.” I asked him if they actually said anything to him or was it just a feeling, he replied, “No you can tell, people are territorial. Now I remember in particular there was a woman who was the president and I could tell she did not want me there. When it came up the subject of gynecologists, for example, now I am a married guy, my wife needs to know the names of gynecologists, and that is why you go to these things. They didn’t want me in there when the gynecologist was giving the presentation. They asked me to leave. I didn’t have to leave the building, but they didn’t want me there. I mean I was there when my son was born, you know, come on! That is how they were. It would have made some people uncomfortable I guess, so you know how it is. You see it from the other side. I was a little miffed, but I got over it.” He did not return to take any more classes as he did not feel a strong need to always be around people.

While women felt the desire to join organizations, to have strong social networks and to feel useful, men had no such convictions. Earl was an avid golfer but did not feel the need to organize a club to find people to play. He explained, “That’s where men and women are different. Men don’t really organize; they just call someone up and get together. We don’t need newsletters and subscriptions. If we go out we pay for a beer, end of story. I don’t feel the need; in fact I would hate it if there was a formal group.” Most male trailing spouses were comfortable doing activities on their own such as working out, reading, or learning a language without the need for strong social relationships. James, the basketball coach, explained, “I don’t have a high social need; I can fulfill a lot of my social needs by going to a shopping mall or something and just be around people observing, listening, and watching. I have learned that that satisfies my

need to be around people. I don't have to interact." James was well-known throughout the female expatriate community in Kuala Lumpur but resisted their efforts to involve him in their social activities. "It's not that I don't enjoy speaking with them; I do have women friends here, really great people; but I really do not enjoy having lunch with 5 or 6 women. We are different genders. They like to talk about other things and they have other concerns and interests and desires and issues and I think it's great that women think differently, but I find myself as a 50 year-old guy now just not wanting to share." James did admit that he missed talking about sports and in fact had started to take an interest in soccer so at some of the social functions, "I have something in common to talk to the Europeans about."

In Kuala Lumpur there were few American male trailing spouses, and therefore little opportunity for male trailing spouses to bond together; however, in Brussels there was a much larger male trailing spouse population which lent itself to a better comparison with the women trailing spouses. As mentioned earlier, the men had formed a very loose organization called STUDS, (Spouses Trailing Under Duress Successfully) where they gathered in a café on the opposite side of Brussels to the women's club and bought coffee, beer, and occasionally lunch and they chatted. There was no agenda, no organized refreshments, no evaluation, and no work involved in organizing. They had a president, but his role seemed to be a contact e-mail for new "members" who arrived in Brussels. There was no buddy system, but over coffee or beers they asked each other questions and whoever was there gave the answers they thought were correct.

I was lucky enough to attend ten STUDS meetings where between five and ten members were present. The president was very friendly, dubbing me a "studette" but the

reception from some members resembled Elliot's reception by the women at the hints class. From some, there was a definite coldness. I was told there was a British women's organization, an American women's organization with the implication of that was where I was supposed to be. Undeterred, I continued to attend and listened to their conversations. Unlike the women, I did not once hear them discuss the price of food, their children's homework, their maids, birthday parties or their most recent recipe (although Jerry confided in me that he watched the food channel everyday to learn how to cook.) All of them shopped in the open vegetable and fruit market outside, and most of them left the luncheon by 2 o'clock to pick up their children from school. They did discuss cars, traffic, driving, parking, how to get a license plate, the best insurance options and how illogical many things in Brussels were. They talked about their travels, sporting events, politics, and the stock exchange; but the most important thing they always discussed was restaurants--where they had last eaten, how good it was, the service, the range of wines, etc. If STUDS had any mission statement it would be to find all the gourmet restaurants in Brussels so they could take their executive wives and impress them with their knowledge of local gourmet restaurants. If they were not in the breadwinner role, at least they could feel in control of their social life and play the masculine role of "host" by taking their wife to a restaurant. It also enabled them to evade the domestic chore of cooking every night.

Few of the male spouses had contact outside the Friday brunch get-togethers nor volunteered at their children's school but appeared to be content in their own company for the rest of the week. They did not seem to integrate into a community, and, unlike the women, there was little social contact. Only two male trailing spouses had given up their

jobs (not careers) to relocate overseas; the rest were stay-at-home-fathers before relocation, so the social contact of other males in a similar situation was a pleasant change from the isolation they had felt in the States. Jeff felt that he was less of an anomaly overseas than he had been in the States. “People don’t know what to make of Americans over here,” he quipped, “so men staying at home while their wives work is just another idiosyncrasy.”

Apart from the two male volunteers, it was hard to determine what the male trailing spouses did all day. They were very evasive with my questions, unlike most of the women who recited a long list of tasks they accomplished each week. Many of the activities in the expatriate community did involve what is typically thought of as “feminine” activities, such as cooking, crafts, and yoga (Copeland 2003; McNulty 2005) building a highly gendered environment. The males felt excluded from these activities because they were deemed feminine, but the female trailing spouses, in volunteering and participating in these gendered activities, reified the domestic role of the spouse and solidified the breadwinner role of the employee.

The companies also reified the employee (particularly the male employee) as the breadwinner by expecting long hours at the office, conference calls late at night at home and extensive travel time away from their families. Michelle, a very active mother of two considered herself a “travel widow.” I asked her about her husband’s travelling. “It’s sort of cyclical, she replied.” “In October he will travel, then in February he travels till the end of the month and again around May; I would say about three months of the year.” That leaves you on your own here? I inquired. “You know, it’s O.K. We had Chinese New Year together, for five whole days we did things together. We had a good time

together and we entertain and go out with friends and stuff, then he leaves. You know, the kids are pretty good kids. They get their homework done they get their own stuff done. In fact I'm going to the American ball on Saturday night with my girlfriend Mandy. The company sponsored all these tickets and I ended up with two of them, so the secretary writes and says please tell me the name of the person you are going to the ball with, so I write back Brad Pitt. I think she knows I am joking. They love to type out the name cards. It should be fun. I have a couple of good friends here and there's a big table with a bunch of women, all are travel widows." Michelle had adapted to going out with her girlfriends, even to balls, instead of her husband because there were other women who were also "travel widows," so they supported each other. Extensive business travel for the employee was ubiquitous, particularly with the male employees, some travelling up to 30 percent of the time. Sharon's husband worked on oil rigs and she had been an expatriate wife for fifteen years, living in six different places. She had two middle school aged children and declared, "I have been a single mom most of the time. You just get used to having to do everything for the kids. He just sends the money." Only one of the female employees with a trailing husband did any traveling and her children were adults and did not locate with them.

Although these wives are living in relative luxury, enjoying substantial economic and social privileges in their "golden cages" (Fechter 2007:41), they are also being subjected to highly gendered expectations by the company by supporting their husband's career. Although very few of the spouses (only two) were expected to perform "executive labor" (Weyland 1997) by the companies, such as holding holiday parties for the local staff or showing around the boss's wife, there were many implicit expectations by the

company. The very long hours and conference calls late at night, traveling for months at a time, and stressful working conditions for the employee left the spouse to manage the household and become a virtual single parent. The spouses supported their husbands by taking on virtually all the family responsibilities in order for husbands to give 100 percent to their work. In their decision to go overseas as a trailing spouse they had convinced themselves that their job was to support the family, even if that meant doing everything. Nicola, a stay-at-home mom saw the administration of the family as her job “My role is to support my family, specifically my husband and make sure he can do his job, and *that* is why we are here. My role is really important to make sure we have a stable family and our day-to-day life goes well, and if something goes wrong it affects my husband and he can’t apply himself in the office one hundred percent. I do whatever it takes.”

Not only do the companies reinforce the nurturer role for wives, they also emphasize the traditional breadwinner role of the employee husband. By expecting long hours and inordinate amounts of energy, the work schedule impedes the nurturing fathering role, suggested by Connell (2000) that many men now aspire to. Norma, another travel widow, explained that her husband felt frustrated by not having more time with his children “My husband is at an executive level, it’s never been like this for us anywhere so he is always feeling very tired. He’s a conscientious worker and he would very much like to be at home with the family more. He’s not out there not with us because he has grabbed a beer. He’s not one of those guys that wants to make sure the children are asleep before he comes home; (laughs) however, it is absolutely insane for him here. He tries to make time for the children but he feels like he is neglecting them. He brings them loads of presents back when he goes away, but it’s just a substitute.”

The female employees with children did not travel out of the country and did not work such long hours. They took over being mother when they arrived home so none of the male trailing spouses felt they were a single parent. Even though the trailing husband (or a hired local) took care of the second shift, these executive women still felt the “third shift;” the pull of the nurturing caregiver as well as her executive role. But unlike most of the executive men, they made sure their schedule gave them “mothering” time with their children. Jeff expected his wife to be there mothering in the evening. He explained, “I think at all ages they need their mom. They are so much better at that nurturing stuff a man can only go so far with. Some days when they are whining I think ‘I’ve nurtured enough today.’ You know women think at the next level, and that’s the difference, I can only tolerate the tears for so long, I can’t take this senseless bawling.”

Some of the wives were offered jobs at the international school. When Norma, the travel widow, was asked to teach for a term she did not feel she could take it. “I can’t get stressed out as well, that just would not work. Who would look after the children while he was away? I can’t imagine what it would be like if we were both working, we would drive ourselves crazy.” Spouses not being in a position to work because of the visa situation works in the company’s favor; it is not in their interest to sponsor visas for spouses. For the executives, both men and women, it is essential for them to have a “wife” for the companies to demand the time and energy required to complete the job. Traditional expectations by the company of executives with support from a stay-at-home wife are challenged both by working female spouses and by male spouses taking the role of caregiver. Company expectations of their executives, particularly the amount of time at

work and the amount of time traveling, have to change if they accept the new non-traditional roles that trailing spouses sometimes aspire to.²¹

Once overseas the trailing spouse is living in a highly gendered world. The company, the clubs and societies, the schools all reflect a pre-feminist sex-role era. However, some of the female trailing spouses adapt well to this situation, particularly the wives who decided to move overseas because of their “time bind” or the pressures of the third shift where they wanted more time for parenting. Spouses having already established careers feel a certain amount of relief from the expectations of having to work and raise a family with little time for themselves. Many use this time to pursue new activities, forge new social networks and enjoy the luxury of participating fully in their children’s upbringing. Gender ideologies and relations of these women are reshaped by migration.

Approaches to Socio-Cultural Adjustment

Although much of the literature associates adaptation directly with adjustment to the host society, the trailing spouses in my study did not judge their adaptation in terms of integration into the host society. They used four different approaches to help their adaptation into different communities in their sojourn overseas. The first approach was a whole-hearted adjustment to the host society where they tried to assimilate into the host culture, or “go native,” learning the language and rejecting the expatriate culture. This approach is rarely found among transferees, as they know there will be a re-entry back to

²¹ There is a foundation called the Permits Foundation that is an international non-profit corporate initiative to promote access of trailing spouses to employment through an improvement of work permit regulations

the home country. Denise, the Peace Corps worker, decided to immerse herself as much as she could into the middle-class Malaysian society. The second approach, integration, was accepting the host society and trying to integrate as much as they could but also integrating into the expatriate society because it was important for most of their basic needs. This approach, ironically, predominated among spouses who were “looking for a change” from their American situation and wanted a cross-cultural experience. Although many found integrating with the host societies very difficult in reality, they could access it modestly through, for example, church congregations, Bible study groups and sports teams. The third approach, separation, was an almost total immersion into the expatriate society with very little contact with the host society. This was the approach followed overwhelmingly by spouses who did not want to leave the United States, like Claire, whose children blackmailed her into relocating, and also many of the spouses who relocated because of their third shift. All of their energies went into not the cross-cultural experience, but parenthood.

The fourth approach was an isolationist approach, used either because they did not want or could not find a community to integrate into, or they rejected the expatriate community and could not integrate into the host society. Some of the spouses, particularly the male spouses, did not need a community to integrate into, or activities to be organized for them. They chose to organize their day around their children or specific activities. Such was Jake who was kept busy looking after his newly adopted baby and discovering different sites of interest in Kuala Lumpur.

The four different socio-cultural adaptation approaches are shown in figure 4-1a as a matrix showing the different approaches that spouses use when interacting with the host or the expatriate communities.

**Figure 4.1a.
Expatriate Interaction Matrix**

	Identification with expat society		
		YES	NO
Interaction with host society	YES	Integration	Going native
	NO	Separation	Isolation

**Figure 4.1b.
Berry's Social Identification Matrix.**

	Identification with society of origin		
		YES	NO
Identification with host society	YES	Integration	Going native
	NO	Separation	Marginalization

Interestingly enough, these interactions parallel John Berry's (1992) social identification framework for immigrant acculturation which proposes that immigrants' acculturation to a host society depends on two attitudinal dimensions: whether immigrants consider their cultural identity and customs sufficiently valuable for them to maintain in the host society, and whether relationships with individuals or groups in the host society are valuable enough for them to foster. Berry argues with his model that the interaction processes function in separate domains such as values, behaviors, and social interactions. Research on the effects of such strategies generally agrees that integration is the preferred and most adaptive strategy where immigrants can integrate their own and the host culture together (Montreuil and Bourhis 2001; Pfafferott and Brown 2006). In a similar way the expatriate uses different strategies in different domains, however any one

strategy is not more adaptive than another. The important thing is that the spouses have agency in the choice over the strategy they chose.

Conclusions

The overseas foreign environment that transferee families move to is a major adjustment for the whole family. It takes differing degrees of time, energy, enthusiasm, motivation and courage to navigate the new *habitus* and adjust to the changes of what their cultural history thinks of as normal. Socio-cultural adjustment is a complicated, multifaceted phenomenon which became more obvious the more I spoke with my interviewees. There are too many positive and negative forces that are interrelated and change over time to think of socio-cultural adjustment as a dichotomized concept where spouses either adjust or don't adjust. Spouses reflect on the positives and the negatives of the physical environment, their interaction with the host society and the expatriate community and employ different approaches to facilitate their adjustment; some see more advantages while others see more disadvantages.

This chapter has examined socio-cultural adjustment from two areas, anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Anticipatory adjustment is the preparation for change. If a major change has already occurred in the spouses' life, for example they have already become a stay-at-home parent or they have relocated within the United States, then they are more likely to be prepared for their ability to cope with change. Company initiated training can help to prepare a spouse for the change in their lives by shaping realistic expectations and informing them of the tools available in order for spouses to do their own productive pre-departure research. Pre-departure training that

dwells on the cultural traits of the host society (as in Hofstede's dimensions) are problematic because it is difficult to break cultures down into various traits that cover the breadth of different classes and ethnicities, especially when it is thought of as being bounded by national borders. The global cities that many of these families are transferred to are not mono-cultural. Spouses interface with the area's culture through the physical environment and people of a different eth-class. Their social networks and support are generally not from the host society but from the expatriate community which consists of a conglomerate of nationalities and cultures.

In-country adjustment takes place in three different domains, the physical environment and social structures, the host society, and the social climate of the expatriate community. These three domains interact and intersect to mold the socio-cultural adaptation of the trailing spouses, some choosing to isolate themselves from as much that is foreign as possible, while others embrace opportunities to learn more about the foreign milieu. The physical environment presents challenges after a move no matter which part of the world. Learning new routes, finding stores and facilities, connecting utilities and living in a different house all take adjustments, particularly for Americans who are used to space, large houses, large appliances, convenience, customer service, high standards of sanitary conditions, privacy and choice. Some physical environments cause more challenges than others, but the social structures tend to cause more frustration and are often outsourced so the expatriate does not have to deal with the bureaucratic problems that are inherent with non-citizens living in a country.

The amount of adjustment is often thought of in terms of cultural distance; however, this study concludes that the measurement of cultural distance is problematic in

various ways. Not only do cities, especially global cities have many cultures, national boundaries are not cultural boundaries. Malaysia and Belgium are two examples of one nation comprising of different cultural groups. The measurement of cultural distance focuses on the second and third level of culture rather than the observable environment. There are differences in the physical environment and the social structures, as well as the host society, and those differences are not necessarily related. Some cities are easier to adapt to physically but more challenging when it comes to cultural values and conventions, while others are more difficult physically but easier culturally. For example, Kuala Lumpur has expanded and Americanized in the process, allowing spouses to shop and eat in familiar franchises but being surrounded by very ethnically diverse groups, with different moral values and religions; while cities like Brussels have kept their more traditional city centers that appear small and inconvenient to many Americans, but they are more comfortable with the everyday cultural conventions. Although spouses cannot isolate themselves from the physical surroundings, should they wish to do so, there are many ways in which they insulate themselves from having to deal with too many changes at one time. They live in the expatriate enclave where houses are often renovated by landlords to American specifications and nearby restaurants, stores, and entertainment centers cater to the expatriate population. Companies often help their transferees through the bureaucracies of visas, legal registrations, driving licenses, and rental leases.

Although the whole family interacts with the host society to some degree, the trailing spouses interface both most widely and deeply into this “unknown”. Working in an American firm or going to a school with American teachers and an American

curriculum hardly compare with the bombardment of new cultural milieu that occurs when buying food, or paying a bill, or getting money from a bank. While the trailing spouse's family experiences daily continuity in their social environment between "home" and abroad, the spouse experiences much more daily difference. The seemingly simple chores that the spouse is expected to accomplish become much more involved when s/he must accomplish them using a new language, navigating odd road systems, and figuring out different organizational rules, new brands, weights and measures, foreign currencies, and negotiating new cultural behaviors that often don't make sense. No wonder then, that for many spouses, the expatriate community offers a more familiar *habitus*, a good source of social networks, but a highly gendered environment.

Companies expectations of trailing spouses and their acquiescence to them reified traditional gender norms, although male trailing spouses still left much of the third shift for their wives. Differences between male and female trailing spouses were most prominent when it came to social networks. Women needed support, to be able to do activities and most volunteered profusely to help either their children, an organization, or were involved in charity work. Very few of the men felt the need for strong social networks, organized clubs and societies, or the need to help other people. The male spouses in Belgium who belonged to STUDS enjoyed having contact with other men in the same situation, but few pursued friendships outside of the Friday morning gatherings; whereas the women formed clubs, societies, became treasurers, even when societies were not there, they formed them. Although the men were more isolationist, they seemed less disgruntled with the company, their wives or their situation.

The motive to becoming a trailing spouse often drives the amount of interaction they are comfortable with, but because their motives were multifaceted, so are their adaptations. The spouses who relocated for adventure and cross-cultural experiences found their adventures around the city and to other countries were exciting and interesting, but many were disappointed with the barriers they encountered to making friendships with the host society. They felt channeled into the expatriate community. However, the expatriate community was very cosmopolitan and there was a great deal of satisfaction in feeling more “worldly” and giving their children a wonderful global experience. The spouses who relocated for economic reasons enjoyed their relatively luxurious lifestyle, the travel opportunities and savings they were able to accumulate, but many longed to return home and “get my life back.” Many of the spouses who relocated because of the third shift, mainly to have more time with their children, were enjoying their new career in parenthood and embraced the school community, enjoying having a social group of professional smart women to “work” with. The spouses who relocated because they felt they had to follow their employed partners, who were not ready for change tended to retreat either into isolationism or into the expatriate community, spending most of their time in the American enclave and at the American Women’s Club. Having these different approaches often helped the trailing spouse find their social networks which aided adaptation.

This chapter has identified many areas where the socio-cultural adaptation of the trailing spouse is different from their families and how gender permeates all aspects of their lives. Another aspect that affects the spouses’ adaptation is the facets of psychological adjustment. When living as a non-citizen in a foreign environment as a

non-worker, there are many changes in status and identity that have little to do with the foreign environment or the host society but the spouses' own feelings of control. The next chapter will explore some of these psychological issues.

CHAPTER V- PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

Relocating to a new country, a new home, and a new lifestyle not only brings about a change in the physical and social environment but it also entails life transitions that may impact an individual's overall psychological well-being. When spouses agree to relocate there are fundamental challenges to their sense of self, initially the most salient arise by living in a cross-cultural situation. Feelings can range from inadequacy, confusion, and frustration to contentment, fulfillment, and pride in the way they cope with the changes associated with moving into a new cultural situation. These cross-cultural changes are the ones most often addressed in the existing adaptation literature and by companies sending families overseas. It probably is no coincidence that these are the changes that transferees also experience (although in different circumstances as documented in Chapter 4). During the process of relocation the whole family undergoes the psychological stresses of preparing for and living in a new cultural environment. Once in the new setting virtually everyone goes through "culture shock" described by Oberg (1954) as a period of anxiety and frustration precipitated by losing familiar behavior and social signs and symbols.²²

However an important, but often overlooked psychological adjustment is the change in the spouses' position and purpose in life through transformations in status, independence, sense of responsibility, and opportunity; a process that is characterized for many by stress and loss and impacts many different cognitive, emotional, and psychosocial processes. For trailing spouses, the adjustments to their new lifestyle and

²² In the acculturation literature culture shock is now more commonly known as acculturative stress and is thought of as manifesting itself in the form of depression (because of culture loss) and anxiety (because of uncertainties) (Berry 1996, Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok 1987).

environment are likely to be more acute than for transferees or children for several reasons. First, the transferee continues with his job, which is typically a promotion involving more responsibility and consequently boosting his self esteem. These contribute to feeling a *higher* sense of control with little change in identity. Second, for the children there is a transition into school, but usually an international school where the surroundings and curriculum will not differ too much from their American school. For most spouses, however, there are many transitions and changes. If they were working before relocation, they now are not. If they had a strong supportive community life back home, they have to build those new support systems. There is not the benefit of the continuity of identity or familiar institutional frameworks. Rather, the spouses are faced with a new environment, must construct new identities, new roles, new social relationships, a new way of being in the world, and this can create a tremendous amount of stress for which their historical coping styles or strategies may not be sufficient. Losses and changes associated with the relocation are greatest for spouses and, not surprisingly the emotional impact of the relocation is greater.

The experience of facing and living through moving, migration, and relocation is recognized in the relevant literature as a highly stressful life event. To understand the process of adjustment to a new cultural environment theorists, influenced by Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping perspective, have conceptualized cross-cultural transitions as a series of stress provoking changes that require strategies for coping (Espino 1991; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Ward and Kennedy 1996; Ben-Sira 1997).

The stress and coping perspective posits that the process of relocation stimulates stress and loss that directly and indirectly influence their sense of self (specifically the

constructs of identity and self-esteem), their perceptions of control over the world (specifically the dynamic among internal locus of control and external locus of control), their ability to cope with daily life experiences (specifically the dynamic among different strategies), and ultimately their psychological well-being (specifically mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression) (Folkman and Lazarus 1984). Using this conceptual model I will examine the process of psychological adaptation of trailing spouses to relocation.

Figure 5.1. Conceptual Map of Stress and Coping.

Although each of these psychological constructs is affected by the processes of adaptation, the interactions among them may have a synergistic effect on well-being. That is, they are all implicated in people's cognitive, emotional, and social functioning. Research has shown that individuals who possess high self esteem and/or sense of control

over their lives have significantly lower symptoms of anxiety and depression when negative events occur (Pearlin 1991; Ross, Mirowsky et al. 1991).

The Appraisal Process

Coping (or not) with the many changes of relocation depends in large part on how spouses appraise the stresses and the strategies they develop to cope with those stressors. The appraisal process is two-pronged (1) the primary appraisal, to assess whether the stressor is a loss, threat, or challenge; and (2) the secondary appraisal, to assess what resources spouses can bring to bear on the situation and how they will cope with it. Thus life events evoke this process in which people assess the challenges they face as a potential loss, threat, or challenge (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984). Depending on how the event is perceived the influence of that event on people's sense of self, sense of control, and ways of coping will be profoundly different. Trailing spouses facing or experiencing relocation will vary in the ways they perceive and interpret loss, threats or challenges. One variable is prior work status. Virtually all the spouses who had been used to being economically independent before relocation saw the lack of income after relocation as a threat to their financial freedom. However they differed in their secondary appraisal – in what resources they brought to the situation in order to cope with it. Nelly, who was coerced into giving up her job to relocate, had many issues surrounding her economic status and the perceived level of control in her life. “Of course it bothers me that I do not earn an income,” she told me. “Every penny I spend I have to justify because it is not mine, not to my husband but to myself. It’s not that I don’t have access to money, I do. I pay all the bills, but I can’t buy something for me. It’s not my money.” Nelly firmly

believed that whoever “earned” money by partaking in paid employment, owned the money, and she saw herself as a manager of someone else’s money. This led to a very stressful situation for her.

The majority of spouses appraised the situation differently from Nelly. They viewed themselves as having more control of their lives abroad because they viewed their marriage and its resources as a partnership. Kathleen explained to me, “We both do our thing to run the family. He really couldn’t do without me here looking after the children and taking care of everything. It’s a joint effort, so I think of it as joint money.”

Kathleen’s view on her marriage produced a less stressful situation than Nelly’s.

However, Jenny appraised her situation in yet another way that led to a more pragmatic coping strategy. She told her husband that she did not want to relocate if she could not have access to an independent source of income. To solve the problem, she arranged for the rent money from their house in Houston to go into her own bank account. “We are renting our house out in the U.S. I arranged the renters and I pay the bills and everything. That money is deposited into my bank account. So I do have money and I can go out and shop and buy things and go do what I want and not have to worry about asking him.”

To reiterate, individual experiences of the stressors and losses of relocation are best understood when considering the spouses’ cognitive appraisals of the stress associated with the move and the move’s effects on their identity, self esteem and locus of control. Individual differences in the degree of impact of relocation are in part due to the appraisal process of the stressors and losses encountered. In this chapter I first examine some of the stressors and losses that are experienced by my participants then analyze the effects of those stressors and losses on their sense of self through self esteem,

identity, and locus of control. Because the stressors and losses are so intertwined with sense of self it is difficult to separate each into separate sections; however for clarity of each concept I have chosen the narrative that illustrates its importance for trailing spouses. The chapter concludes with a discussion of coping strategies that trailing spouses use and how the strategies they chose affect their adjustment.

What Have I Done? Stress and Loss

Feelings of Transience and Rootlessness

When examining psychological adjustment of trailing spouses, the temporary or not so temporary nature of the move has to be taken into consideration. As spouses of international company employees, not only do they have to adjust to living overseas, they also have to adjust to the transient lifestyle that many companies require. Relocation of the international company transferee and family is considered a temporary situation as the expatriate contract is usually signed for two or three years. But as all expatriates know (or find out), this number is not set in stone. A two year contract can be cut short after six months or extended for many years beyond the initial agreement. Such indeterminacy affects how relocated families think about their adjustments. Why make huge adjustments if the contract will be cut short? If the contract gets extended, a low commitment to adjustment needs to be increased. But nothing is fully known, making calibrating adjustment all the more difficult. Again, since the spouse is the one principally responsible for interfacing with the new society while the working spouse and the children in school are sheltered from most of these adjustments, it is the spouse who is disproportionately shouldered with these responsibilities.

It is often difficult for spouses who adjust to living in an overseas location, make new friends, and become involved in activities, to move to a new location and start the process over again. Kitty objected when the company asked them to move from Belgium to Germany. “We almost did move when his office moved, but I campaigned to stay here and so now he travels back and forth. I didn’t want to have to start learning a new language, learning to get around a new town, and make new friends. I can’t do that every couple of years.” Transience was hard on social relationships. Rona had lived in Brussels for six years, and over that time had made and lost some very good friends. “The changeover of expats is disconcerting. You never know what next year will bring. Even if you know you will be here, you can be sure some of your friends will have moved on. You are all in the same boat so you make friends quickly, and they are strong bonds, but that makes it harder to say goodbye. Most of the parties are goodbye parties; that’s the sad part.”

The transience and uncertainty put a strain on marriages. Rose, the potter, was not prepared for the unsettled life. She did not want to move to Belgium, but was given an ultimatum. Once she had established herself there and started her own pottery workshop she enjoyed life. She was settled and wanted to stay but her husband’s job required them to move again. She refused and her marriage broke up. “To start with he said he was going to be here for ten years, O.K. that’s fine, I’ll move if I can stay there for ten years, but it ended up being four years, which is a big difference because I had just settled down, got my pottery classes going, made my plans. I told him I couldn’t move again, so he left without me.

The psychological stress of rootlessness and transiency are not concepts that are studied often in psychology, but they can be examined through Maslow's (1943) third level of basic needs which has been used extensively in studies related to motivation (Duffy and Dik 2009; Sheldon and Gunz 2009; Charles and Carstensen 2010). Maslow states that people seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation; this involves both giving and receiving love, affection, and the sense of belonging. Because the transferee families live such transient lives, their feelings of a sense of belonging are compromised and a sense of rootlessness is considered a stressful situation. This impacts them psychologically.

The life of a trailing spouse is full of transience: physical spaces, social spaces, and transference of identities which make the attitudes to “home” an important element in a spouse’s psychological adjustment. However, home means different things to different people and the coping strategies used to deal with the sense of transience were different. Some families still had a very strong sense of “home” in the U.S. with a house waiting for their return. These were usually the spouses who expected their short-term contracts to be just that and planned their overseas sojourn accordingly. Others left little trace of where they came from, which necessitated a redefining of “home.” Jerry told me “home was where the cat was” while Sharon thought of home as where her “knick-knacks” were (her knick-knacks were beautiful pieces of art work from places she had lived). Obviously for Jerry and Sharon the stress of transience was not as great as for many of the other spouses.

Most spouses wanted something a little more tangible than “home is where the cat is” and the lack of a place to call home was a homeland motivator to return home

permanently. Nicola, who was on her fourth posting, told me, “What we were saying before about living overseas and giving everyone a global perspective - becoming international, that is the positive spin. But the negative spin is that we do not really have a home, we do not really have a place we consider home to go back to and that is a moving target. I think as an expat, it depends on how often you are being relocated because some companies move people on a very regular schedule so you never really spend the majority of time in one place that you come to feel as home.” Abigail, who had been an expatriate for eight years, had bought a house to establish some roots. “I’m not sure where I would define as home. We will retire in Houston. We bought a house there for that purpose, but we haven’t lived there forever. Houston has changed so much so it doesn’t really feel like home, but having a house there gives me roots. It makes me feel grounded.” Abigail was worried that living out of the U.S. for so long deprived their children of a “real American identity.” She worried that her children would never feel “normal” in the States as they won’t have any childhood friends to share stories with, they won’t be able to drive past the house they grew up in or even share the same values, “so where will they call home?” Owning a house in the States was one way of defining home, another was making the overseas location their home base. Two families had applied for Belgian citizenship and bought homes in Brussels, with no intention of returning to the U.S. It was not “home” (as in the United States) that they yearned for but stability of a place they could treat as a home. However, not everyone was in a position to choose the option of staying in one place and had to adjust to the transience of company expatriate uncertainties.

The uncertainty of not knowing how long you were going to be living in a place was the reason why some did not get involved with the expatriate community. Heather was a rather isolated spouse, not committing to do any volunteering or even social activities. “You just don’t know what is round the corner,” she said to explain her reluctance to get involved. “I’d start to commit to something and I’d have to say, wait, my husband is looking at Tokyo, or wait we might be moving there. I am not going to invest my efforts starting something new and be told six months later we were leaving. So I kept waiting and just didn’t get involved with anything. I’d like a bit more certainty to my life.” Nelly, who was very work oriented and spent a lot of energy applying for jobs felt the transience of moving around inhibited her getting a job. “I did start looking for jobs because I know with my skills I could get my own visa. I had an interview with Citibank and they asked me how long my husband’s contract was for. They were not willing to hire me because they knew I’d be leaving. I was really mad about that. I am just not in charge of my own destiny. What am I supposed to do, choose my husband or a job? I don’t blame my husband, we chose to do this, but the uncertainty of what will happen in the near future is unsettling.”

Factors that push and pull the spouses to want to go home or want to stay overseas are complex and often compete with each other. The desire for adventure often requires a transient or rootless existence, but the desire for “home” and roots also has a pull. Molly describes this dilemma. “There are times here when I have been surprised how much I have missed my daughters, we talk and we email and I wish I were with them, and part of me is very glad to be going back to the U.S. and not on another foreign assignment. Then I know I have to grab these moments here too. I like the adventure, experiencing

something new and different is what keeps me going. If we stay in one place too long I get jaded: been there, done that, don't need to do it again.”

Spouses' motivations to relocate are an important force in their attitudes toward transience. The spouses who relocate for adventure and travel adapt more easily to the transience of the expatriate lifestyle than the ones who put parenting first. They are willing to put up with the uncertainties of transience to be able to reap other benefits such as financial rewards, good schools, having time to spend with their children, travel, adventure and cross-cultural experiences. They had adjusted to living the “expat” lifestyle and did not want to give that up. Rachel visited her family every year, but could not think of that space as home. “When I go back home and visit my sister and my mom back in South Carolina they are living in the same house, they are driving the same roads, going to the same restaurant every Friday night; the same thing every day. I would not be happy with that. I am just lucky enough to have gotten away.”

Cross-Cultural Stressors

Living in another culture where rules and behavior differ from what is considered the norm can lead to very stressful situations (Furnham and Bochner 1986; Thoits 1986; Rumbaut 1991; Cross 1995; Ben-Sira 1997; Adler 2002; Elmer 2002). While coping with the host society things that are usually routine and easy, such as shopping, driving, and contacting service personnel, often become burdensome and frustrating because much of the feeling of being in control is lost. Facing an unknown culture causes stress due to the unfamiliarity with the host culture in terms of language, values, customs and beliefs (Gudykunst and Kim 1984; Black and Gregersen 1991). This unfamiliarity can be

something as deep-rooted as not understanding religious beliefs or something far more mundane, for example, not taking a reusable shopping bag to the supermarket (highly frowned upon in Brussels) or not knowing how to pay for goods in a department store (in Kuala Lumpur). These cultural behaviors can be learned, but often they are learned by making mistakes. However, those mistakes generate in those who make them feelings of inadequacy, stupidity, and embarrassment. In their home countries people would never feel this way while shopping or getting an oil change. Abroad, however, it is another story. It is important to recall here that it is the trailing spouses who do the vast majority of tasks requiring interfacing with the local society while their transferee partners and children are sheltered.

Reggie, the spouse who had lived his childhood in India was very motivated to try to “fit in” with the Belgian way of life, but still found some of the behavioral differences stressful. “Every day there are a hundred different things that happen to you that you always have to negotiate in your head to make sure that you are not offending the person. People don’t always tell you; it’s hidden and you just don’t know. You can read and ask around but I still make faux pas. Like the other day I picked out some fruit I wanted from a market stall and the lady started shouting and throwing her arms around. Apparently they don’t like you touching the fruit and choosing your own. I didn’t know that – I do now, but it was really embarrassing. I think I’ll stick to the supermarket for shopping, it’s safer.” By safer he meant more familiar, therefore less stressful. He knew the supermarket culture better because it was more similar to the one he was used to in the U.S. and therefore he was less likely to get “shouted at” for not knowing the “normal” behavior.

Language difficulties, in particular, made it difficult for spouses to feel they were managing well in a cross-cultural situation. Without language, they could not command outside the home. Yet they were responsible for negotiating life outside of the home on behalf of their families. Rona had been a pharmaceutical executive in the United States but felt a lack of confidence because of her lack of fluency in French. “When I first got here my French wasn’t so great and you just have to take what is handed out and that is miserable. They give you bad fruit and you can’t complain; they try to explain something to you in the supermarket and treat you like you are a child. I was responsible for over 30 people when I was working and I couldn’t even buy laundry detergent. It’s devastating to your confidence.” The lack of confidence was for many a new concept. Jenny, a marketing executive described going shopping the first few weeks after arriving in Brussels. “I would go in – now I’ve talked in front of 500 people so you’d think no big deal – and I was afraid to go in and ask for something from the store. I would take whatever they gave me. I would run. You know there were these huge obstacles, mainly in my own head, that I just didn’t anticipate.” Jenny had really convinced herself that she was finding adjusting to the new environment difficult because of her own inadequacies. Although she argued her difficulties were only “in my own head” she still thought they were a reflection on her capabilities to adjust.

Feelings of Loss

It seems clear from the data, an important psychological impactor for trailing spouses is loss: loss of identity, loss of status, and loss of independence. However, they also experience losses as a result of being uprooted from the lives they had created for

themselves, leaving behind family and friends to relocate to something new and unfamiliar. Psychological feelings of loss are often associated with the experience of grieving and sadness which, if not examined and reflected upon, may grow into feelings of depression. Although typically grief is thought of as a response to death, grief reactions are experienced to many and various losses. Yet, there are great individual differences in the experiences of loss as well as variations in the degree of awareness and acceptance of these feelings. Understanding the loss experienced by trailing spouses is important because it impacts their sense of self, sense of control, ways of coping, and psychological well-being.

Loss of Independence

From the beginning of the process of applying to work overseas, spouses often feel excluded in many of the decisions that are made by the transferee and the company (Copeland 2003; McNulty 2005; GMAC 2007). To many spouses who believe they are in egalitarian marriages, this is only the beginning of a highly gendered process driven by a patriarchal business culture. It leaves them feeling dependent on the company for many aspects of their lives; about where to live, when to move, even which airline they will fly on. The process of obtaining a spousal visa comes as somewhat of a shock to people who have been brought up in a society that values individualism and independence. A spousal visa is issued as a temporary right of residency based on the transferee's visa and in many countries denies the holder any work privileges. This means on death, ill-health or divorce the spousal visa is cancelled and they are not allowed to stay in the country as an independent person. This was the case for one of my participants, Rose, who had lived in

Belgium for the last six years. Her husband was divorcing her and she wanted to stay in Belgium because she had set up a pottery school, had many friends there, and she wanted her eldest child to finish high school in Brussels. Her husband had transferred to a different country, leaving her without accommodation and with an order to leave the country. This can be very stressful to men and women used to living an independent lifestyle.

It was not just the dependence on the host country government to give them a visa, nor the dependence on the company to dictate their place and timing of the move, but a dependence on the transferee often altered the powerbase of relationships, particularly economic dependence.

Economic dependence affected spouses in different ways. Spouses who were stay-at-home parents before relocation had already dealt with the financial adjustment to a one-income family, therefore their economic self worth, whether high or low, did not change much because of relocation. Spouses who had been equal earners had the largest adjustment to becoming economically dependent; there was a shift in their attitude towards spending money - one of a feeling of loss of control. Noreen, the lawyer who became a trailing spouse to look after her son, felt she had lost a lot of her independence when she became a trailing spouse. She described her feelings to me. "You asked about the control and giving up work - I did feel a major loss of control over my own destiny. When we came here I was earning more than he [her husband] was, but because of the expat package and all that it didn't affect our lifestyle. He has also advanced and done well so it has played out well. I'm not worried about money, it's the independence. With

the loss of my income there was a feeling of dependence which I have not felt since I lived at home with my parents.

The notion of independence with earning money was even more prominent with the male trailing spouses than the female trailing spouses. Except for Jake with his small baby, all the male trailing spouses talked about plans to make money, how they “took care” of the finances and how not making money was very difficult for them. Elliot, the lawyer, had competing emotions about his role as financial advisor. He knew he was not good at financial planning and investments but felt that was one thing at least he should try to do. He told me “One of the STUDS, he sits in front of the computer and shuffles money around all day. He makes as much as his wife. I have to get myself into investments or something, but numbers aren’t my thing. I would probably lose all of her money.” The fact that he used the term “her money” shows a gendered perception of ownership of the money. Few of the female trailing spouses thought of their husband’s money as “his money;” it was the household money. When I asked him if he thought of his wife’s wages as family wages he started to justify why they should be family wages. “When it was the other way around, when she was in school and I was working, my money was hers. I looked at it that way and I still do [although he obviously didn’t from his last comment]. I was never one to think of the money I earned as my money. We are a team (laughs). She would like it the other way now, but you know I can see things from her feminist point of view. I’ll tell you, it’s about power and it’s about money. I mean, money is not important to me.” Elliot was fighting his logical “we are a team” and “I paid for her to get this education” idea of not working against the hegemonic male as breadwinner role of earning money. It was hard for him to reconcile those two ideas. For

the female trailing spouses it was easy to think of the “earned” money as household money because of the hegemonic expectation that the male is the breadwinner, therefore it was O.K. to be dependent on his money.

Jerry also had a difficult time accepting the dependence of the non-breadwinning role. When he first gave up work to become a stay-at-home father while still living in the U.S. he worked on renovating the house. He had to convince himself and his wife that the work he was doing was going to make them a lot of money that because of *his* work the house was going to be worth a lot more. “What I found out was it wasn’t a situation of working or not, but a situation of needing to do things for money, because I no longer did things for money. Everything I thought about doing had to be a form of income or money producing. I played the drums, but suddenly it was important for me to get paid for playing the drums. Why you are doing it changes. I don’t have the same pressure here, but I don’t think I have totally sorted it all out yet.” Almost all spouses had complete access to money and none intimated that they were restricted in any way financially. However, this did not stop them feeling a dependence on the breadwinner. It was not caused by the person who earned the money’s attitude, but from the spouse’s inner feelings, or as Laine said “A lot of the issues are mostly inside my own head.”

Loss of Identity

Theoretically, identity is conceptualized as the construct that addresses the question “Who am I?” Borrowing from James (1890/1981) and Mead (1934), Susan Krauss Whitbourne (Whitbourne 1986; 2002) posited that our identities are constructed from the most important domains in our lives and represent what we know ourselves to

be. She suggested that we come to know ourselves through a process of self-reflection and acquire self-knowledge derived from our experiences, the meaning we take from them, our interactions with others, and our drive to have a cohesive unified sense of self.

A person's identity(ies) is now thought of, not as one self-defining identity, but as multiple, often mutually constituted identities that are constructed and reshaped by a dynamic process in various social contexts with numerous influences. Identities emerge from the dialectic between the individual and society (Gergen 2001; Wyn and Woodman 2006; Tsetsura 2007; Tyler and Stokes 2008). After relocation some identities were kept; however, there was a great feeling of loss over the most significant identities that were no longer salient, such as professional identity and those that were compromised, such as gender identity. Some even felt a loss of a self identity; that their identities were determined by their employed husbands or wives. They perceived this to be reinforced by the government and the company. Comments like "I am just a wife," "I am an appendage," reflect this loss of self identity that spouses felt about their dependence on the transferee. For Clare it amplified the reasons why she should not have left the U.S. "Here I am my husband's wife; I have no status at all. It even says that on my visa. He leaves, I have to leave. I am a chattel here. I am a nobody, I can't do anything. I can't even open a bank account. I can order water to come to the house but then I am not allowed to pay for it. Yesterday I was at a sale at the American club and I bought a piece of furniture and I gave her my name but she wanted my husband's. I could not buy it on my own." When living in the U.S. spouses took for granted their independence and their right of residence as persons with their own individual identities. Now this loss of "rights" is recalled with grief.

Another commonly expressed loss of identity, particular to Malaysia, relates to gender equality. Malaysia is a very patriarchal society (Pellegrini and Scandura 2008) and the women spouses were made to feel insignificant by the broader society's belief in male dominance. Relative to the United States, the male in Malaysia is expected to wield more power within the household and is considered the person who makes decisions and takes charge of the finances. This was inherent in the banking system and particularly obvious when communicating with landlords and tradesmen (they were always men). Freda, the educational consultant, was initially very surprised, then outraged when she bought some furniture and the vendor required her husband's signature before they would deliver it. Deidre, on her first posting overseas, always encountered gendered problems getting repairs done in their rented house in Kuala Lumpur. She complained that the landlord did not want to spend any money on the house to keep it in good repair. It was not until her husband telephoned the landlord one time and the repairs were finished that she realized she was being ignored because she was a woman. It had not occurred to her that being a woman was the reason the landlord was not doing anything she asked. "I feel completely out of control of handling things, like feeling I cannot get something done for myself. For instance last week there was a leak in the sink I had to tell my husband to call the landlord because I know nothing would get done if I called him." Burke(1991) explains that the feeling of frustration is because of identity disruption. When individuals enter new cultures often their identity markers are incongruent with the new culture which can lead to a highly stressful situation. In this case Deidre expected equal treatment; she was an equal to her husband but she was not treated as an equal by the landlord who acted in accord with Malaysian gender role expectations.

One of the most salient identities that spouses who had left their careers behind mourned was their professional identity. Pre-relocation identities are an important component of the adjustment of self to an overseas situation. Spouses who were stay-at-home parents before relocation have already been through the changes in status and identity that giving up paid employment entails. Social psychologists have studied identities created through employment, in particular the effects of job losses on those identities. The psychological impact of job loss was first articulated by Maria Jahoda and her colleagues during the Great Depression. She argued that work had important social and psychological functions that established identities by giving people the capacity to earn, a sense of participation in a collective effort and purpose, and an opportunity for social activities and connections with co-workers (Jahoda 1932/2002; Jahoda 1982). By becoming unemployed (or “choosing” to opt out), these important functions were diminished. Contemporary ethnographers such as Pamela Stone, Michelle Bolton, and Mary Blair-Loy have recorded the socio-psychological changes that take place when professional women leave the work force and acquire a stay-at-home status. Within this demographic (professional women) it is not so much the economic loss that they find difficult; it is the loss of a part of their identity. Stone (2007) documents the “double bind” that many of her women participants feel when they leave their high-powered jobs. The “identity theft” that made them question their own worth because of the highly devalued status that a housewife accords them even when counterbalanced by the satisfaction of intensive mothering, feeling responsible for the family, and solving the time bind that most working parents encounter.

In my study, the 57 percent of trailing spouses who became “unemployed” as a consequence of relocating overseas definitely expressed feeling that one of their main sources of identification, their professional identity, had been eroded once they entered the expatriate community. Even when spouses *desired* leaving their profession because they felt it was time for change, a non-employed status after relocation was something that the trailing spouses were not prepared for. They prepared for what they deemed as positive features of relocation and living overseas; for example, the greater time they would have for their children or the cross-cultural and travel opportunities they would enjoy. But they did not prepare psychologically for the effect that losing their professional identity would have on them. Dorothy described it aptly: “I was so excited about going overseas, that I didn’t think the whole thing through. I didn’t realize how much my job meant to me until I wasn’t doing it anymore.”

Previous researchers have suggested that work orientation is an important consideration when examining the effects of work interruption on adjustment (Harvey 1997, Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Konopaske et al 2005, Nina Cole 2010). Strength of professional identities depends on whether employment is considered income based or career based. Income based careers generally have less status and a weaker sense of professional identity than high status career based employment. Because jobs and careers are so integrally connected to identity and status (Pugliesi 1995; Price, Friedland et al. 1998) the change in professional status affects the amount of adjustment depending on how salient their professional identity is. There will be a much greater feeling of loss for the spouses who had high status jobs. Gloria, an intellectual property lawyer, identified herself with her job so deeply that she felt without her profession her identity had been

taken away. “Being all by myself some days I say to myself, ‘Hmmm, what am I worth?’ I still think of myself as being a lawyer. I still introduce myself as a lawyer, but I’m not. Who am I? You feel that your being has been taken, your identity, you don’t know who you are.” Pamela Stone refers to this as “identity theft” (2007:144).

Although spouses do not lose their personal identities, i.e. being a daughter or a mother, if that relationship now has to exist across an ocean it too can be seen as a loss to be mourned.

Loss of Family Connections

Loss of comforts of home and lifestyle, and relationships were all significant, but the most salient loss was that of family ties, the celebrations and family gatherings and the feeling that their children are losing out on having aunts and uncles and grandparents. Added to this, particularly for the women, was the sense of responsibility they felt towards their older children left at home, and their elderly parents.

A major predictor of psychological adjustment for spouses was the relationship that they had with their families in the U.S. The closer they were emotionally to their families, the greater the loss they felt when living thousands of miles away. Family celebrations such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, birthdays, and weddings exacerbated homesickness and reinforced how divorced they were from their homeland. Many fly back for special occasions, but for those with children the logistics and expense can sometimes be difficult. Lyn explains how she deals with these situations. “We miss family events like my parents had their golden wedding anniversary and there was a big party, but we couldn’t make it. I was really low about that. My sister’s first baby was

born and I did fly home for that. She is my only sister, so that was something really important. We have to make accommodations. We are really lucky that we are in a position that we are able to do that, you know financially. My husband had to make sure he didn't travel while I was gone because of the children. It was hard for him. It is hard for me not to be there with my family. I'm missing out on a lot."

The stress of family separation was particularly acute among the eleven spouses who have grown children in the States. Many talked of planning visits to bring their children and even grandchildren to visit them abroad. Four of the spouses were suffering an "empty nest" effect (Crowley 2003) because they had children who had just started college and they were not there to help them settle in. Additionally, they felt guilty because these students would not have "home" to come home to during holidays. Freda had left six children in the States, but her youngest son was just starting university. She related to me about the night she told her children that she and her husband were moving to Kuala Lumpur. "So we sat down that night to tell the children that we were moving to Kuala Lumpur. I glance over at Tommy and I saw that he had tears rolling down his face. He is 19 years old. He was so sad. 'I don't have a home anymore, what am I going to do? I don't have a home.' It broke my heart. I think he is doing O.K. He came here for Christmas with three of his sisters, but he missed his friends. He wanted to catch up with his old high school friends and he can't. I feel bad about that." Freda was torn between being a "good" mother and following her dreams of travelling to exotic places—a dream that had had to wait a long time for her children to be grown. When her son travelled to Kuala Lumpur they did an extensive tour of Vietnam, which she thought might make up

for him not seeing his friends. This maternal pull took a toll on her satisfaction with living overseas.

Other events that made the spouses feel a loss about being so far away from their families were deaths in the family, and ill health of family members. Five spouses had experienced the death of one parent while they had been overseas. Five spouses told me they would like to go back home because their parents were getting old and they wanted to be near them. “They are living on borrowed time, I need to be there.” Molly told me.

Just as the empty nesters missed their children, so the families in the U.S. missed their sons and daughters living overseas. The loss of family time was felt by the family overseas and the family back home. A certain amount of emotional “blackmail” was used to try to get “their” families back, especially where grandchildren were concerned. Rona’s parents missed having their daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren living close by. “Well, first of all I thought, I felt like I missed my family, but I realized it was because they made me feel so guilty about being here. It was like ‘How long are you going to be there?’ and when we had been here three years it was ‘what do you mean you are going to stay longer?’ and they didn’t like that at all. When we lived in the States they used to spend a lot of time coming to our house and even stayed on weekends. I enjoyed the help because I was working and my mom would look after the kids and my dad would help around the property, cut trees and stuff like that so we were really close. I think it’s kind of selfish but they just wish we were back there.

Gender differences

One of the major gender differences between male and female trailing spouses was revealed by expressions, or lack thereof, of affinity and responsibility towards family in the U.S. Recalling Hochschild's (2003) "third shift" concept of emotional responsibility towards their families women trailing spouses worried openly about aging parents, children in college, and missing out on seeing their grandchildren, but the male trailing spouses did not. Virtually every female trailing spouse listed their family as the aspect of home they missed the most; in contrast, not one of the male trailing spouses did. And the differences did not stop at the trailing spouses. Reggie told me that he had to help his wife (an executive for a pharmaceutical company) adjust to being overseas away from family. "She was on some medication for depression. I just knew for a fact that it was because she was missing her family and she felt guilty about not being there for her children over the Christmas holidays." The socially constructed nurturer role affects women much more than men. They have closer emotional bonds to their children and feel responsible for looking after aging parents. Male trailing spouses did not feel this emotional pull back to the U.S.

Having examined some of the stressors and losses of relocating overseas for trailing spouses, I now turn to the effects of those stressors and losses on sense of self.

Who Am I? Sense of Self

The stressors and losses inflicted by the act of moving away directly affect spouses' sense of self. George Herbert Mead (1934) described the sense of self as having the capacity of self-reflective thought, the ability to communicate through language and

relate to others. This general sense of selfhood has been explained from the perspectives of the psychoanalytic and ego psychological approaches (Guntrip 1971; Erikson 1974), from the humanistic perspective (Assagioli 1965/2000), from the perspective of symbolic interactionism (Dewey 1896; Mead 1934), and experimental social psychology and role theory (Turner 1978; Aronson 1991), which have blended together to create the contemporary social-cognitive perspectives of the self-system (Frazier, Hooker et al. 1993). While these general theories are helpful in framing the self-motivational need to make meaning from our experiences, more relevant for the current analysis are the more explicit domains of the self system—specifically identity, self-esteem and locus of control.

Identity and Sense of Self

Although some spouses felt a loss for some aspects of their identity, people have multiple identities that are formed along axes of identification such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, relationships, profession, or hobbies. One person can identify herself simultaneously as a mother, a daughter, a wife, a runner, a dentist, an American, and a Republican, but as her social contexts change, so might her identities. That is, identity is not fixed but plastic and contextual. Relocation provokes huge context changes that, in turn, generate pressures to alter or change their identifications. Some identities are lost, others are shifted and some are strengthened. Brett and Stoh (Brett and Stroh 1995) refer to the redefining of personal and social roles as identities in a state of transition.

The socio-psychological adjustment of spouses thus needs to be understood in terms of how they transition in their identities to redefine themselves after relocation, how they perceive the new social groups they must interact with and how these groups, in

turn, view them (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1985). For some spouses the new identities enhance their sense of self; for others the new identities are viewed, consciously or not, as less positive replacements for their pre-location identities.

Although losing the saliency of some of their identities is highly stressful, (and seen as a loss as already discussed), many of the spouses looked to find replacement identities or reinforce ones they already had. Nicola, who was on her fourth posting, discussed her changes in identity as she moved from country to country. “If you try to invent yourself everywhere you go you would go insane, it is a balancing act. You have to keep something of yourself. You worry about your husband’s work and the kid’s school, that’s your first priority, as a wife and mother. You tend to put yourself last, that’s the normal challenging spouse’s role, that’s where gender comes in, and it’s just an expected part of the process. My identity changes based on my environment which I think is probably normal. There are still basic parts of my life that stay the same.” From Nicola’s comments it is clear that spouses emphasize their spousal and parental role first before really thinking how to establish their own identity. Mothers, particularly those motivated to become trailing spouses because of their third shift, threw themselves into their motherhood identity with the energy and enthusiasm they had previously devoted to their professional lives. They became the “supermoms” they felt they could not be while pursuing their careers. Johnston and Swanson (2006) found that when women give up work they construct different work and mother ideologies to justify their situation. Rona, who has two children and gave up her job as a pharmaceutical executive to relocate told me, “I think parenting is one of the most underrated jobs that we have. I am glad I made the decision to become a full-time mom. You know raising children properly is difficult,

and I have seen the situation when both parents are working, the kids suffer. I don't want to be critical or anything but nannies aren't mothers." Rona was emphasizing how important her "job" as a parent was, and to a certain extent devaluing women who continue to work and have children.

For spouses who did not have a strong professional identity before relocation, their transference to a parenthood identity was a relatively smooth transition. For some, emphasizing parent identity was even more important. This was evident, in particular, among the male trailing spouses—in no small part because they overwhelmingly (though there were few of them) had not been working outside the home before relocation. Their status as primary caregivers remained the same. Jake told me he had no problem taking on the parental identity. I asked him how he identifies himself when being introduced, he replied, "I say I am a stay-at-home father, I don't mind that. I feel privileged that financially I don't have to work and I can look after Mateus. I was never proud to say I worked in a warehouse. Looking after my baby is far more noble." This underscores the previous argument that work orientation affects whether spouses mourn their professional identity or not.

Living in an international community affected cultural identities. Virtually all spouses who were parents met their closest friends through activities at the international school or through their children's friendships. Unlike friends made through The American Women's Clubs, friends made through the school were of various different nationalities and many spouses saw this as a positive experience in widening their views to new ways of thinking. It was an adjustment, but for many a very welcome one that developed a more cosmopolitan identity. Deanna provided me with an anecdote to

illustrate this. “Our friendship group consists of many different nationalities, lots of Europeans, Indians, and a few South Americans. But my daughter’s best friend is Russian, and we have become friendly with her parents. We do quite a few things together. When we went home two years ago, we were watching the Olympics on T.V. and my daughter started cheering for the Russians to win. My father was incensed. He told her she was unpatriotic but of course she didn’t understand. I told him not to inflict his views on her. We have lived a very different life and my kids take people for who they are, not judging where they came from. I didn’t realize how much I had changed until I went back home. People there are just so narrow in their cultural thinking. I like thinking of myself as more international.”

The successful transition of spouses to new identities within the expatriate community was highly dependent on their parental status and their employment status before relocation. The construction of a strong mother or father identity helped to overcome the loss of other identities. Trailing spouses without children at the location did not have this option, however. They therefore had a much harder time building new identities because they did not have the social connections through a school and often felt lonely. Finding other avenues for identity building was more important, but was also more difficult. Transitioning from what was considered a strong identity to a weak identity, or even being identified by another person’s status had a great deal of effect on the spouse’s self esteem, another construct in the building of self.

Self Esteem and Sense of Self

Identity as part of the self-system or sense of self helps us define who we are. Theories of self have stressed the intrinsic motives inherent in the system for self-preservation and self-enhancement (Breyspraak 1984). This motive translates into the constructs of self-esteem and self-consistency. The sense of self-worth that we derive from identity and self constructs gives us our sense of esteem (Rosenberg 1965). Self esteem has a powerful influence in our lives and is evident in the tendency to distort reality to protect ourselves through a variety of different defensive mechanisms. One such mechanism is attributing success to our actions, behaviors, and personalities, while attributing failures to the situation and others outside ourselves. This powerful self regulatory function to preserve our self esteem has been studied using the self serving bias (Miller and Ross 1975) described in attribution theory (Kelley 1967).

Self-esteem was evident when spouses talked about trying to learn the language of the country they were in. Daphne went overseas with the aim of acculturating as much as she could into the society. To that end she and her family spent many hours in language classes, watching Malaysian television and talking to neighbors in Bahasa Malay. She acquired a great deal of self esteem from the fact she was nearly fluent in the language and could hold a conversation with her neighbors. She told me, “I feel very good about being able to speak to the neighbors or ask for what I want. I think because of the effort we have put in to language study, people are extremely open and excited about that, there are so few white people who do that and that really sets us apart. Because we have tried hard, so do they.” Daphne felt good about her own actions and behaviors learning a language because she was successful at it. This increased her esteem.

Molly, on the other hand, had also come to Malaysia with the intention of getting to know the locals but had not been so successful at learning the language. She had become frustrated with some workmen not understanding her. When I asked her if she could speak Bahasa her response was, “No, I don’t speak it well enough to have a conversation. I took a class at the YMCA. It was not very stimulating, the teacher wasn’t very good and the curriculum wasn’t very well organized. It was just a very basic list of reading with little actual talking. I tried to speak with my driver but he likes to speak to me in English, so I just have not had the practice, so no, I’m afraid I don’t.” Molly blamed the teacher, the curriculum, and her driver not wanting to speak to her in Bahasa as the reasons why she felt she had failed learning the language. “I’m afraid I don’t” expressed an almost apologetic comment that points to the fact that she really wants to learn the language to be able to communicate with the host society, but to keep her self esteem high she persuaded herself that it was not her fault that the classes are not good and no one wants to help her practice.

Another perspective on self esteem was developed by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) who posited cognitive dissonance can be experienced when our beliefs about ourselves (“I am an independent person” “I am an intelligent person”) are met with inconsistent information or experiences (“I have to get my husband to call the landlord” “*you* can’t help me with my math homework”). Cognitive dissonance in our beliefs about ourselves can negatively impact our self-esteem and result in a variety of negative emotional states most notably stress, anxiety, and feelings of depression. Most trailing spouses considered themselves independent people, but being put in a cross-cultural situation provoked feelings of cognitive dissonance. The successful, professional women

were not used to thinking of themselves as being anything but successful. Noreen, the lawyer who had decided to become a trailing spouse to have more time with her son had to continuously remind herself that it was the different culture that sometimes made doing things difficult and not her own inadequacies. “There are times when I get frustrated, just not knowing the culture or not being able to cope and I recite this little phrase to myself, ‘Four years of college, partner in two regional law firms, I am not an idiot, I am not an idiot’” (she laughs). Her friend, sitting in on the interview, piped in, “Then you add, well I never used to be.”

The feeling of helplessness and being dependent on the company to help them do every day jobs that they have done themselves all their adult lives, like register at the commune or get a driver’s license, irked many of the spouses. They were reluctant to ask for help from company staff as this made them feel more dependent on the company and they considered it widened the perceived gap between the “workers” and the stay-at-home-spouses. I had a first inkling of this when talking to Molly, the librarian who wanted social contacts with Malaysians. When I suggested that the Malaysians working with her husband would be a good source of information, she told me she had “as little contact with them as possible.” I found this surprising until I heard similar attitudes from other spouses. Nicola, who was a seasoned trailing spouse on her fifth posting overseas explained to me, “When something goes wrong I don’t know what to do, I don’t know who to call. I feel so dependent on other people. I hate having to call the secretary at the company to ask the simplest of things. She just treats me like I am an imbecile. I want to shout at her, ‘I could do this with my eyes closed and my hands tied behind my back in America.’ I don’t want to feel so helpless.” And she certainly did not want her husband’s

secretary to batter her self-esteem. The fact that someone else, who she considered less qualified than herself, could do something she couldn't affected her sense of value for herself. Not communicating with the local personnel in the company meant that those comparisons did not have to be made public.

As well as considering themselves as independent people, spouses also thought of themselves as intelligent, thinking people and many still thought of themselves as lawyers or dentists or chemical engineers. However, their children often did not. Gloria was an intellectual property lawyer and had been working very hard learning French because she wanted to feel more in control in Belgium, but also she thought it might help her career when she returned. When I asked her about her professional identity she told me, "You know that what you do is not considered important when you are worried about your French exam and your daughter says to you 'Well, it hardly matters.' As opposed to her exams that are really, really important. So that is how she sees me. It's really sad." Nicola, who had been a trailing spouse since before her children were born, told me at her interview, "It is interesting how you see yourself through other's eyes. Even today when I told my daughter that you were going to interview me, she said, 'Why would she want to interview *you*?' like I don't have anything important to say." Actually in a follow up e-mail her daughter had commented on how it was interesting for her to hear her mother "talk intelligently about her situation." Realizing that others see you in a different (more negative) role lowers your own self esteem. However this can be reversed when people see you in a more positive light.

Due to societal expectations of the male breadwinner role, participants who were stay-at-home fathers before relocation generally had low self esteem. What they

experienced overseas, however, was an enhancement in their self-esteem. Their role became not a role based on lifestyle choice (in which the male stay-at-home caregiver would easily be seen as avoiding the proper breadwinning role), but a role accorded to them by their circumstances. They *had* to stay at home because government policy did not permit them to work. They no longer had to justify their choice of parenting over work, reproductive over productive labor. After relocation they were afforded an excuse for their choices and, in fact, claimed a good deal of admiration from many of the women trailing spouses. Their self esteem increased because the community recognized them for the job they *are* doing (i.e. supporting their wives and in many cases looking after the children) rather than the job they are not doing. A case in point is Elliot. Before relocation, Elliot gave up working to look after his son when his wife was given a promotion. “She needed a wife,” he explained “She was working very long hours so it was like ‘Who is going to take care of our son?’ So she asked me to stop working and I did. I had to be talked into it; I really didn’t want to quit. When I stopped working I drank a lot. It was sort of, ‘Can I think of a reason not to get drunk tonight?’ Nope (laughs).’ I was very depressed. There’s also the self image, the self worth thing. It’s difficult for a guy in the States not to have a job because they think you must have a problem. That is one of the nice things about being in Belgium, it’s accepted. I can socialize without the stigma of living off my wife.” Elliot’s change in his social environment had changed how he was perceived by his peers (male and female) and increased his self esteem.

James had been a stay-at-home parent for ten years before relocating overseas and he felt that he and his children were excluded from many activities in the U.S. because he was a male child caregiver. He described the situation to me. “My kids never got invited

to a play date so and I was kind of hurt by that. That is not what I expected. I expected that with these educated moms that I would be, not embraced but certainly accepted. Do I have a chip on my shoulder? Yes I do. It was not as offensive personally to me but for my kids, I thought it was discriminatory against my kids. That made me angry.” When I asked if he gets the same reaction in Kuala Lumpur he replies “Oh no, everyone here wants to include me. I organize the soccer games and play with the kids. It may be their ages, [his children are now in middle school] but it’s just a lot easier here. A lot of these women are professionals and they realize what I gave up. They realize I am supporting my wife, and I suppose they admire me in a way.” The difference between Jack’s experience as a stay-at-home parent in the U.S. and his experience in Kuala Lumpur made a huge impact on his feelings of self esteem. In Kuala Lumpur the women spouses did not question his reasoning for giving up work as the women in the U.S. had, and applauded his support for his executive wife, something they may even have been envious of.

It’s My Life? Locus of Control

Another psychological construct that influences our perceptions of the world and is shaped by our sense of self, is our perception of control. Relocation almost inevitably involves transitions from independency to dependency, familiarity to the unfamiliar, and control into attenuated control. When they lived in the U.S. spouses had much control over both their home life and life outside the home. The concept of *locus* of control was formulated from a framework first developed by Rotter (1954). Locus of control is the extent to which individuals believe they can control events that affect them. A person

with high internal locus of control believes they control their life whereas a person with high external locus of control believes that events and decisions made by others control their lives (Rotter 1954; Rotter 1990). Spouses' self esteem was affected by the transition from mainly internal locus of control to mainly external locus of control.

Spouses felt they had control over personal things and in particular the parenting of their children, but were not in control of the big issues like where they lived and for how long they were going to live there. In the interviews I asked the spouses how much control they had over their lives. Many felt that external factors controlled their lives and in many instances highlighted things they could not do. By becoming a trailing spouse, most felt they had to give up a certain amount of personal control to the company that sent them and the transferee that made the initial decision about whether to apply for an overseas posting or a transfer. Norma's response was typical of many of the spouses. "I have not been in charge of my life since I came overseas. I don't mean my personal belongings, I mean my own affairs. I have not been in control since I came overseas. I am pretty much in charge of all the kid related family things that go on. I'm not angry or bitter, but it is a bit of a comedown to once being a professional woman and to feel like you are on an equal footing with your husband and feel self sufficient. I always felt I could take care of myself but now I am very much dependent on my husband and his company for lots of things." Nelly felt that her husband was more in control of her life than she was and made decisions for both of them "I feel as an expat over the years I have had a certain lack of control in following my husband. I don't know the jobs he is not applying for, so I really have little say. I have this feeling that we made a joint decision to leave. It wasn't explicit, it was implicit in that his work and his travel

schedule did not allow me to have a job and I always felt we never sat down and had that talk about the whole thing so now I am left doing what he wants to do.” Spouses who were used to being “in charge” suddenly found themselves not being in control any more. The area where trailing spouses’ internal locus of control was the highest, particularly for the women, was with the family, the children, and the domestic running of the household. This reinforced the gendered expectations of the domestic nurturing role of women, but it also was the one thing where she *did* have control and often where her self esteem was the highest. They were all very proud of their children, particularly how many opportunities they had, how worldly they were becoming. They attributed this growth in large part to living overseas and to the international exposure the children received at school. Feeling that their children were, at least, benefiting from the women’s sacrifices gave them positive feedback for a job well done, where they had the internal control.

Another area where spouses found their internal locus of control affirmed was through taking on “jobs” that boosted their self esteem. Being put “in charge” of a range of activities helped to bring these wives’ lives more in alignment, in terms of control, with their pre-location lives, for example, they served on committees for the PTA, the American Club or the Malaysian Society. Freda was the editor of the American Society magazine in Kuala Lumpur. Deborah organized the annual bazaar at the international school in Kuala Lumpur and Carlton opened an “Underground Café” to feed the sports teams in Brussels healthy food. They all had a mission, a quest, which gave them a feeling of control, and a boost to their self esteem. By transferring and building identities and concentrating on activities that provided them with an internal locus of control their self esteem grew, and they achieved higher levels of adjustment.

Just Deal With It! Coping Strategies

When faced with stressful situations, like a cross-cultural situation or a loss of certain axes of identity, people draw on internal resources, (personal, cognitive, emotional, and physical) and external resources (economic, social, cultural) to help them cope with the stressors and losses. Coping strategies refer to the attempts to tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events either by managing the stressor or managing the emotional distress caused by the stressor (Folkman and Lazarus 1980). Problem-focused coping manages the stressor and is useful when there are aspects of the stressful situation that are amenable to change; emotion-focused coping regulates emotions and aids when the stressful situation is outside one's control and is less amenable to change (Murphy 1977; Folkman and Lazarus 1980; House and Kahn 1985; Pearlin 1999; Zarit, Pearlin et al. 2003). An additional distinction that is often made in the coping literature is between active and avoidant coping strategies. Active coping strategies are responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself or how one thinks about it, whereas avoidant coping strategies lead people into activities (such as alcohol use) or mental states (such as withdrawal) that keep them from directly addressing stressful events. Generally speaking, active coping strategies are thought to be better for dealing with stressful events, and avoidant coping strategies appear to be a psychological risk factor for adverse responses to stressful life events (Holahan and Moos 1987).

When living overseas many stressors cannot be changed. They are part of the cultural *habitus* that spouses reside in. Consequently, people must rely more on emotion-focused coping strategies. Stressors like the lack of security, unsafe driving, and the way

you are treated as a woman cannot be changed, but by using emotion-focused coping skills the stressor can be perceived as less stressful. Deirdre eventually coped with her husband having to talk to the landlord when she reframed it in her head. She no longer saw it a threat to her gender identity but as one less job she had to deal with. Kathleen, a chemical engineer who earned as much as her husband before relocation, coped with her loss of professional identity by reassessing *her* meaning of work. “In the beginning I was very frustrated and I would sit here saying ‘I need work’ but I had to get my head around the fact that I can do work but not necessarily get paid for it. The other women out there helped me to do that. We’re all in it together. There were important jobs out there to do, and someone had to do them. Now I see that I have a lot more opportunities now than when I was working. I worked with a top class stage designer and learned a lot. I’d love to do more. I couldn’t do that while I was working. You just have to feel that what you are doing is important.”

Time, according to Oberg (1951) and Lysgaard (1954), allows people to adjust and become more confident within a new culture. For my participants the most difficult situations occurred during the first few months of living in a new country and over time most of them learned coping strategies to manage their lack of self confidence and lack of control. Some, particularly spouses such as Clare and Elizabeth who did not want to move overseas and did so under a certain amount of duress, used the coping strategy basically of not coping with a new cultural environment but kept themselves in the expatriate world as much as they could. Others used avoidant strategies of not socializing, importing food and clothing and spending a lot of time communicating with their families back home. The majority wanted to cope and quickly learned to ask other

expatriates about correct behaviors, observed the behavior of other people around them, and became more culturally competent when completing the tasks necessary to manage a household in a cross-cultural environment. In this situation changing their own behavior to fit into the host society's expectations was considered the best coping strategy (Ward and Kennedy 1992; Cross 1995).

Problem-solving coping strategies that the spouses used included using a GPS to help navigate the small streets of Brussels instead of getting lost or hiring a driver in Kuala Lumpur, using a French/English dictionary in the supermarket to distinguish laundry detergent from fabric softener. The most important one for the women was asking other people for more information and joining activities that helped them appreciate and understand the culture more. These were the active strategies that produced more positive adjustment (Mosher and Prelow 2007) and tended to be used by the spouses that had exerted more agency in their decision to move. These spouses were willing to transform their pre-relocation identities into new identities.

Anthis and LaVoie (2006) examined the role of readiness to change on adult identity development. They found a relationship between a readiness to change and changes in identity exploration and in identity commitment. This reinforces the suggestions in chapter 3 of this dissertation that spouses who are at a stage in their personal, parental or professional life where they are, in their words, "ready for change" are more likely to adjust better to the trailing spouse role. The building and transformation of identities involves complex processes that take time. The key thing, as illustrated by Lillian's experience, is actively making an adjustment. The petroleum engineer explained it to me this way. "I don't think I have had too many problems here

considering I am not working. I really think you have to get out and have to do things that are important to you and give you respect. You have to convince yourself that it is O.K. not to 'work.' It's been drummed into your whole life, get a career, it's hard to give that up in one swoop. You have to replace it with something, but something real. You need real things to do or you can doubt yourself. I'm not a shopper, some of the women try to buy happiness, but it's the real things like helping other people that give you the satisfaction."

Finding value in experiences not linked with paid employment is an active problem-solving strategy that is a vital step to positive adjustment and to identify transformations. These changes occur through both individual achievements and group activities. Male trailing spouses tended to use the individual strategy for building identities, while female trailing spouses tended to use the group strategy for building identities. Carlton was an architect before he became a stay-at-home parent but used his sojourn in Belgium to transform his architect identity to other creative identities. "Not working enabled me to develop my creativity in a different direction," he told me. When he first came to Belgium he wrote and recorded music, then after a history of Belgium class he wrote a historical novel set in Brugges which was published a few years ago, something he had not contemplated while working. These individual activities gave the spouses a sense of self respect and higher self esteem.

Many researchers have found that volunteer work has positive effects on trailing spouses' psychological well-being including a greater feeling of self respect and fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety (Hunter and Lin 1981; Allen and Rushton 1983; Putnam 2000; Thoits and Hewitt 2001; Carlo, Okun et al. 2005). Some spouses

transformed their professional identities to new identities easier by using their skills from their professional life to help in a volunteer capacity. Dorothy, a university international student advisor volunteered at a Fulbright Center helping Malays apply for American universities. Lyn transitioned her professional identity as a financial planner into helping Chin refugees manage their profits from selling their handicrafts. Others learned new skills like Deanna who volunteered at a convent library and is now contemplating taking a degree in library science, or Michelle, a law consultant, who, after volunteering with a charity organization, now wants to get out of the corporate world and work for a not-for-profit organization when she returns to the States. Michelle worked with the Chin refugees and found her work far more rewarding and challenging than her job as a law consultant. She described what she had achieved. “We have about 30 women who do embroidery. They do these cross stitching and make these beautiful cross stitching bags. We expanded their repertoire and taught these ladies how to make telephone covers, book marks and wine covers.” Lyn, a financial planner in the States, helped Michelle and taught them how to use the computer. “Using an Excel worksheet they record the materials they use, the number of hours it takes them to make the article, then they calculate how much it can be sold for. We sell them at all the expat bazaars that we have here and I send them off to a friend in New York and she sells them in a little boutique for about 20-30 dollars then sends us a check. We have taught them to keep all their accounts. We applied for a grant from one of the big trust funds through the embassy and got 1000 dollars to buy them a computer and pay for the space. I feel like I really have made a difference in their lives. When I go back to the States I want to work with a non-profit organization and do similar things. The last thing I want to do is go back into the

corporate world.” Lyn’s professional identity as a financial planner had been replaced by something she felt was better and more worth-while. Because she had used the coping strategy of building a new identity to replace her professional identity, her self esteem was stronger, she felt she had more control and therefore she adapted to her new sense of self. This shows the importance of coping and the effectiveness of coping strategies in this stressful situation and how they can affect the outcomes of mental health.

Stress and Social Support

One coping resource that has been found to be particularly successful in positive adaptation is social support (Cohen and Wills 1985; Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Underwood 2000). Social support for trailing spouses is especially important as they have lost their support system from home and during the stressful times it is important that spouses reach out to others (Black and Gregersen 1991; Briody and Chrisman 1991; Harvey 1997; Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2001; Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Copeland and Norell 2002; Copeland 2003). Transferees will find support at work through colleagues and company resources, and children will find support in their schools. Spouses are left at home and have to actively seek out their social contacts. This can be very daunting in a new country with little knowledge of the transportation systems or even where to find people with whom to make contact. Michelle explained this to me. “When I got here I thought now what do I do? It’s hard to make friends because you are here all on your own, you know no one. I had looked up the address of the American Club, but I didn’t have a clue how to get there. I just wanted someone to take me. You have to make the effort to make friends; you have to make that big leap and get out there and join

something. People don't come to you." Although social support will come from spouses' partners, (their husbands or wives), many work long hours and travel extensively, therefore spouses have to look outside of the immediate family to either the host community or the expatriate community for their social support. As discussed in Chapter 4, establishing friendships in the host society is particularly difficult; therefore, most of their social support comes from the expatriate community.

Social support has been found to have a buffering effect on stress by providing better resources and information to help with problems, and to provide emotional support (Cohen and Wills 1985; House and Kahn 1985; Fisher and Shaw 1994; Thoits 1995; Pearlin 1999; Zarit, Pearlin et al. 2003). The support can be from individuals, but also from community groups. It is a sense of belonging that is important (Felton and Shinn 1992). For many spouses, particularly wives, the expatriate community is a social space where resources, help, and support abound. Resources were found through clubs and societies that were run by expatriate spouses, namely The American Women's Clubs, both in Kuala Lumpur and in Brussels and through company spousal associations. There were regular coffee mornings and talks, classes and outings that provided a space for meeting people and socializing. The Brussels section ran a "hints" course, a ten week long course on Belgian culture and practical hints of how to survive in Brussels. This not only gave information that helped relieve some of the stressors while living in Brussels, it also provided a space for newcomers to meet people and make friends.

These friends acted as a buffer for the cross-cultural stressors that spouses encountered in the foreign environment. Alice attended this course in the first few months of living in Brussels and established most of her friends from there. "It was a great class.

Not just for the information but for the contacts I made. I had been sitting at home getting more miserable every day. I had to make myself go to this class, just to get out and I am so pleased I did. It was a chance to meet other people in the same boat. It was a place to say, hey I've figured something out, let me share it, or to go to discover things together. A friend of mine I met there, we do things together then it isn't so scary. Yesterday she wanted a dress altered so we went together. We got lost, but it was better when there are two of you. It's better to be together because it is all so new, we help each other out. After that course I was never alone if I didn't want to be. It gave me my friendship group."

Spouses who had been stay-at-home parents found the expatriate community much more of a social and emotional support than the support they had at home. Carol, who did not live near her parents in the U.S., enjoyed having more friends in Brussels. "In lots of ways finding friends here was easier than back home. In some ways the Belgian expat community is a throwback to the 50s when all women stayed at home raising their children and not working. What I have appreciated is the company of so many bright, intelligent women with professional degrees. I have really enjoyed becoming involved with these groups of women and we accomplish great things on a volunteer level. I didn't find that back home." Male spouses in Brussels also found a better support system. It enabled them to socialize with people who were facing the same stressful situations; both being a stay at home father and in a cross-cultural situation. Thoits (1986) and Cohen and McKay (1984) recognize that effective support givers are individuals who have successfully faced the same stressful circumstances because they are most likely to offer the best matches in both emotional and practical needs. Often

employed transferees who do not have to interface with many of the daily hassles that spouses do, do not understand the stresses that spouses go through. Rose felt that her husband did not understand how she had to work at finding friends. “I think one of the things the working spouse does not appreciate and the children don’t, whatever age they are, is that you make this move and the working partner has a network immediately because they have their jobs, the children immediately have a network because of the school, and the spouse has nothing, so you have to put in so much more energy and effort to then creating that network. He thinks that I just go out to lunch and friends will appear.” Alice, who admitted her marriage was not a particularly strong one, felt part of the problem was that her husband just did not understand or appreciate what she had given up. “He doesn’t understand. I mean I’ve talked about it, we have read books and gone over the issues, so he knows, but doesn’t understand. And it really is not an issue any more. I just get on with what I have to do and I do not discuss my problems with him. I use my friends for that.” Other spouses felt the international experience enhanced their family ties and they became an emotional support for each other.

Emotional support, particularly in the first few months is especially important to get spouses through the hostility stage of culture shock (Oberg 1960). One component of social support is an exchange of information within a social network that is comforting because the stressor is shared and gives opportunities to acquire new interpretations to a stressful situation (Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Haslam, Jetten et al. 2004). Lyn described the support she felt she received from the expatriate community “His [her husband] job takes him away a lot. He is gone for two or three weeks at a time so that leaves me pretty vulnerable. What has made it much easier is that the expat community very quickly

becomes your support network; far easier than at home. Everyone knows you don't have a family nearby of your friends, the parents of your children's friends, they come to help. If something happens or one of your kids gets sick, you can rely on this community for help. Everyone is in this together. You are alone but you are not." An example of this was given by Abigail who had been an expat for many years and now lived in Brussels. "I will say that's one thing I do think if you need something, everybody jumps, period, paragraph, underscored. John [her son] had the epilepsy and he was in hospital for a week. My husband was traveling. We had only been here 6 months so I called somebody I had just met and they said 'Are you O.K.?' and I said I have to go to hospital; I have no idea how long, I expect it will be about a week. She didn't think twice about it. She took my daughter in and someone else went to the house to take care of the animals. It was amazing. I hardly knew these people. You would not get that back home. It is like an extended family."

Not everyone felt the clubs and societies were what they needed for social support. Reanne, for example, would not join The American Women's Club "because too many American women together doing crafty things is not something I want. There can sometimes be very negative feelings there. They all want to create a "Little America" and that is not why I am here. I stay away from those places like the plague." Reanne used her family as her social support and members of her church. She felt she had all the support she needed.

Some spouses, particularly non-parents, did not want to join The American Women's Club for the same reasons as Reanne, but could not find another outlet to find their social support. Ellen was a typical example. She spent hours on the internet e-

mailing her friends and family back home and watching endless videos. It wasn't that she did not like Brussels, she had just not taken the initiative to get out and find friends. She did not want to go home, but she was unhappy with her isolation. "Sometimes I don't want to go back, and I will look back and say, what was it that was so difficult about living in Belgium that you know.... And you go on all these ups and downs, because I like it better all the time. I am just bored and sometimes lonely. David does long days so I am on my own too much." The role of social support is evident from the data, whether it is from partners or friends. Finding the right kind of social support and knowing where to find it is not always that easy.

Gender Differences

Studies have found that there are gender differences in preferred support giving strategies in the types of support that men and women wish to receive. Husbands are more likely to hide problems and give (sometimes unwanted) advice, they are less likely to ventilate and are uncomfortable with their wives expressing emotions (Gottlieb and Wagner 1991). With data from my male participants, there was certainly less complaining about their working wives and the companies than female spouses. They appeared to be very supportive of their wives' roles; however the working wives hardly ever travelled and male spouses were not left to look after the children as the female spouses were.

Male spouses did their fair share of ventilating and complaining about the behaviors of the hosts and the efficiency of communications and infrastructure. However none complained about their social networks, even the isolated few in Kuala Lumpur, and

most were adamant that they did not need a “female spouse” type of community to organize their lives.

So How Am I Doing? Mental Health Outcomes

Changing lifestyles, identities, and environments produce stressful situations that require spouses to assess their situation and tailor their coping strategies to the context or situation. Adaptation will depend on the use of multiple strategies to address different stressors and losses. When efforts at coping fail, as when one tries to use problem-focused coping in a situation that cannot be changed, distress and depression may result. This is an especially problematic situation because once a person experiences depression the effectiveness of their appraisal and coping efforts may be negatively affected creating a vicious circle. Depressed individuals are more likely to employ emotion-focused coping and avoidance/denial when problem-focused or active coping efforts might be more effective (Zeidner and Saklofske 1996).

Being a trailing spouse, just as the name suggests, can be an experience that diminishes self esteem and weakens identities. This leads to anxiety or even depression. Many of my interviewees hinted that at times they felt depressed, but the positive social support that seems to be inherent in the expatriate community helps the spouses with their coping strategies. Conversely the sense of self can be strengthened by developing personal and social identities and increasing locus of control.

Gender differences

How did the coping strategies differ between the male and female trailing spouses? Early coping studies (Hamilton and Fagot 1988; Guelzow, Bird et al. 1991; Perosa and Perosa 1993) indicated that men usually relied on problem-focused coping and women more on emotion-focused coping. More recent work shows, however, that the early findings are not that simple (Green and Diaz 2008; Muhonen and Torkelson 2008). While gender differences in coping still appear in certain circumstances, contemporary theories of coping suggest that the most adaptive forms of coping demonstrate the selective use of both functions of coping, and that when people match or tailor their coping effort to the specific stressors they face, adaptation is greatest and psychological distress minimized (Frazier, Hooker et al. 1993; Frazier, Tix et al. 2000).

However, there does appear to be differences in coping strategies between male and female trailing spouses. Few men sought a new identity unless it involved employment whereas most of the women sought and found new identities, particularly through volunteering. Few of the male trailing spouses used social support as a coping strategy where the women used it extensively. This may have been because of the smaller population, or the lack of facilities to socialize, but even in Brussels where there was a social circle of male trailing spouses, social support and sharing of information on adaptation issues was not prevalent. Their self esteem appeared to be higher while overseas than in the States if they were stay-at-home fathers, which was not apparent for the female trailing spouses.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have explored and analyzed the data through Folkman and Lazarus' model of stress and coping. Clearly, even for the well-adjusted there is some degree of stress. How that stress is interpreted through the spouses' lens of self affects the amount of control they feel and coping strategies they employ to adjust. In this chapter I emphasize the importance of spouses' psychological adjustment. Although they also experience socio-cultural adjustment merely by the fact that they are living outside their own cultures, they express their experiences much more in a personal, psychological language than in a socio-cultural adjustment language. Of course these cannot be separated completely; the instances of interviewees' talking about feeling stupid when they cannot accomplish simple tasks like shopping attest to the interrelatedness of these aspects of adjustment. However, in socio-cultural adjustment trailing spouses each face *similar* problems. In psychological adjustment, in contrast, they differ much more. Those spouses who were and continue to be stay-at-home parents had less identity dissonance than spouses with professional, high status careers. Women felt much more stressed by the distance between themselves and their family back home than men. Those spouses looking for a change were more psychologically prepared for adjustment than those who had resisted the overseas transfer.

Gender reflected adjustment in significant ways. The higher expectation for women over men to be nurturers and mothers pressed heavily on the women trailing spouses. Some abandoned careers in order to satisfy this aspect of their self identity only to feel as much loss as gain. Loss in their social status as independent, worthy people and breadwinners while gain as nurturers coupled with the guilt of feeling the loss. Male

trailing spouses, in contrast, felt their identity affirmed overseas and thus their psychological adjustment was not as fraught as the women's. Consequently, they were not compelled as much as their female counterparts, to recover a sense of self worth and identity through volunteerism. Volunteerism was a double edged sword. For some, it felt like doing menial tasks for free, while others built a whole new identity around their new found interests.

The readiness to accept a change in sense of self, i.e. using emotional coping strategies, led to more positive adjustments. Spouses who wanted to make the location similar to home were continuously wishing for home, which did not lead to positive adjustment.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSIONS

This exploratory study of American international transferee spouses explored how the gendered societal expectations inherent in the structures of society governed the decisions, attitudes, and behaviors that affect adaptation of trailing spouses living in a foreign *habitus*. Through analysis of the extensive data, understandings of the concept of the “trailing spouse” have been enhanced in several ways.

First, this dissertation employed ethnographic methods to generate rich qualitative data in contrast to the quantitative data collected in most studies to date. By living in an expatriate environment for eight months I was able to socialize with many of the participants. Occupying the same social space enabled me to obtain insights into the world of the expatriate spouse through participant observation and participation, developing empathy with the participants and the adjustments they were experiencing. Participating in the many activities helped me understand the processes that the spouses undergo to adjust not only to a foreign environment, new language, and new lifestyle, but to the psychological adaptations and the energy required to use coping strategies that brought about positive adjustment. Through on-site interviews new factors emerged that affected adaptation which has not arisen in previous research or which have arisen but have neither been adequately understood nor contextualized through surveys. One important area that emerges is gender’s influence. Some recent studies have included male trailing spouses in their population and have analyzed the similarities and differences and made recommendations to companies, but few consider the structural effects of gender in the results or conclusions (Copeland 2003; McNulty 2005). Migration literature has extensively used structural factors, including gendered relations,

to investigate the adaptation of migrants (Sassen 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford 1999; Menjivar 1999; Mahler and Pessar 2006; Zentgraf 2002), but this is not the case for this population.

Second, this dissertation compared the experiences of trailing husbands to those of trailing wives. Although they are both in similar circumstances, the gendered structures and role expectations in their home society and the expatriate society affect their socio-cultural and psychological adaptation. Given the increasing frequency of male spouses accompanying female transferees it is important to understand this new but growing group. By comparing male and female trailing spouses' experiences of and reflections on their overseas assignments, issues of gender emerged that are difficult to bare when studying trailing wives or trailing husbands in isolation.

Third, it investigated to what extent most spouses interact inter-culturally with the host society versus the expatriate community. Many studies describe expatriate "golden ghettos" (Willis and Yeoh 2002; Beaverstock 2003; Harvey and Kiessling 2004) where little contact with the host community is sought. However, these studies continue to assume that problems in adjusting reflect contact problems with the host community. The receiving community, particularly ethnic enclaves, has been found to have a huge effect upon adaptation of immigrants in the migration literature (Anderson 1974; Sassen 1979; Portes and Stepick 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Raijman and Tienda 1999) but has been sorely understudied for expatriate professional and skilled workers and their families living abroad. By living with the expatriate families I was able to observe the quantity and quality of social contacts with both the host society and within the expatriate

community and the effect of social relations on their socio-cultural and their psychological adaptation.

Fourth, through a comparative frame of reference this study examined the effects of location on trailing spouses by exploring the effects of cultural distance on spousal adjustment in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Brussels, Belgium. These two cities are considered to be very different culturally but in fact they had some interesting parallels. They were both global cities with a high expatriate population and they both had multiple ethnic/linguistic groups in cultural power struggles. With Malaysia having a higher cultural distance than Belgium, it would be expected that Kuala Lumpur would be more difficult for Americans to adapt to. However there were some interesting anomalies. Kuala Lumpur has been recently redeveloped and has a multitude of American style stores, shopping malls and restaurants where Americans can feel quite at home and many people speak English. Conversely in Brussels many people do not speak English, and there are very few American style stores, restaurants or franchises which made Brussels more difficult to adapt to. In my analysis I explored the effects these similarities and anomalies had on spousal adjustment.

Fifth, using a dual frame of reference, pre-relocation circumstances were explored to understand why spouses agreed to become trailing spouses. This question revealed the backdrop of their lives before relocation, collecting information on attitudes toward employment, parenthood, familial relations and mapped the life stages they were going through when the decision to move was made. Although scholars have acknowledged the importance of motivations to move (Black and Gregerson 1991; Copeland and Norrell 2001; Copeland 2003), few have explored the reasons *why* those decisions are made.

Looking through the lens of gender theories I was able to analyze the gendered structural forces and role expectations that influenced why spouses chose to become trailing spouses, thus acquiring a better understanding of their attitudes toward adaptation.

Sixth this study expands insights useful to the broader migration scholarship. Migration studies have overwhelmingly focused on unskilled workers immigrating from developing countries to developed countries, and recent theoretical perspectives have emphasized their socio-cultural and economic integration (Portes and Stepick 1993; Roberts 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Foner 1999; Raijman and Tienda 1999; Logan et al. 2002). Many government immigration policies now emphasize, however, the recruitment of *skilled* temporary workers, but few studies have concentrated on the adaptation of this group (Iredale 2001; Khadria 2001; Peixoto 2001), and their spouses have been virtually ignored. By focusing on spouses of transferees, or what could be termed “temporary migrants,” it examines socio-cultural and psychological adaptation by a population unhindered by the receiving country’s traditional expectation of political and economic integration to the host society for permanent migrants. It also advances scholarship in gender relations particularly in the skilled temporary worker literature and explores some of the issues that need further research to understand this growing specialized population in many countries.

Lastly, the findings from this study extend and enrich the adaptation literature in business studies, migration studies, psychological studies and gender studies by using perspectives and theoretical frameworks from the different disciplines to produce a more holistic understanding of the adaptation of trailing spouses and the gendered structures inherent in the decisions to become a trailing spouse.

Through the various studies that have been conducted about trailing spouses, many conclusions and recommendations have been made. Much of this study reinforces those findings; however, by viewing the extensive qualitative data through the lens of gender theories, it explains not just *what* spouses adapt or do not adapt to, but *how* they adapt and *why*. Investigating the role that gendered expectations play in the decisions, attitudes, and behaviors of spouses allowed a more nuanced understanding that highlights predictors of spousal adaptation.

This study clearly shows that pre-relocation factors are extremely important. Life stages, career orientation, parental status, family and community connections all play a part in the *decision* to become a trailing spouse. Although migration scholars have emphasized this dual frame of reference methodology, I had not anticipated how motivations to move would become central to much of my analysis on spousal adaptation reinforcing Black and Gregerson's (1991) predictions and Copeland's (2003) findings.

It became clear as the analysis progressed that motivations to move translated into motivations to adjust. Throughout the analysis spouses' motivations were reflected in their attitudes and behaviors, particularly in their socio-cultural adjustment. There was rarely one motive for agreeing to become a trailing spouse, but reasons for moving fell into two main categories, financial and ready for change (either because they wanted to become a full time parent or they wanted a cross-cultural experience). When viewed through the lens of gender theories they can be placed on a continuum according to the amount of agency exerted in agreeing to move from coercion to desire. The more a spouse desired to go overseas, the more they desired to adjust. They had an internal locus of control and used appropriate coping strategies to aid their adjustment. The more a

spouse was coerced (either by the transferee, children or gendered societal expectations) the more they resisted adjustment. They had an external locus of control and used inappropriate coping strategies. Desiring adjustment did not mean that it was achieved, there were many factors that intervened after relocation to impede adjustment; however, if a spouse resisted adjustment from the beginning, it was very difficult for them to overcome the socio-cultural and psychological barriers for adjustment to take place. More research and testing needs to be done on the effect of the exertion of agency in decision making and adjustment.

Few studies have compared spousal adjustment in two locations to consider the effect of location and culture distance. Most studies find the higher the culture distance (or novelty) the harder the adaptation (Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Black and Gregersen 1991; Tung and Miller 1990); however Tung's (1998) research on expatriates did not. In this study the data were not consistent between Kuala Lumpur and Brussels. In Kuala Lumpur, a high cultural distance for Americans, spouses adapted better to the physical environment than in Brussels. This, I argue, is because many global cities, particularly in Asia, have transmorphed into spaces that reflect the global aspects of their financial development. This means that amenities such as shopping malls, restaurants and supermarkets cater to an affluent, cosmopolitan community and reflect an English-speaking, Americanized market which produces a physical space that American spouses can use with little adaptation. However, the deeper culture is still of high cultural distance for the American trailing spouse. Consequently the more exposure they get to the deeper culture the wider they feel the culture gap. Conversely many European cities, particularly Brussels, have resisted the American style shopping malls and franchises. Spouses had to

get used to restricted shopping hours, speaking French, and buying from small more specialized stores which required a higher level of adjustment for American spouses. However, the deeper culture is closer to American culture, and in fact becomes very attractive for spouses who consider traditional family values as important. Therefore the effect of culture distance depends at which cultural level the spouse is operating. As a result it is difficult to classify culture novelty of global cities, which is where most of the spouses reside). This study shows the deeper a spouse participated in the host culture, the more important cultural distance became as a factor towards adaptation.

Using ethnographic methods was central when examining the communities into which spouses integrate. Although spouses have contact with the host society, it is not so much a *social* contact but a service based contact with maids, drivers, storekeepers and landlords. Although these interactions are friendly, little social interaction takes place outside of the service rendered. There was often a division in the eth-class of the people they had contact with. In fact in both locations spouses found it difficult to make friends with the local populace even when they learned the language and were motivated to have host country friends. Most of their contacts were made through church and religious groups, but generally it was the host society member who infiltrated the English-speaking expatriate community rather than the other way around. These differences have generally not been made in previous studies.

What has been noted and reaffirmed in this study is that the expatriate community is very important because (a) it provides social and emotional support, (b) it is an excellent resource for information, and (c) it is a vehicle for providing outlets for the

formation of new identities which all aid positive adjustment (Harvey 1985; Black and Gregersen 1991; Briody and Chrisman 1991; Shaffer and Harrison 2001).

This study posits that there are four different strategies that spouses may use to integrate into a foreign environment, integration, separation, isolation, and going native. Most studies find that integration into the host society is the most effective adaptive strategy (Williams and Berry 1998; Mountreuil and Bourhis 2001; Pfafferott and Brown 2006). However, adjustment does not necessarily mean integration into the host society. The expatriate community is an important medium for adjustment as well as the host society. Spouses may be content to use family as their social support, therefore isolationism may also be considered an adjustment strategy. Family oriented people may not need a community to support them. Following Ann Copeland's (2003) findings, the data indicated that it is not the strategy used that is important but for spouses to have agency in their choice over the strategy they choose.

Another area of comparison in the data analysis was exploring trailing male spouses' adaptation with trailing female spouses' adaptation. There were some interesting similarities as well as differences. For both male and female trailing spouses who were stay-at-home parents before relocation, their personal identities changed little after relocation. The adjustment from employed to unemployed had already been made. For those spouses who were employed before relocation, they had to cope with the loss of their professional identity, which for some was very strong. Using the division of career versus income oriented employment (Cole 2010), it was clear from the data that career oriented spouses needed a new strong personal identity to replace their professional one. The higher the status and economic reimbursement of the career that was interrupted, the

greater the adjustment was to losing it. The fact that because of many gendered structural forces, men generally have higher status careers and earn more may explain why professional males have been found in previous studies to require more adjustment to professional identity loss than females (Shaffer and Harrison 2001; Cole 2010). Female trailing spouses who had been lawyers and doctors had a very difficult time adjusting to their lack of professional status.

Another important factor that must be considered is spouses' parental status. Because of societal gendered expectations of the nurturing female, women found it easier to adopt the mothering identity in place of their professional identity. Male trailing spouse roles were not "fathering" roles, and they did not want to be identified as mothers, therefore the role change was harder. However, males who had children at the location felt a higher sense of self esteem than they had in the U.S. The female spouses admired their willingness to support their wives' careers and made them feel that their role was "noble". Parental status also affected support systems. For both male and female spouses who had children in school at the location, an immediate support system was available through the organizations within the school and networks via their children's friends. Spouses without children had the most difficult time finding a good support group to help with adjustment.

The social support structures of the expatriate society were geared toward female trailing spouses by their choice of activities and their exclusivity (American *Women's* Club). Brussels was an interesting comparison to Kuala Lumpur because it was possible to examine the difference between male spouses who were socially isolated in Kuala Lumpur with the male support group STUDS in Brussels. Although male spouses

enjoyed the company on Friday mornings, the group was used for casual exchanging of information, not the organized workshops and lectures of the women's clubs. They told me they rarely met at any other time and had not formed what would be considered close friendships; nor did they feel the need to have close friendships, whereas women did. For women, the stronger their social network, the better adjusted they felt. This was one reason they participated in many volunteer activities and men rarely did. The male trailing spouses did not develop higher self esteem by doing a job for no money; the women developed a higher self esteem because they felt needed and appreciated by doing volunteer work.

The socially constructed female nurturing role was evident in female trailing spouse relationships and their sense of responsibility towards parents, adult children and grandchildren left in the home country. Particularly those spouses who had relocated for their own new experiences felt the tug of guilt in leaving family behind. Male trailing spouses did not verbalize their feelings of loss of family or guilt for leaving loved ones left behind most female spouses did.

Although male trailing spouses are fulfilling a non-traditional role, they felt comfortable in that identity and many enjoyed the tasks in parenting. That is probably one reason that they agreed to become trailing spouses. They are a self selected group that did not have the societal pressure on them to "follow the breadwinner." Therefore their motivation was tempered by going against societal expectations; a resistance towards them, which showed agency being exerted in their decision. Men were very supportive of their wives and did not show the resentment that was expressed by women

who felt they had been given “a raw deal.” Male spouses told me they were often envied by their friends at home and were considered to have an ideal life.

By using Searle and Ward’s bifurcated model of adaptation I was able to separate the socio-cultural adaptation from the psychological adaptation. It is possible for a spouse to adapt extremely well to the socio-cultural aspects of the society, but have a difficult time adapting to a loss of professional identity. Conversely a spouse may adapt extremely well to the new found identity in motherhood or fatherhood, but have a difficult time with the socio-cultural aspects of the new society. This is extremely important to understand for spouses when they adopt coping strategies.

The data from this study indicates that the two major hurdles to spousal adaptation overseas are the importance of their career and the strength of family ties in the home country. Spouses who have strong professional identities and firm projections for their career will suffer a great deal of loss if they cannot continue with their careers, especially when they see the transferees enhancing and forwarding theirs. If a spouse agrees to become a trailing spouse, even though they have firm projected career aspirations, other forces have persuaded them to agree to relocate. Whatever the forces, there is a lack of agency in the decision; therefore, even before relocation their locus of control is diminished.

Two major assets to spousal adaptation overseas are parental status and a readiness for change. Parental status is important to both psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment. Children are an avenue to making social networks to build social support, but they are also a source of an identity that is accepted and respected.

Spouses without children had much more difficulty not only finding social networks, but finding a new, respected identity to replace their professional identity.

Theoretical contributions from this study add to the migration literature by extending work done on professional migrants to include their social adaptation and adaptation of their spouses. It highlights the recent trend in migration studies to consider gender as an organizing factor in migration and reinforce the need to study family members as active agents of change and not passive followers. Much of the international migration literature has concentrated on financial “pull” of moving to a new country with economic opportunities. This study highlights other gendered factors that are linked to a need for change. It furthers the ethnic enclave concept by considering the enclave’s social purpose rather than economic that has been the main focus to date.

The business literature will also gain from insights discussed in this study. Although gender issues have been studied in business management, gender theories have not been applied to the expatriate spouse literature; therefore, this study brings a different perspective to the concept of trailing spouse. Most importantly, I argue, for spousal adjustment to be positive is the spouse’s readiness for change and the agency employed in that change: the change of location, the change of sense of self, the change of culture, the change of outlook in life, change in lifestyle, change in family relationships and change in goals for the future. Pre-departure preparation would do well to counsel spouses to anticipate all these changes and help them develop coping strategies to cope with the many stressful situations.

The title of this dissertation asks “Does Gender Matter?” This study found a resounding yes along two axes of analysis. Firstly gender matters because of the gendered

structures in our society create the reasons for women to become trailing spouses, either the gendered societal expectations that women are nurturers and men are breadwinners and all the power implications that that brings, or gendered expectations within the structures of the work place that inhibit promotions and success and place the family responsibilities above work responsibilities for women and not for men. Secondly, gender matters because the experience of being a trailing spouse affects males differently to females. Adjustment is harder for male trailing spouses because psychologically they still feel the need to earn money and be a token breadwinner which inhibits them taking on new identities, but easier because they do not need such a strong support system, and they do not feel the guilt of leaving the responsibilities to their families back home.

I am arguing that by using a gendered lens on a problem like adaptation of trailing spouses, a better understanding can be found as to WHY things happen rather than reporting on how they happen. A need to go home may have nothing to do with the place or the job, or the lack of training but a need to look after elderly parents, or be closer to grandchildren. A reason to stay may not be because spouses adapt, but because they want their children to finish high school at an international school or they do not want to go back to working in a corporate world. The data I collected from the trailing spouses gave a much more nuanced insight into the process of adaptation. It is not a quantifiable concept, but a process of adjustments that sometimes spouses cope with and sometimes they do not. What is needed is more qualitative research to understand more clearly these complex ideas.

Limitations

One of the limitations in this study is the low number of male spouse interviewees, particularly in Kuala Lumpur. Although there were other male trailing spouses that I located, they were either not American or were not spouses of international company transferees. Also not one of the male trailing spouses had given up a career to relocate overseas therefore it was difficult to compare motivations with female trailing spouses who had given up careers to relocate.

Since security has tightened in almost every establishment, human resource managers, Chambers of Commerce and embassies now do not publish names or contact information to outsiders, making it difficult to be introduced to probably the least adapted people. The spouses that were integrated into the host community, or were not integrated into any community, particularly those without children at the location were much more difficult to recruit and interview.

Spending only a relatively short period of time at each location I was not able to study temporal factors affecting adaptation. Winter weather in Brussels was cited as being “a depressing time,” but I was there during the summer months when many outdoor activities were possible. As well as different seasons of the year, religious holidays, length of time at that posting, may all affect data. If possible more research should be conducted at a later date with the same recipients to collect longitudinal data and analyze temporal adaptation. Only comparing two locations can not lead to generalizations, but similar research at different sites at a later date could lead to a better overview.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Abe, H. and R. I. Wiseman (1983). "A Cross-Cultural Confirmation of the Dimensions of Intercultural Effectiveness." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **7**: 53-68.
- Adler, N. J. (1987). "Pacific Basin Managers: A Gaijin, not a Woman." Human Resource Management **26**(2): 169-192.
- Adler, N. J. (2001). International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior. Cincinnati, South-Western College Publishing.
- Adler, N. J. (2002). From Boston to Beijing: Managing With a World View. Cincinnati, South Western.
- Adler, N. J. (2007). International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior. Mason, Thompson.
- Ali, A., K. Van der Zee, et al. (2003). "Determinants of Intercultural Adjustment Among Expatriate Spouses." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **27**: 563-580.
- Allen, N. J. and J. P. Rushton (1983). "Personality Characteristics of Community Mental Health Volunteers: A Review." Journal of Voluntary Action Research **12**: 36-49.
- Anderson, G. (1974). Networks of Contact: The Portuguese and Toronto. Ontario, Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Angrosino, M. V. (1999). The Culture Concept and Applied Anthropology. The Unity of Theory and Practice in Anthropology: Rebuilding a Fractured Synthesis. C. E.Hill and M. L. Baba, NAPA Bulletin 18.
- Anthis, K. and J. C. LaVoie (2006). "Readiness to Change: A longitudinal Study of Changes in Adult Identity." Journal of Research in Personality **40**(2): 209-219.
- Argyle, M. and A. Kendon (1967). The Experimental Analysis of Social Performance. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. L. Berkowitz. New York, Academic Press. **3**: 55-98.
- Arieli, D. (2007). "The Task of Being Content: Expatriate Wives in Beijing, Emotional Work and Patriarchal Bargain." Journal of International Women's Studies **8**(4): 18-31.
- Aronson, E. (1991). How to Change Behavior. How People Change: Inside and Outside Therapy. R. C. Curtis and G. Stricker. New York, Plenum Press.

Arthur, W. J. and W. Bennett (1995). "The International Assignee: The Relative Importance of Factors Perceived to Contribute to Success." Personnel Psychology **48**: 99-114.

Ashamalla, M. H. and M. Crocitto (1997). "Easing Entry and Beyond: Preparing Expatriates and Patriates for Foreign Assignment Success." International Journal of Commerce and Management **7**(2): 106-114.

Aspinwall, L. G. and S. E. Taylor (1997). "A Stitch in Time: Self-Regulation and Proactive Coping." Psychological Bulletin **121**: 417-436.

Assagioli, R. (1965/2000). Psychosynthesis: A Collection of Basic Writings. Hadley, Synthesis Center.

Babbie, E. (2002). The Basics of Social Research. Belmont, Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

Baca Zinn, M. (1990). "Family, Feminism and Race in America." Gender and Society **4**: 68-82.

Baeten, G. (2004). The Old Elites in a New City: Restructuring the Leopold Quarter and the Europeanization of Brussels. The Globalized City: economic restructuring and social polarization in European cities. F. Moulaert, A. Rodríguez and E. Swyngedouw. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Baker, J. C. and J. M. Ivancevich (1971). "The Assignment of American Executives Abroad: Systematic, Haphazard, or Chaotic?" California Management Review **13**(3): 39-41.

Barth, E. A. T. and D. L. Noel (1972). "Conceptual Frameworks for the Analysis of Race Relations: An Evaluation." Social Forces **50**(3): 333-348.

Beaverstock, J. (1991). "Skilled International Labor Migration: An Analysis of the Geography of International Secondments within Large Accountancy Firms." Environment and Planning A **23**: 1133-46.

Beaverstock, J. V. (2002). "Transnational Elites in Global Cities: British Expatriates in Singapore's Financial District." Geoforum **33**(4): 525-538.

Beaverstock, J. V. (2003). "Transnational Elite Communities in Global Cities: Connectivities, Flows and Networks." Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network Research Bulletin **63**.

Beck, M. (1997). Breaking Point: Why Women Fall Apart and How They Can Re-create Their Lives. New York, Crown.

- Belkin, L. (2007). The Opt-Out Revolution. The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender. D. B. Grusky and S. Szelenyi. Boulder, Westview Press.
- Bellas, M. L. (1992). "The Effects of Marital Status and Wives' Employment on the Salaries of Faculty Men: The (House) Wife Bonus." Gender and Society 6: 609-22.
- Ben-Sira, Z. (1997). Immigration, Stress, and Readjustment. Westport, Praeger.
- Berk, S. F. (1985). The Gender Factory: Appointment of Work in American Households. New York, Plenum.
- Bernard, J. (1992). The Good Provider Role: Its Rise and Fall. Men's Lives. M. S. Kimmel and M. S. Messner. New York, Macmillan Publishing: 203-21.
- Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation. Acculturation: Theory, Models and some New Findings. A. M. Padilla. Boulder, Westview: 9-25.
- Berry, J. W. (1984). Cultural Relations in Plural Societies. Groups in Contact. N. Miller and M. Brewer. New York, Academic Press.
- Bhaskar-Shrinivas, P., D. Harrison, et al. (2005). "Input-based and Time-based Models of International Adjustment: Meta-analytic evidence and theoretical extensions." Academy of Management Journal 48: 257-281.
- Bianchi, S. M., J. P. Robinson, et al. (2006). Changing Rhythms of American Family Life. New York, Russell Sage.
- Bielby, W. T. and D. D. Bielby (1992). "I Will Follow Him: Family Ties, Gender-Role Beliefs, and Reluctance to Relocate for a Better Job." American Journal of Sociology 97(5): 1241-67.
- Black, J. S. (1988). "Work Role Transitions: A Study of American Expatriate Managers in Japan." Journal of International Business Studies 19: 277-294.
- Black, J. S. and H. B. Gregersen (1991). "Antecedents to Cross Cultural Adjustment for Expatriates in Pacific Rim Assignments." Human Relations 44(5): 497-515.
- Black, J. S. and H. B. Gregersen (1991). "The Other Half of the Picture: Antecedents of Spouse Cross-Cultural Adjustment." Journal of International Business Studies 22(3): 461-477.
- Black, J. S., H. B. Gregersen, et al. (1992). Global Assignments: Successfully Expatriating and Repatriating International Managers. San Francisco, CA, Jossey Bass.

- Black, J. S., H. B. Gregersen, et al. (1999). Globalizing People Through International Assignments. New York, Addison-Wesley, Longman.
- Black, J. S. and M. Mendenhall (1990). "Cross-Cultural Training Effectiveness: A Review and a Theoretical Framework for Future Research." Academy for Management Review **January**: 113-136.
- Black, J. S. and M. Mendenhall (1991). "The U-Curve Adjustment Hypothesis Revisited: A Review and Theoretical Framework." Journal of International Business Studies **22**(2): 225-247.
- Black, J. S., M. Mendenhall, et al. (1991). "Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment: An Integration of Multiple Theoretical Perspectives." Academy of Management Review **16**(2): 291-317.
- Black, J. S. and G. K. Stephens (1989). "The Influence of the Spouse on American Expatriate Adjustment and Intent to Stay in Pacific Rim Overseas Assignments." Journal of Management **15**(4): 529-544.
- Blair-Loy, M. (2003). Competing Devotions: Career and Family among Women Executives. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Bochner, S. (1972). Problems in Culture Learning. Overseas Students in Australia. S. Bochner and P. Wicks. Sydney, University of New South Wales Press: 65-81.
- Bochner, S. (1986). "Coping with Unfamiliar Cultures: Adjustment or Culture Learning." Australia Journal of Psychology **38**: 347-358.
- Bolton, M. K. (2000). The Third Shift: Managing Hard Choices in Our Careers, Homes, and Lives as Women. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a Theory of Practice. London, Cambridge University Press.
- Bourhis, R. Y., L. C. Moise, et al. (1997). "Towards an Interactive Acculturation Model: A Social Psychological Approach." International Journal of Psychology **32**(6): 369-386.
- Boyd, M. (1989). "Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas." International Migration Review **23**(3): 638-70.
- Boyle, P. and K. Halfacree (1995). "Service Class Migration in England and Wales 1980-81: Identifying Gender Specific Mobility Patterns." Regional Studies **29**: 43-57.
- Brescoll, V. L. and E. L. Uhlmann (2005). "Attitudes Towards Traditional and Nontraditional Parents." Psychology of Women Quarterly **29**: 436-445.

Brett, J. M., L. Stroh, et al. (1992). What is it Like Being a Dual-Career Manager in the 1990s? Work and Family. S. Zedeck. San Francisco Jossey-Bass.

Brett, J. M. and L. K. Stroh (1995). "Willingness to Relocate Internationally." Human Resource Management **34**(3): 405-425.

Breyspraak, L. M. (1984). Development of Self in Later Life. Boston, Little, Brown and Company.

Brienes, W. (1986). "The 1950s: Gender and Some Social Science." Sociological Inquiry **56**: 69-92.

Briody, E. K. and J. B. Chrisman (1991). "Cultural Adaptation on Overseas Assignments." Human Organization **50**(3): 264-282.

Briscoe, D. R. and R. S. Schuler (2004). International Human Resource Management. New York, Routledge.

Brown, W. O. (1934). Culture Contact and Race Conflict. Race and Culture Contacts. E. B. Reuter. London, McGraw-Hill: 34-37.

Budig, M. J. (2002). "Male Advantage and the Gender Composition of Jobs: Who Rides the Glass Elevator?" Social Problems **49**: 258-77.

Budig, M. J. and P. England (2001). "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." American Sociological Review **66**(2): 204.

Bunnell, T., P. A. Barter, et al. (2002). "Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan Area: A Globalizing City-Region." Cities **19**(5): 357-370.

Burke, P. J. (1991). "Identity Processes and Social Stress." American Sociological Review **56**: 836-849.

Burnam, M. A., C. A. Telles, et al. (1987). "Measurement of Acculturation in a Community Population of Mexican Americans." Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences **9**(2): 105-130.

Caligiuri, P. M. and I. Tarique (2006). International Assignee Selection and Cross-Cultural Training and Development. Handbook of Research in International Human Resource Management. G. K. Stahl and I. Bjorkman. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

Caligiuri, P. M., M. A. Hyland, et al. (1998). "Testing a Theoretical Model for Examining the Relationship Between Family Adjustment and Expatriates' Work Adjustment." Journal of Applied Psychology **83**(4): 598-614.

Caligiuri, P. M., A. Joshi, et al. (1999). "Factors Influencing the Adjustment of Women on Global Assignments." International Journal of Human Resource Management **10**: 163-179.

Caligiuri, P. M., J. Phillips, et al. (2001). "The Theory of Met Expectations Applied to Expatriate Adjustment: The Role of Cross-Cultural Training." International Journal of Human Resource Management **12**(3): 372-387.

Campisi, P. J. (1947). A scale for Measurement of Acculturation. Psychology. Chicago, University of Chicago.

Carlo, G., M. A. Okun, et al. (2005). "The Interplay of Traits and Motives on Volunteering: Agreeableness, Extraversion and Prosocial Value Motivation." Personality and Individual Differences **38**(6): 1293-1305.

Carlson, C. (1990). Perspectives on the Family. History, Class and Feminism. Belmont, Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Charles, S. T. and L. L. Carstensen (2010). "Social and Emotional Aging." Annual Review of Psychology **61**(2010): 383-409.

Church, A. (1982). "Sojourner Adjustment." Psychological Bulletin **91**(3): 540-572.

Cohen, E. (1977). "Expatriate Communities." Current Sociology/ Sociologie Contemporaine **24**(3): 5-133.

Cohen, S. and G. McKay (1984). Social Support, Stress, and the Buffering Hypothesis: An Empirical and Theoretical Analysis. Handbook of Psychology and Health. A. Baum., J. E. Singer and S. Taylor. Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum. **4**.

Cohen, S. and T. A. Wills (1985). "Stress, Social Support and the Buffering Hypothesis." Psychological Bulletin **98**(2): 310-357.

Cole, N. D. (2009). Expatriate Accompanying Partners: The Males Speak. Proceedings of the Australia and New Zealand International Business Academy (ANZIBA) Annual Conference, June 2009, Brisbane, Australia.

Cole, N. D. (2010). "Managing Global Talent." International Journal of Human Resource Management **in press**.

Coltrane, S. (1996). Family Man. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Coltrane, S. (1998). Gender and Families. Newbury Park, Pine Forge Press.

Coltrane, S. (2000). Household Labor and the Routine Production of Gender. The Gendered Society Reader. M. S. Kimmel. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 167-187.

Connell, R. W. (2000). The Men and the Boys. Cambridge, Polity.

Cooke, T. and A. Bailey (1999). The Effect of Family Migration, Migration History and Self Selection on Married Women's Labour Market Achievement. Migration and Gender in the Developed World. P. Boyle and K. Halfacree. London, Routledge: 102-113.

Cooke, T. J. (2003). "Family Migration and the Relative Earnings of Husbands and Wives." Annals of the Association of American Geographers **93**(2): 338-349.

Copeland, A. P. (2003). Many Women, Many Voices: A Study of Accompanying Spouses Around the World. Newark, NJ, Prudential Financial.

Copeland, A. P. (2004). Many Expatriates, Many Voices: Study of Accompanying Spouses and Partners Relocating to the U.S.A. Newark, NJ, Prudential Financial.

Copeland, A. P. and S. K. Norell (2002). "Spousal Adjustment on International Assignment: The Role of Social Support." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **26**(3): 255-272.

Copeland, L. and L. Griggs (1985). Going International. New York, Random House.

Corbin, J. and A. Strauss (2007). Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Corporate_Leadership_Council (2002). Expatriate Programs: Staff Development. Arlington VA, Corporate Executive Board.

Correll, S. J., S. Benard, et al. (2007). "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" The American Journal of Sociology **112**(5): 1297-1338.

Crittenden, A. (2001). The Price of Motherhood. New York, Metropolitan Books.

Crompton, R. (1999). The Decline of the Male Breadwinner: Explanations and Interpretations. Restructuring Gender Relations and Employment: The Decline of the Male Breadwinner. R. Crompton. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1-25.

Cross, S. E. (1995). "Self Construals, Coping, and Stress in Cross-Cultural Adaptation." Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology **26**(6): 673-697.

De Verthelyi, R. F. (1995). "International Students' Spouses: Invisible Sojourners in the Culture Shock Literature." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **19**(3): 387-411.

Deutsch, F. M., J. Roska, et al. (2003). "How Gender Counts When Couples Count Their Money." Sex Roles **48**(7/8).

DeVault, M. (1990). Conflict Over Housework: A Problem that (Still) has No Name. Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change. L. Kriesberg. Greenwich, CT, JAI Press.

Dewey, J. (1896). "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology." Psychological Review **3**: 357-370.

Dex, S. (1987). Women's Occupational Mobility: A Lifetime Perspective. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Di Leonardo, M. (1987). "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families and the Work of Kinship." Signs **12**: 440-453.

Dick, H. and P. Rimmer (1998). "Beyond the Third World City: The New Urban Geography of Southeast Asia." Urban Studies **35**(12): 2303-2321.

Dowling, P. J. and D. E. Welch (2004). International Human Resource Management: Managing People in a Multinational Context. Florence, KY, South-Western.

Drnevich, P. (2004). The Role of Cultural Distance in International Negotiations. Strategic Management. West Lafayette, Purdue.

Duffy, R. D. and B. J. Dik (2009). "Beyond the Self: External Influences in the Career Development Porcess." The Career Development Quarterly **58**(1): 29-43.

Duncan, O. D. and S. Lieberman (1959). "Ethnic Segregation and Assimilation." The American Journal of Sociology **64**(4): 364-374.

Eagly, A. (1987). Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social Role Interpretation. Hillsdale, Erlbaum.

Elmer, D. (2002). Cross-Cultural Connections. Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press.

Erikson, E. H. (1974). Dimensions of a New Identity. New York, Norton.

Espino, C. M. (1991). Trauma and Adaptation: The Case of Central American Children. Refugee Children: Theory, Research, and Services. R. L. Ahearn and J. L. Athey. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press: 106-24.

Etaugh, C. and C. Moss (2001). "Attitudes of Employed Women Towards Parents Who Choose Full-Time or Part-Time Employment Following their Child's Birth." Sex Roles **44**: 611-619.

- Evans, P., V. Pucik, et al. (2002). The Global Challenge: Frameworks for International Human Resource Management. New York, McGraw-Hill.
- Faist, T. (2000). The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Fechter, A. M. (2005). "The 'Other' Stares Back: Experiencing Whiteness in Jakarta." Ethnography **6**: 87-99.
- Fechter, A. M. (2007). Transnational Lives and their Boundaries: Expatriates in Jakarta, Indonesia. Aldershot, Ashgate.
- Feld, S. (1984). "The Structured Use of Personal Associates." Social Forces **62**: 640-52.
- Feldman, D. C. and H. B. Thompson (1993). "Expatriation, Repatriation, and Domestic Geographical Relocation: An Empirical Investigation of Adjustment to New Job Assignments." Journal of International Business Studies **24**(3): 507-529.
- Felton, B. J. and M. Shinn (1992). Social Integration and Social Support: Moving "Social Support" Beyond the Individual Level.
- Fernandez-Mateo, I. (2009). "Cumulative Gender Disadvantage in Contract Employment." American Journal of Sociology **114**(4): 871-923.
- Fernandez Kelly, M. P. (1995). Social and Cultural Capital in the Urban Ghetto: Implications for the Economic Sociology of Immigration. The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship. A. Portes. New York, Russell Sage Foundation: 213-247.
- Ferree, M. M. (1990). "Beyond Separate Spheres: Feminism and Family Research." Journal of Marriage and Family **52**(4): 866-884.
- Ferree, M. M., J. Lorber, et al., Eds. (1999). Revisioning Gender. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Festinger, L. and J. M. Carlsmith (1959). "Cognitive Consequences of Forced Compliance." The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology **58**(2): 203-210.
- Fetterman, D. M. (1989). Ethnography: Step by Step. Newbury Park, Sage Publications.
- Fielding, T. and S. Harding (1999). A Longitudinal and Regional Analysis of Gender-specific Social and Spatial Mobilities in England and Wales 1981-91. Migration and Gender in the Developed World. P. Boyle and K. Halfacree. London, Routledge: 30-53.

- Filene, P. G. (1974). Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America. New York, New American Library.
- Findlay, A. (1995). Skilled Transients: The Invisible Phenomenon? The Cambridge Survey of World Migration. R. Cohen. Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press.
- Fisher, C. D. and J. B. Shaw (1994). "Relocation Attitudes and Adjustment: A Longitudinal Study." Journal of Organizational Behavior **15**(3): 209-224.
- Folkman, S., M. Chesney, et al. (1991). Translating Coping Theory into an Intervention. The Social Context of Coping. J. Eckenrode. New York, Plenum.
- Folkman, S. and R. S. Lazarus (1980). "An Analysis of Coping in a Middle-Aged Community Sample." Journal of Health and Social Behavior **21**: 219-239.
- Frank, R. (1996). "Is the Male in Child Care Role Changing? Primary Care Giving Males Demonstrate the Changing Family Structure: Implication for Social Work Practice." Retrieved February 20th 2007, from http://slowlane.com/researchsocial_wk.html.
- Frazier, L. D., K. Hooker, et al. (1993). "Longitudinal Studies of Aging in Social and Psychological Gerontology." Reviews in Clinical Gerontology. **3**(4): 415-426.
- Frazier, P. A., A. P. Tix, et al. (2000). "Testing Theoretical Models of the Relations Between Social Support, Coping and Adjustment to Stressful Life Events." Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology **19**(3): 314-335.
- Friedan, B. (1963). The Feminine Mystique. New York, Norton.
- Friedman, S. A. (1996). Work Matters: Women Talk About Their Jobs and Their Lives. New York, Viking.
- Furnham, A. and S. Bochner (1986). Culture Shock: Psychological Reactions to Unfamiliar Environments. London, Methuen.
- Fusilier, M. R., D. C. Ganster, et al. (1987). "Effects of Social Support, Role Stress and Locus of Control." Journal of Management **13**: 517-528.
- Galinsky, E., K. Salmond, et al. (2003). Leaders in a Global Economy: A Study of Executive Women and Men. New York, Families and Work Institute.
- Gans, H. (1992). "Second Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of the Post-1965 American Immigrants." Ethnic and Racial Studies **15**(2): 173-92.

- GaWC. (2009). "The World According to GaWC 2008."
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2008t.html> Retrieved 09 09, 2009.
- Gerado, O. S. (1991). *The Expatriate Manager's Spouse: The Critical Actor Behind the Scenes*, Governors State University.
- Gergen, K. J. (2001). *Social Construction in Context*. London, Sage.
- Gerson, J. M. and K. Peiss (2000). Boundaries, Negotiation, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations. *The Gendered Society Reader*. M. S. Kimmel. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 118-131.
- Gerson, K. (1993). *No Man's Land: Men's Changing Commitments to Family and Work*. New York, Basic Books.
- Gibson, M. A. (1988). *Accommodation Without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Gilbert, L. A. (1993). *Two Careers/One Family*. Newbury Park, Sage Publications.
- GMAC (2008). *Global Relocation Trends: 2007 Survey Report*. Woodridge, Illinois.
- GMAC (2004). *Ten Years of Global Relocation Trends: 1993-2004*, GMAC.
- GMAC (2007). *Global Relocation Trends: 2006 Survey Report*. Woodridge, Illinois, GMAC.
- Goode, W. J. (1994). Why Men Resist. *Family in Transition*. A. Skolnick and J. H. Skolnick. New York, Harper Collins Collage Publishers.
- Gordon, M. M. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Gottlieb, B. H. and F. Wagner (1991). Stress and Support Processes in Close Relationship. *The Social Context of Coping*. J. Eckenrode. New York, Plenum.
- Grant-Vallone, E. J. and E. A. Ensher (2001). "An Examination of Work and personal Life Conflict, Organizational Support, and Employee Health Among International Expatriates." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* **25**(3): 261-278.
- Green, A. (1997). "A Question of Compromise? Case Study Evidence on the Location and Mobility Strategies of Dual Career Households." *Regional Studies* **31**(7): 641-657.
- Green, D. and N. Diaz (2008). "Gender Differences in Coping with Victimization." *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*. **8**(2): 195-203.

GRTS (2009). Global Relocation Trends: 2009 Survey Report, Brookfield Global Relocation Services.

Gudykunst, W. and Y. Kim (1984). Communication with Strangers. New York, Random House.

Guelzow, M. G., G. W. Bird, et al. (1991). "An Exploratory Path Analysis of the Stress Process for Dual-Career Men and Women." Journal of Marriage and the Family **53**(1): 151-164.

Gullahorn, J. R. and J. E. Gullahorn (1962). "An Extension of the U-Curve Hypothesis." Journal of Social Issues **3**: 33-47.

Guntrip, H. (1971). "The Ego Psychology of Freud and Adler Re-examined in the 1970s." British Journal of Medical Psychology **44**(4): 305-318.

Gupta, A. K. and J. Ferguson (1992). "Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." Cultural Anthropology **7**(1): 6-23.

Gupta, A. K. and V. Govindarajan (2002). "Building an Effective Global Business Team." Sloan Management Review **42**(4): 63-71.

Guy, B. S. and W. E. Patton (1996). "Managing the Effects of Culture Shock and Sojourner Adjustment on the Expatriate Industrial Sales Force." Industrial Marketing Management **25**: 385-393.

Haas, L. (1986). "Wives' Orientation to Breadwinning." Journal of Family Issues **7**: 358-381.

Haas, L. (1991). Equal Parenthood and Social Policy: Lessons From a Study of Parental Leave in Sweden. Parental leave and Child Care: Setting a Research and Policy Agenda. J. S. Hyde and M. J. Essex. Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

Hall, E. T. (1956). "Orientation and Training in Government for Work Overseas." Human Organization **15**(1): 4-10.

Hamilton, S. and B. Fagot (1988). "Chronic Stress and Coping Styles: A Comparison of Male and Female Undergrads." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology **55**(5): 819-823.

Hammer, M. R., W. Hart, et al. (1998). "Can You Go Home Again? An Analysis of the Repatriation of Corporate Managers and Spouses." Management International Review **38**: 67-86.

Handlin, O. (1941). Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Haour-Knipe, M. (2001). Moving Families: Expatriation, Stress and Coping. London, Routledge.

Hartmann, H. I. (1981). "The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework."

Harvey, M. G. (1989). "Repatriation of Corporate Executives: An Empirical Study." Journal of International Business Studies **20**(1): 131-143.

Harvey, M. G. (1995). "The Impact of Dual Career Families on International Relocations." Human Resources Management Review **5**(3): 223-244.

Harvey, M.G. and T. Kiessling (2004). "The Negative Effects of Being a 'Late' newcomer During and Expatriation Assignment." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **28**: 551-576.

Harvey, M. G. and D. Wiese (1998). "The Dual Career Couple: Female Expatriates and Male Trailing Spouses." Thunderbird International Business Review **40**(4).

Harvey, M. G. (1985). "The Executive Family: An Overlooked Variable in International Assignments." Columbia Journal of World Business **20**(1): 84-92.

Harvey, M. G. (1997). "Dual-career Expatriates: Expectations, Adjustment, and Satisfaction with International Relocation." Journal of International Business Studies **27**: 627-658.

Harvey, M. G. (1997). "'Inpatriation' Training: The Next Challenge for International Human Resource Management." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **21**(3): 393-428.

Haslam, S. A., J. Jetten, et al. (2004). "Social Identity, Social Influence and Reactions to Potentially Stressful Tasks: Support for the Self-Categorization Model of Stress." Stress and Health **20**: 3-9.

Hawes, F. and D. J. Kealey (1981). "An Empirical Study of Canadian Technical Assistance: Adaptation and Effectiveness on Overseas Assignment." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **5**: 239-258.

Hernandez, D. and B. Rheman, Eds. (2002). Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism. New York, Avalon.

Hesse-Biber, S. and G. L. Carter (2004). A Brief History of Working Women. Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings. S. M. Shaw and J. Lee. Boston, McGraw Hill: 339-352.

Hill Collins, P. (1990). Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment. Boston, Unwin Hyman.

Hirschman, C., P. Kasinitz, et al., Eds. (1999). The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience. New York, Russell Sage Foundation.

Hochschild, A. R. and A. Machung (2003). The Second Shift. New York, Penguin.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's Consequences. Beverly Hills, Sage.

Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations. California, Sage.

Holahan, C. J. and R. H. Moos (1987). "Risk, Resistance, and Psychological Distress: A Longitudinal Analysis with Adults and Children." Journal of Abnormal Psychology **96**: 3-13.

Hood, J. C. (1983). Becoming a Two Job Family. New York, Praeger.

hooks, b. (2000). Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics. Boston, South End.

Hopkins, K. M. (1997). "Supervisor Intervention with Troubled Workers: A Social Identity Perspective." Human Relations **50**(1215–1238).

Hort, B., B. Fagot, et al. (1990). "Are People's Notions of Maleness More Stereotypically Framed than their Notions of Femaleness? ." Sex Roles **23**(3-4): 197-212.

House, J. S. and R. L. Kahn (1985). Measures and Concepts of Social Support. Social Support and Health. S. Cohen and S. L. Lyne. Orlando, Academic.

Hunt, J. G. and L. L. Hunt (1982). "The Dualities of Careers and Families: New Integrations or New Polarities?" Social Problems **29**: 499-510.

Hunter, K. L. and M. W. Lin (1981). "Psychosocial Differences Between Elderly Volunteers and Non-volunteers." International Journal of Aging and Human Development.

Jahoda, M. (1932/2002). Marienthal: the Sociography of an Unemployed Community Transaction Publishers.

- Jahoda, M. (1982). Employment and Unemployment. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- James, S., J. Hunsley, et al. (2004). "Marital, Psychological, and Sociocultural Aspects of Sojourner Adjustment: Expanding the Field of Inquiry." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **28**: 111-126.
- James, W. (1890/1981). The Principles of Psychology (Vol. 1), 8th publication of original work. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. .
- Janssens, A. (1998). The Rise and Decline of the Male Breadwinner Family? An Overview of the Debate. The Rise and Decline of the Male Breadwinner Family? A. Janssens. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1-23.
- Johnson, J. and J. Salt (1990). Labor Migration. London, David Fulton.
- Johnston, D. and D. H. Swanson (2006). "Constructing the "Good Mother": The Experience of Mothering Ideologies by Work Status." Sex Roles **54**: 509-519.
- Kearney, M. (1986). "From the Invisible Hand to Visible Feet: Anthropological Studies of Migration and Development." Annual Review of Anthropology **15**: 331-361.
- Keith, P. M. and R. B. Schafer (1991). Relationships and Well-Being Over the Life Stages. New York, Praeger.
- Kelley, H. H. (1967). Attribution Theory in Social Psychology. Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, Lincoln. D. L. Vine. Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press.
- Kessler-Harris, A. (1982). Out to Work: A History of Wage Earning Women in the United States. New York, Oxford.
- Kimmel, M. S. (2004). The Gendered Society. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Kluckhohn, C. and A. L. Kroeberg (1952). Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. New York, Vintage Books.
- Knijn, T. (1995). Towards Post-Paternalism? Changing Fatherhood: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. M. C. van Dougen, G. Frinking and M. Jacobs. Amsterdam.
- Kogut, B. and H. Singh (1988). "The Effect of National Culture on the Choice of Entry Mode." Journal of International Business Studies **19**(3): 411-32.
- Komarovsky, M. (1950). "Functional Analysis of Sex Roles." American Sociological Review **15**: 508-16.

- Kraimer, M. L., S. J. Wayne, et al. (2001). "Sources of Support and Expatriate Performance: The Mediating Role of Expatriate Adjustment." Personnel Psychology **54**: 71-99.
- Kupka, B. and V. Cathro (2007). "Desperate Housewives - Social and Professional Isolation of German Expatriated Spouses." International Journal of Human Resource Management **18**(6): 951-968.
- Lamb, M. E. (1987). Introduction: The Emergent American Father. The Father's Role: Cross-Cultural Perspectives. M. E. Lamb. Hillsdale, N.J., Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F. and R. K. Merton (1954). Friendship as a Social Process: A Substantive and Methodological Analysis. Freedom and Control in Modern Society. M. Berger. New York, Nan Nostrand: 18-66.
- Lee, E. S. (1966). "A Theory of Migration." Demography **3**(1): 47-57.
- Li, L. and A. Findlay (1999). To Follow the Chicken or Not? The Role of Women in the Migration of Hong Kong Professional Couples. Migration and Gender in the Developed World. P. Boyle and K. Halfacree. London, Routledge: 172-185.
- Linehan, M. (2002). "Senior Female International Managers: Empirical Evidence from Western Europe." International Journal of Human Resource Management **13**(5): 802-814.
- Linton, R. (1936). The Study of Man. New York, Appleton-Century.
- Lofland, J. and L. Lofland (1995). Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis. Belmont, Wadsworth.
- Logan, J. R., W. Zhang, et al. (2002). "Immigrant Enclaves and Ethnic Communities in New York and Los Angeles." American Sociological Review **67**(2): 299-322.
- Lorber, J. (1994). Paradoxes of Gender. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Lorber, J. (2004). The Social Construction of Gender. Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings. S. M. Shaw and J. Lee. Boston, McGraw Hill: 129-132.
- Louch, H. (2000). "Personal Network Integration: Transitivity and Homophily in Strong-Tie Relations." Social Networks **22**: 45-64.
- Lysgaard, S. (1955). "Adjustment in a Foreign Society: Norwegian Fulbright Grantees Visiting the United States." International Social Science Bulletin **7**: 45-51.

Macfarlane, L. R. and H. Robinson (2004). Lessons from Two Fields: A Diplomat and an Interculturalist Converse. Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy. H. Slavik. Malta, Diplofoundation: 39-56.

Mahler, S. (1995). American Dreaming: Immigrant Life on the Margins. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Markham, W., and J. Pleck (1986). "Sex and Willingness to Move for Occupational Advancement: Some National Sample Results." The Sociological Quarterly **27**(1): 121-143.

Martin, C. L., L. Eisenbud, et al. (1995). "Children's Gender-Based Reasoning about Toys." Child Development **66**: 1453-71.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). "A Theory of Human Motivation." Psychological Review **50**: 370-96.

Massey, D. S. (1990). "Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration." Population Index **56**(1): 3-26.

Massey, D. S. and F. G. Espana (1987). "The Social Process of International Migration." Science **237**: 733-38.

McCaughey, D. and N. S. Bruning (2005). "Enhancing Opportunities for Expatriate Job Satisfaction: Human Resource Strategies for Foreign Assignment Success." Human Resource Planning **28**: 21-29.

McDowell, L. (1999). Gender, Identity and Place. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

McKinnon, S. and S. Silverman, Eds. (2005). Complexities: Beyond Nature and Nurture. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

McNulty, Y. (2005). "The Trailing Spouse Survey: Findings of a Four Year Study of Accompanying Spouse Issues on International Assignments." www.trailingspouse.com.

McPherson, M., L. Smith-Lovin, et al. (2001). "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks." Annual Review of Sociology **27**: 415-444.

Mead, G. H. (1934). Mind, Self, and Society. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Mendenhall, M. and G. Oddou (1985). "The Dimensions of Expatriate Acculturation: A Review." Academy of Management Review **10**(1): 39-47.

- Merton, R. K. (1984). Socially Expected Durations: A Case Study of Concept Formation in Sociology. Conflict and Consensus: A Festschrift for Lewis Coser. W. W. Powell and R. Robbins. New York, The Free Press: 262-286.
- Miller, D. T. and M. Ross (1975). "Self-Serving Biases in the Attribution of Causality: Fact or Fiction?" Psychological Bulletin **82**(2): 213-225.
- Mincer, J. (1978). "Family Migration Decisions." Journal of Political Economy **86**: 749-773.
- Misa, K. F., and J. M. Fabricatore (1975). "Return on Investment of Overseas Personnel." Financial Executive **47**(4): 42-46.
- Miser, A. L. and M. F. Miser (2009). Couples Coaching for Expatriate Couples: A Sound Investment for International Business. The Routledge Companion to International Business Coaching. M. C. Moral and G. Abbott. New York, Routledge.
- Mishel, L., J. Bernstein, et al. (2001). The State of Working America 2000-2001. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Moen, P., G. Downey, N. Bolger (1990). "Labor-Force Rentry among U.S. Homemakers in Midlife: A Life-Course Analysis." Gender and Society **4**(2): 230-243.
- Moen, P. and K. R. Smith (1986). "Women at Work: Commitment and Behavior over the Life Course." Sociological Forum **1**(3): 450-475.
- Montreuil, A. and R. Y. Bourhis (2001). "Host Majority Acculturation Orientations Towards "Valued" and "Devalued" Immigrants." Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology **32**(6): 718-739.
- Mosher, C. E. and H. M. Prelow (2007). "Active and Avoidant Coping and Coping Efficacy as Mediators of the Relation of Maternal Involvement to Depressive Symptoms among Urban Adolescents " Journal of Child and Family Studies **16**(6): 876-887.
- Moya, M., F. Exposito, et al. (2000). "Close Relationships, Gender and Career Salience." Sex Roles **42**(9/10): 825-846.
- Muhonen, T. and E. Torkelson (2008). "Collective and Individualistic Coping with Stress at Work." Psychological Reports **102**(2): 450-458.
- Murphy, H. B. M. (1977). "Migration, Culture and Mental Health." Psychological Medicine **7**(4): 677-84.
- Nash, D. (1969). "The Domestic Side of a Foreign Existence." Journal of Marriage and the Family **31**(3): 574-583.

- Naumann, E. (1992). "A Conceptual Model of Expatriate Turnover." Journal of International Business Studies **23**(3): 499-531.
- Naumann, E. (1993). "Organizational Predictors of Expatriate Job Satisfaction." Journal of International Business Studies **24**(1): 61-80.
- Navara, G. S. and S. James (2002). "Sojourner Adjustment: Does Missionary Status Affect Acculturation?" International Journal of Intercultural Relations **26**: 695-709.
- Navas, M., A. J. Rojas, et al. (2007). "Acculturation Strategies and Attitudes according to the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM): The Perspectives of Natives Versus Immigrants." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **31**(1): 67-86.
- Newman, K. (1999). Falling From Grace: Downward Mobility in the Age of Affluence. Berkeley, University of California.
- Newstrom, J. W., and K. Davis (1993). Organizational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work. New York, McGraw Hill.
- Nivalainen, S. (2004). "Determinants of Family Migration: Short moves vs. Long Moves." Journal of Population Economy **17**: 157-175.
- Oberg, K. (1960). "Culture Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments." Practical Anthropology **7**: 177-182.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1990). "Minority Status and Literacy in Comparative Perspective." Daedalus **119**: 141-68.
- Olah, L. S., B. E.M., et al. (2002). Co-residential Paternal Roles in Industrial Countries: Sweden, Hungary, and the United States. Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities, and the Social Politics of Fatherhood B. Hobson. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Olds, K. (1995). "Globalization and the Production of New Urban Spaces: Pacific Rim Mega Projects in the late 20th Century." Environment and Planning **27**: 1713-1743.
- Olson, J. E., I. H. Frieze, et al. (1990). "Having it All? Combining Work and Family in a Male and a Female Profession." Sex Roles **23**: 515-534.
- Ortner, S. (1996). Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture. Boston, Beacon Press.
- Padavic, I. and B. Reskin (2002). Women and Men at Work. Thousand Oaks, Pine Forge Press.

- Padilla, A. M. (1980). Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings. Boulder, Westview Press.
- Papadopoulos, A. (1996). Urban Regimes and Strategies: Building Europe's central executive district in Brussels. Chicago, Chicago University Press.
- Papanek, H. (1979). "Family Status Production: The 'Work' and 'Non-work' of Women." Signs **4**: 775-781.
- Park, R. E. and E. W. Burgess (1921/1969). Introduction to the Science of Sociology. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Parsons, T. (1951). The Social System. New York, Free Press.
- Pascoe, R. (2004). "It Takes Two." Financial Times, Expat Living and Working **Friday May 24th**.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. Newbury Park, Sage Publications.
- Pearlin, L. I. (1991). The Study of Coping: An Overview of Problems and Directions. The Social Context of Coping. J. Eckenrode. New York, Plenum.
- Pearlin, L. I. (1999). Stress and Mental Health: A Conceptual Overview. A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health: Social Contexts, Theories and Systems. A. V. Horowitz and T. L. Schied. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Pellegrini, E. K. and T. A. Scandura (2008). "Paternalistic Leadership: A Review and Agenda for Future Research." Journal of Management **34**(3): 566-593.
- Pellico, M. T. and L. K. Stroh (1997). "Spousal Assistance Programs: An Integral Component of the International Assignment." New Approaches to Employee Management **4**: 227-243.
- Perosa, S. L. and L. M. Perosa (1993). "Relationships Among Minuchin's Structural Family Model, Identity Achievement, and Coping Style." Journal of Counseling Psychology **40**(4): 479-489.
- Pfafferott, I. and R. Brown (2006). "Acculturation Preferences of Majority and Minority Adolescents in Germany in the Context of Society and Family. International Journal of Intercultural Relations **30**: 703-717.
- Pfost, K. S. and M. Fiore (1990). "Pursuit of Nontraditional Occupations: Fear of Success or Fear of not Being Chosen?" Sex Roles **23**: 15-24.

Phillips, S. D. and A. R. Imhoff (1997). "Career Development and Counseling for Women." Annual Review of Psychology **Invited chapter 48**: 31-59.

Pleck, J. H. (1985). Working Wives/Working Husbands. Newbury Park, CA, Sage.

Portes, A., Ed. (1995). The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship. New York, Russell Sage Foundation.

Portes, A. and L. Jensen (1987). "What's an Ethnic Enclave? The Case for Conceptual Clarity." American Sociological Review **52**: 768-71.

Portes, A. and L. Jensen (1992). "Disproving the Enclave Hypothesis: A Reply to Sanders and Nee." American Sociological Review **57**(3): 418-423.

Portes, A. and R. Rumbaut (1996). Immigrant America. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Portes, A. and J. Sensenbrenner (1993). "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action." American Journal of Sociology **98**: 1320-50.

Portes, A. and A. Stepick (1993). City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Potuchek, J. (1992). "Employed Wives' Orientation to the Breadwinning: A Gender Theory Analysis." Journal of Marriage and the Family **54**: 581-591.

Potuchek, J. L. (1997). Who Supports the Family? Gender and Breadwinning in Dual-Earner Marriages. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Price, R. H., D. S. Friedland, et al. (1998). Job Loss: Hard Times and Eroded Identity. Perspectives on Loss: A Sourcebook. J. H. Harvey. Philadelphia, Taylor and Francis.

Pugliesi, K. (1995). "Work and Well-Being: Gender Differences in the Psychological Consequences of Employment." Journal of Health and Social Behavior **36**: 57-71.

Punnett, B. J. (1997). "Towards Effective Management of Expatriate Spouses." Journal of World Business **32**(3): 243-252.

Punnett, B. J., O. Crocker, and M.A. Stevens (1992). "The Challenge for Women Expatriates and Spouses: Some Empirical Evidence." The International Journal of Human Resource Management **3**(December): 585-592.

Putnam, R. (2000). Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York, Simon and Schuster.

- Pyke, K. D. (1996). "Class-based Masculinities: The Interdependence of Gender, Class, and Interpersonal Power." Gender and Society **10**(5): 527-549.
- Raijman, R. and M. Tienda (1999). Immigrants' Socioeconomic Progress Post-1965: Forging Mobility or Survival? The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience. C. Hirschman, P. Kasinitz and J. DeWind. New York, Russell Sage Foundation.
- Rapoport, R. and R. Rapoport (1971). Dual-Career Families. London, Penguin.
- Rapoport, R. and R. Rapoport (1976). Dual-Career Families Re-examined: New Integrations of Work and Family. London, Martin Robertson.
- Ravenstein, E. (1885). "The Laws of Migration." Journal of the Royal Statistical Society **48**: 167-235.
- Reskin, B. F. and P. A. Roos (1990). Job Queues, Gender Queues: Explaining Women's Inroads into Male Occupations. Philadelphia, Temple University Press.
- Risman, B. J. (1987). "Intimate Relationships from a Microstructural Perspective: Men Who Mother." Gender and Society **1**: 6-32.
- Ritzer, G. (1993). The McDonaldization of Society: An Investigation into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life. Thousand Oaks, Pine Forge Press.
- Roberts, B. R. (1995). Socially Expected Durations and the Economic Adjustment of Immigrants. The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship. A. Portes. New York, Russell Sage Foundation: 42-86.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the Adolescent Self-Image. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Rosenfeld, R. (1980). "Race and Sex Differences in Career Dynamics." American Sociological Review **45**: 583-609.
- Ross, K. E., J. Mirowsky, et al. (1991). The Impact of the Family on Health. Contemporary Families: Looking Forward, Looking Back. A. Booth. Minneapolis, National Council on Family Relations.
- Rossi, A. (1977). "A Biosocial Perspective on Parenting." Daedalus **106**: 1-31.
- Rossi, A. (1984). "Gender and Parenthood." American Sociological Review **49**: 1-19.
- Rotter, J. B. (1954). Social Learning and Clinical Psychology. New York, Prentice-Hall.

Rotter, J. B. (1990). "Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement: A Case History of a Variable." American Psychologist **45**: 489-493.

Rubin, L. (1983). Intimate Strangers: Men and Women Together. New York, Harper and Row.

Rumbaut, R. (1991). The Agony of Exile: A Study of Indochinese Refugee Adults and Children. Refugee Children: Theory, Research, and Services. F. L. Ahearn and J. L. Athey. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press: 53-91.

Rumbaut, R. G. (1989). Portraits, Patterns, and Predictors of the Refugee Adaptation Process. Refugees as Immigrants: Cambodians, Laotians and Vietnamese in America. D. W. Haines. Totowa, Rowman and Littlefield: 138-82.

Ryan, G. W. and H. R. Bernard (2003). University of Florida, Field Methods Vol 15, University of Florida: 85-109.

Sainsbury, D. (1996). Gender, Equality, and Welfare States. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Sandell, S. H. (1977). "Women and the Economics of Family Migration." Review of Economics and Statistics **59**: 406-414.

Sanders, J. M. and V. Nee (1992). "Problems in Resolving the Enclave Economy Debate." American Sociological Review **57**(3): 415-418.

Sassen, S. (1979). "Formal and Informal Associations: Dominicans and Columbians in New York." International Migration Review **13**(Summer): 314-332.

Sassen, S. (1988). The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labor Flow. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Sassen, S. (1995). Immigration and Local Labor Markets. The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship. A. Portes. New York, Russell Sage Foundation: 87-127.

Schwartz, F. (1989). "Management Women and the New Facts of Life." Harvard Business Review **67**: 65-76.

Searle, W. and C. Ward (1990). "The Prediction of Psychological and Socio-Cultural Adjustment During Cross-Cultural Transitions." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **14**: 449-464.

Sebald, H. (1976). Momism: The Silent Disease of America. Chicago, Nelson Hall.

- Selmer, J. (2001). "Adjustment of Western European vs North American Expatriate Managers in China." Personnel Review **30**(1): 6-21.
- Selmer, J. (2007). "Which is Easier, Adjusting to a Similar or to a Dissimilar Culture?" International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management **7**(2): 185-201.
- Selmer, J. and A. Leung (2003). "Personal Characteristics of Female vs Male Business Expatriates." International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management **3**(2): 195-212.
- Shaffer, M. A. (1996). "Expatriate Turnover: An Investigation of the Decision Process and an Analysis of the Impact and Nature of Spouse Adjustment." Journal of International Business Studies **27**(1): 222-230.
- Shaffer, M. A. and D. A. Harrison (2001). "Forgotten Partners of International Assignments: Development and Test of a Model of Spouse Adjustment." Journal of Applied Psychology **86**(2): 238-254.
- Shaw, S. M. and J. Lee (2004). Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings. Boston, McGraw Hill.
- Sheldon, K. M. and A. Gunz (2009). "Psychological Needs as Basic Motives, Not Just Experiential Requirements." Journal of Personality **77**(5): 1476-1492.
- Shepard, S. (1997). Managing Cross-Cultural Transitions. Bayside, NY, Aletheia Publications.
- Simmel, G. (1922/1955). Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations. translated and edited by Kurt Wolff. Glencoe, Free Press.
- Simmons, L. C. (2002). "How a Cultural Focus Can Help Keep Expatriates Happy." Practicing Anthropology **24**(2).
- Sjaastad, L. A. (1962). "The Costs and Returns of Human Migration." The Journal of Political Economy **70**(5): 80-93.
- Skolnick, A. (1978). The Intimate Environment. Boston, Little, Brown.
- Smith, D. P. (2004). "An 'Untied' Research Agenda for Family Migration: Loosening the 'Shackles' of the Past." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies **30**(2): 263-282.
- Sowell, T. (1981). Ethnic America: A History. New York, Basic Books.
- Spence, J., K. Deaux, et al. (1985). Sex Roles in Contemporary Society. Handbook of Social Psychology. G. Lindzey and E. Aronson. New York, Random House.

Stone, P. (2007). Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Strasser, S. (1982). Never Done: A History of American Housework. New York, Pantheon.

Suárez-Orozco, M. M. (1989). Central American Refugees and U.S. High Schools: A Psychosocial Study of Motivation and Achievement. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Sullivan, O. (2004). "Changing Gender Practices within the Household: A Theoretical Perspective." Gender and Society **18**(2): 207-222.

Sussman, N. (2001). "Repatriation Transitions: Psychological Preparedness, Cultural Identity, and Attributions Among American Managers." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **25**: 109-123.

Swagler, M. A. and L. M. Jome (2005). "The Effects of Personality and Acculturation on the Adjustment of North American Sojourners in Taiwan." Journal of Counseling Psychology **52**(4): 527-536.

Szkudlarek, B. (2010). "Reentry—A Review of the Literature." International Journal of Intercultural Relations, **34**(1): 1-21.

Tajfel, H. (1981). Human Groups and Social Categories. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Tajfel, H., Ed. (1978). Differences Between Social Groups: Studies in the Psychology of Intergroup Relations. London, Academic Press.

Tajfel, H. and J. C. Turner (1985). The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. Psychology of Intergroup Relations. W. G. Austin. Chicago, Nelson-Hall: 7-24.

Takeuchi, R. and J. M. Hannon (1996). Antecedents of Expatriate Spouse Adjustment: An Analysis of Japanese Spouses in the U.S. Purdue University, Center for International Business Education and Research.

Takeuchi, R., S. Yun, et al. (2002). "An Examination of Crossover and Spillover Effects of Spousal and Expatriate Cross-cultural Adjustment on Expatriate Outcomes." Journal of Applied Psychology **87**: 655-666.

Taylor, S., N. K. Napier, et al. (2002). "Women in Global Business." International Journal of Human Resource Management **13**(5): 739-742.

Teague, B. W. (1976). Selecting and Orienting Staff for Overseas Service. New York, The Conference Board.

Thoits, P. A. (1986). "Social Support as Coping Assistance." Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology **54**(4): 416-423.

Thoits, P. A. (1995). "Stress, Coping and Social Support Processes: Where Are We? What Next?" Journal of Health and Social Behavior **Extra Issue**: 53-79.

Thoits, P. A. and L. Hewitt (2001). "Volunteer Work and Well Being." Journal of Health and Social Behavior **42**(2): 115-131.

Thompson, C. J. and S. K. Tambyah. (1999). "Trying to Be Cosmopolitan." Journal of Consumer Research **26**: 214-242.

Thompson, L. (1995). "Conceptualizing Gender in Marriage: The Case of Marital Care." Journal of Marriage and the Family **55**: 557-569.

Tihanyi, L., D. A. Griffith, et al. (2005). "The Effect of Cultural Distance on Entry Mode Choice, international Diversification and MNE Performance: A Meta-Analysis." Journal of International Business Studies **36**.

Torbiorn, I. (1982). Living Abroad: Personal Adjustment and Personnel Policy in the Overseas Setting. New York, Wiley.

Trager, L. (1987). "Living Abroad: Cross-Cultural Training for Families." Practicing Anthropology **9**(3): 5-11.

Treas, J. and E. D. Widmer (2000). "Married Women's Employment over the Life Course: Attitudes in Cross-National Perspective." Social Forces **78**(4): 1409-1436.

Triandis, H. C. (1989). "The Self and Social Behaviour In Differing Cultural Contexts." Psychological Review **96**: 506-520.

Triandis, H. C. (1995). Individualism and Collectivism. Boulder, Westview Press.

Tsetsura, K. (2007). Discipline and Control in Negotiating Female and Professional identities in Public Relations. 2007 ICA Conference. San Francisco, ICA.

Tucker, M. F. (1973). Improving Cross-cultural Training and Measurement of Cross-Cultural Learning. Denver, Center for Research and Education.

Tucker, M. F., R. Bonial, et al. (2004). "The Definition, Measurement, and Prediction of Intracultural Adjustment and Job Performance among Corporate Expatriates." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **28**: 221-251.

Tung, R. L. (1981). "Selection and Training of Personnel for Overseas Assignments." Columbia Journal of World Business **16**(1): 68-78.

- Tung, R. L. (1998). "American Expatriates Abroad: From Neophytes to Cosmopolitans." Journal of World Business **33**(2): 125-145.
- Turner, R. H. (1978). "The Role and the Person." American Journal of Sociology **84**(1): 1-23.
- Tyler, D. and H. Stokes (2008). "Constructing Identities: Young People's perspectives on Life and career." International Journal of Interdisciplinary Sciences **2**(1).
- Tzeng, R. (1995). "International Labor Migration Through Multinational Enterprises." International Migration Review **29**(1): 139-154.
- Underwood, P. W. (2000). Social Support: The Promise and Reality. Handbook of Stress, Coping and Health B. H. Rice. Newbury Park, Sage.
- van Oudenhoven, J. P., K. I. van der Zee, et al. (2001). "Successful Adaptation Strategies According Expatriates." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **25**: 467-482.
- Vega, W. A., E. L. Khoury, et al. (1991). "Cultural Conflicts and Problem Behaviors of Latino Adolescents in Home and School Environments." Journal of Community Psychology **23**: 167-179.
- Vertovec, S. (1999). "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism." Ethnic and Racial Studies **22**(2): 447-462.
- Walzer, S. (1997). "Contextualizing the Employment Decisions of New Mothers." Qualitative Sociology **20**(2).
- Ward, C. and A. Kennedy (1992). "Locus of Control, Mood Disturbance, and Social Difficulty During Cross-Cultural Transitions." International Journal of Human Resource Management **16**: 175-194.
- Ward, C. and A. Kennedy (1996). Crossing Cultures: The Relationship Between Psychological and Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Adjustment. Asian Contributions to Cross-Cultural Psychology. J. Pandey, D. Sinha, and D.P.S. Bhawuk. New Dehli, Sage Publications.
- Ward, C. and A. Rana-Deuba (2000). "Home and Host Culture Influences on Sojourner Adjustment." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **24**(3): 291-306.
- Warner, W. L. and L. Srole (1945). The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Warren, T. (2007). "Conceptualizing Breadwinning Work." Work, Employment and Society **21**: 317-336.

Waxin, M. F. (2004). "Expatriates' Interaction Adjustment: The Direct and Moderator Effects of Culture of Origin." International Journal of Intercultural Relations **28**: 61-79.

Weitz, S. (1977). Sex Roles: Biological, Psychological, and Social Foundations. New York, Oxford University Press.

West, C. and S. Fenstermaker (1993). Power, Inequality and the Accomplishment of Gender: An Ethnomethodological View. Theory on Gender/Feminism on Theory. P. England. New York, Aldine De Gruyter: 151-74.

West, C. and D. H. Zimmerman (1987). "Doing Gender." Gender and Society **1**(2): 125-51.

Wharton, A. S. (2005). The Sociology of Gender. Malden, Blackwell Publishing.

Whitbourne, S. K. (1986). "Openness to Experience, Identity Flexibility, and Life Change in Adults." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology **50**(1): 163-168.

Whitbourne, S. K., J. R. Sneed, et al. (2002). "Identity Processes in Adulthood: Theoretical and Methodological Challenges." Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research. **2**(1): 29-45.

Williams, J. (2000). Unbending Gender. New York, Oxford University Press.

Williams, J. C. (2010). The Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict: The Poor, the Professionals, and the Missing Middle, Center for American Progress.

Willis, K. and B. Yeoh (2002). "Gendering Transnational Communities: A Comparison of Singaporean and British Migrants in China." Geoforum **33**(4): 553-565.

Willis, K., B. Yeoh, et al. (2002). "Transnational Elites." Geoforum **33**(4): 505-507.

Wilson, K. and A. Portes (1980). "Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami." American Journal of Sociology **86**: 295-319.

Winkels, K. M. (2005). A Qualitative Research Study Examining Identity, Perception and Gender in Stay-at-Home Dads. Linguistic Department, Minnesota.

Winter, J. and A. Pauwels (2006). "Men Staying at Home Looking After Their Children: Feminist Linguistic Reform and Social Change." International Journal of Applied Linguistics **16**(1): 16-36.

Wood, J. T. (2003). Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender and Culture. Belmont CA, Wadsworth Publishing.

Wyn, J. and D. Woodman (2006). "Generation, Youth and Social Change in Australia." Journal of Youth Studies **9**(5).

Yellen, T. M. I. and S. J. Mumford (1975). The Cross-cultural Interaction Inventory: Development of Overseas Criterion Measures and Items that Differentiate between Successful and Unsuccessful Adjusters. San Diego, US Navy Personnel Research and Development Center.

Yeoh, B. and L. Khoo (1998). "Home, Work, and Community: Skilled International Migration and Expatriate Women in Singapore." International Migration **36**(2): 159-182.

Yeoh, B. A. A. and K. Willis (2005). "Singaporeans in China: Transnational Women Elites and the Negotiation of Gendered Identities." Geoforum **36**(2): 211-222.

Zarit, S. H., L. I. Pearlin, et al., Eds. (2003). Personal Control in Social and Life Course Contexts. New York, Springer Publishing Co.

Zeidner, M. and D. H. Saklofske (1996). Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping. Handbook of Coping: Theory, Research and Applications. M. Zeidner and N. S. Endler. New York, John Wiley: 505-531.

Zentgraf, C. M. (2002). "Immigration and Women's Empowerment: Salvadorians in Los Angeles." Gender and Society **16**(5): 625-646.

Zvonkovic, A. M., K. M. Greaves, et al. (1996). "The Marital Construction of Gender through Work and Family Decisions: A Qualitative Analysis." Journal of Marriage and the Family **58**(1): 91-100.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Previous Conditions

1a) At which stage of life was the spouse/transferee at the time of the decision to move including marriage, children, parents, family?

1b) How settled was the family in their house, neighborhood? What was their physical environment and resources? What expectations or desires did they have to move?

1c) How strong were their pre-migration social networks, their participation in the community, leisure activities?

1d) How much choice did the spouse have in the decision to move overseas and what factors affected the decision?

1e) What was their employment status, history, education and their attitudes toward employment?

1f) How satisfied were they with their lives? What had they achieved, what long term goals did they have?

1g) How did they prepare for their relocation, personal research, personal contacts, company assisted information, cross-cultural training?

1h) What were their expectations of their move abroad?

2. Culture Distance/Continuity of Life

2a) How much traveling in the U.S., overseas, had they done before relocation.

2b) How much contact had they had with diverse ethnicities, cultures before relocation.

2c) What are the main differences in the physical environment - home, yard, parks, weather, topography, cleanliness?

2d) What are the main differences in physical resources - shopping, schools, transportation?

2e) What are the main differences in social resources - entertainment, leisure?

2f) How difficult is it to communicate with the general society of the host country?

2g) What have been the biggest changes since relocation? How do they feel about those changes?

2g) What are the main things they miss about their old home?

2h) What do they enjoy about the new location that is different from their old home?

3. Receiving Communities

3a) How much contact do the spouses have with the company community, the expatriate community, the host community? Who do they have contact with and for what purpose?

3b) Where did they meet their main social group? What activities do they do with them? Which community are they from?

3c) What factors affect the choice of group that the spouses socialize and network with?

3d) How satisfied are they with the quality of the friendships?

3e) How does the company help to make their lives more satisfying, more frustrating?

3f) Does having an expatriate community help make life more satisfying or does it isolate them from the host society?

3g) Within the expatriate community, do they associate with all the expatriates or a certain section of them- explain their associations.

3h) How do they perceive the company views them?

3i) How do they perceive the expatriate community views them?

3j) How do they perceive the greater society of the host country views them?

4. Satisfaction with Life (adapted from Linn's Social Dysfunction Rating Scale)

a) Self system

4i) How do they feel about their own status, status within the family, within the community? How confident are they about coping with the new environment?

4ii) What are their future goals and how will they attain them?

4iii) How has their philosophy of life changed since they relocated?

4iv) Do they feel they are physically and mentally healthy?

b) Interpersonal system

4v) How outward going are they? Has it changed since relocation?

4vi) Do they feel any frustration or hostility towards others? Why, when?

4vii) Which areas do they feel in control of, which areas do they feel not in control of? Give reasons why this might be.

4viii) Do they feel they have a similar amount of independence or are less independent than before? In what areas, explain why this might be.

4ix) What aspects of living in the new location, if any, makes them anxious?

4x) Do they feel suspicious or a degree of distrust about anyone or anything?

c) Performance system

4xi) How satisfied are they with relationships with spouse, children, family at home, friends? Has this changed since relocation?

4xii, xiii) How do they feel about the quality and quantity of their friendships and social contacts?

4xiv) How useful do they feel, what are their confidence levels, how do they view their status?

4xv) How satisfied are they with the activities they do, - compare with pre-migration?

4xvi) How satisfied are they with their leisure activities – compare with pre-migration

4xvii) Would they like to have more leisure, self-enhancing or satisfying activities? Such as?

4xviii) What community activities do they involve themselves in, would they like to involve themselves in?

4xix) How involved are they in community affairs, on committees, organizing events? What is their satisfaction level with their involvement?

4xx) How financially secure do they personally feel?

4xxi) What coping strategies do they use to deal with stress?

APPENDIX B

CODE BOOK

Previous situation

- previous mobility
- closeness of family
- employment
- preparation for moving
- motivations
 - adventure
 - ready for change
 - societal expectations
 - economic/ambition

Physical environment

- economics
- driving
- housing
- safety
- school
- shopping
- travel
- weather

Host society

- Knowledge of host society
 - Predeparture training
 - Relocation orientation
- Participation in host society
 - cultural bridges
 - Language
 - Cultural “festivals”
 - Cultural values
 - Religion
 - Quality of life
- Services
 - drivers
 - medical
 - home help
 - food
 - customer service

Family life

- company demands
- travelling
- parenting
- relationships spouse and kids

social groups

- in home country
- in host country
- host society friends
 - children initiated
 - church
 - neighbors
 - church
- expatriate community
 - company
 - church
 - neighbors
 - clubs, societies
 - school
 - children initiated

Attitudes to diversity

- global awareness
- comopolitanism
- host culture
- host society
- home culture
 - ethnocentrism

gender

- In the home
 - third shift
 - second shift
- In relationships
 - economics
 - self sacrificing spouses
- Gender differences/host country

life satisfaction

- self confidence
- locus of control
- identity
 - lack of employment
- self esteem
 - volunteering
 - studying

APPENDIX C

ROSENBERG SCALE OF SELF ESTEEM

The scale is a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale - from strongly agrees to strongly disagree. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 High School Juniors and Seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State.

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem. Scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

From Morris Rosenberg (1965) *Society and the Adolescent Self Image*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

The scale may be used without explicit permission. The author's family, however, would like to be kept informed of its use. A letter has been sent.

From the data an independent assessment was made by the researcher using a three point scale consisting of positive self esteem (+a), negative self esteem (-a) and either positive in some areas and negative in others, or neither definitely positive nor negative (a). The comparison is below

Rosenberg Scale

Please answer each of the following questions honestly, and go with your first reaction/response.

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I am able to do things as well as most people.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. I certainly feel useless at times.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. At times, I think I am no good at all.			
1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Comparisons of study's assessment of self esteem compared with Rosenberg test's score

Textname	pseudonym	Rosenberg score	Researcher's score
#FB-01#	Deanna	25	+a
#FB-02#	Reanne	25	+a
#FB-03#	Noreen	20	a
#FB-04#	Rose	25	a
#FB-05#	Nelly	26	a
#FB-06#	Carol	30	+a
#FB-07#	Irene	22	+a
#FB-08#	Alice	25	a
#FB-09#	Jenny	24	+a
#FB-10#	Gloria	29	+a
#FB-11#	Kathleen	24	a
#FB-12#	Kitty	26	+a
#FB-13#	Rona	23	-a
#FB-14#	Abigail	25	+a
#FB-15#	Elizabeth	18	-a
#FKL-01#	Daphne	30	+a
#FKL-02#	Nicola	20	-a
#FKL-03#	Molly	27	a
#FKL-04#	Heather	23	a
#FKL-05#	Michelle	20	a
#FKL-06#	Jessica	30	+a
#FKL-07#	Donna	19	a
#FKL-08#	Freda	26	+a
#FKL-09#	Clare	29	a
#FKL-11#	Norma	26	a
#FKL-12#	Laine	26	+a
#FKL-13#	Rachel	22	a
#FKL-14#	Dorothy	24	+a
#FKL-15#	Jessie	29	a
#FKL-16#	Sharon	24	a
#FKL-17#	Lillian	24	a
#FKL-18#	Jackie	26	+a
#FKL-19#	Kristen	30	+a
#FKL-20#	Diedre	23	+a
#FKL-22#	Lyn	30	+a

#MB-01#	Jerry	25	a
#MB-02#	Reggie	20	-a
#MB-03#	Carlton	25	+a
#MB-04#	Elliot	18	-a
#MB-05#	Earl	25	+a
#MKL-01#	James	28	a
#MKL-02#	Jake	25	+a

APPENDIX D

ATTRIBUTES

Fourteen attributes were identified to be entered into MAXQDA. They were:

Age

Number of years at the location

First move from their home town

Number of overseas postings

Number of school age children

Children attending international school?

Number of pre-school children

Number of adult children

Income/career based employment prior to relocation

Stay-at-home parent prior to relocation

Volunteer participation (scale 0-3)

Language fluency (scale 0-3)

Rosenberg score (0-30)

Pre-departure training (scale 0-3)

VITA

ANNE M. BRASEBY

November 18, 1951	Born, Doncaster, Yorkshire, England
1971-1975	B.Ed. Mathematics University of Southampton Southampton, England
1975-1982	Primary school teacher Sussex, England
1982-1996	International school teacher Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania Cairo, Egypt Beijing, China
1996-1997	M.A. Education University of Colorado Boulder, CO
1997-2001	International school teacher Jakarta, Indonesia Sao Paulo, Brazil
2001-2003	Teaching English as a second language Sao Paulo, Brazil
2003-2006	Presidential Teaching Assistantship M.A. Comparative Sociology Florida International University Miami, Florida
2006-2010	Doctoral Candidate in Comparative Sociology Florida International University Miami, FL

PRESENTATIONS

Adaptation of Trailing Spouses in the Business World Graduate Scholarly Forum, FIU:

March 2010

Gender in Trailing Spouse Choices International Women's Week, FIU: March 2010

Know Thyself: Understanding Your Own Culture to Understand Others FILC Ocala, FL:

February 2010

Dating Outside the Box Diversity Week, FIU: October 2009

Gender Differences in Trailing Spouses SIETAR Durham, NC: April 2009

Structural Influences on Intercultural Families ESS Baltimore MD: March 2009

Societal Gender Expectations and the Trailing Spouse AABSS, Las Vegas: February 2009

Emigration from the United States: the impact of societal gender roles. U.M. Miami Migrants and Migration Conference: November 2008

My Experience of being a European, European Cultural Club, FIU: November 2008

The Perception of my Reception, Diversity Week, FIU: October 2008