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Ramola B. Joseph
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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

PERCEIVED CHANGE OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A STUDY
OF KERALA (ASIAN INDIAN) IMMIGRANT COUPLES IN GREATER CHICAGO

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

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PERCEIVED CHANGE OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A STUDY
OF KERALA (ASIAN INDIAN) IMMIGRANT COUPLES IN GREATER CHICAGO

In this study I examined, on the descriptive level, the general life changes and life satisfaction of the Kerala immigrants (50 married couples) in the Greater Chicago area in terms of structural variables (age, rural/urban residence, education, occupation, income, social class, order of arrival, and length of stay) and surveyed the mode of structural and cultural assimilation into American society. On the analytical level, several hypotheses were tested to examine relationships between personal characteristics and interactional aspects of life (use of Malayalam, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, children's academic development, and marital satisfaction), and husbands' and wives' level of satisfaction in the United States. I also analyzed the degree of agreements and differences between spouses about their perceptions in objective and subjective aspects of life and the effects of these perceptions on life satisfaction.

The methodology included participant observation of family interaction during community events (activities) in

addition to structured interviews with both husband and wife using random and snowball sampling. A path model was drawn up and the quantitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using correlations and multiple regression. The results of quantitative data were combined with the qualitative data to develop greater depth of understanding of the acculturation-assimilation of the Keralites into American society.

Results indicate that: (1) the Keralites have integrated into the American mainstream structurally, but maintained and enhanced a selective and pluralistic mode of cultural adaptation; (2) marriage partners do not want to give up their own traditional gender roles even though they are changing in decision-making patterns and division of labor; (3) the exchange model is the most parsimonious explanation of the relationship between interactional factors and life satisfaction for husbands, and the equity model is the best fit for wives; and (4) contrary to most studies, where husbands are more satisfied with their marriages than their wives are, this study found that wives are more satisfied with their marriages in the United States.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother, Mercy Periera Joseph, who did not live to see its realization.

V I T A

The author, Ramola B. Joseph, is the daughter of Gurvadese Joseph and Mercy Periera Joseph. She was born on July 11, 1950 in Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

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Dr. Ramola B. Joseph will resume teaching Sociology at St. Teresa's College, Cochin upon her return to India.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

International migration is one of many dimensions of human behavior that has been profoundly affected by industrial development and is likely to be even further influenced in the twenty-first century. It is one of the most significant changes that can take place during an individual's life experience. Today, the volume, direction and composition of international migration have changed so markedly that there is a need to assess its causes and consequences.

A variety of social, economic, political and personal factors, both in the sending countries as well as in the receiving countries, explain the causes of migration. The impacts, both direct and indirect, on sending and receiving countries arising from each type of migration may be very different. The decision to leave one's home country and start a new life in a completely different socio-cultural setting is determined by many dynamic factors, and the very act of migration has both socio-psychological and societal

consequences for those who actually move (Saran, 1977). Migration, therefore, is a dynamic force that compels change. It shapes the character of population change by involving selectively the more affluent, younger and better educated members of the population. It is a dialectic process between the American social structure and the immigrants' adaptive capacities.

In this study two factors are mainly responsible for the immigration of Asian Indians¹ to the United States: changes in the United States' immigration policy and individuals personal choice. The enactment of the 1965 Immigration law marked the beginning of the most important phase of Asian immigration to the U.S. During this phase, the annual flow of new arrivals from India increased dramatically. The number of Asian Indian immigrants grew from 582 in 1965 to 815,447 in 1990 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990). In personal choice, relatives and friends were instrumental in encouraging to immigrate, the people from their own home town. These relatives and friends helped them with sponsorship, money, accommodations and jobs.

However, the social consequences of migration are both manifold and varied touching all aspects of the immigrants' family and community life on the basis of ethnicity, religion, family size and structure, class, skills and

¹ I have used the term Asian Indian to differentiate them from the Native Indians (American) population.

earnings (Appleyard, 1988). Migration is thought to increase anomie, or normlessness, because social support and integration are reduced by the influx of new persons into a community. In turn, the newcomers are rootless and find the stress on their marriages great. It influences family life, roles of marital partners and the status of women. ✓

Relationships which have become established in one society and culture experience change from spacial mobility alone, since the social matrix of the family and permanent location changes, altering its inner unity and consensus. These consequences of the individual are likely to be both positive and negative. The uprooting of individuals no matter how voluntarily from the social matrix in which their life has taken on its meaning is a seriously disruptive event. In the words of Rhodes and Singham (1976):

Uprooting "breaks the thread of continuity" provided by a commonly held social life, and inevitably loosens the ties that have bound a person to the shared values of his community (1976: 417-418).

Thus, relocation could intensify and create tensions in the family or these tensions might be allayed in their new setting. The blend of meanings, perceptions and patterns of behavior that emerge in the new country is different for each immigrant group, reflecting its specific cultural, social and demographic characteristics. Therefore, individual case studies of specific immigrant groups moving into America could provide insights into both the nature and

extent of social consequences of migration.

This study, therefore, focuses on the consequences of immigration and examines what impact (positive and negative) it has on the lives of the Asian Indians, especially the Keralites² living in the United States. More specifically, the study hopes to understand perceptions of change in personal characteristics and on selected interactional aspects of life of the Kerala couples and to examine how satisfied they are with their life in the United States. It also examines whether the similarity between husbands and wives in personal attributes as well as in selected subjective aspects of life (e.g., traditional family attitudes and decision-making patterns) results in greater congruence in life satisfaction for the couples. Examining the couples perceptions and congruence in perceptions might help to understand whether the couples are satisfied with their life in the United States.

I will, therefore, trace the pattern of migration to the United States to demonstrate how changes in the U.S. immigration law ushered in an enormous increase in the proportion of Asians to this country. An overview of the demography of immigration in the United States will help to understand the changes in immigration streams as well as

² Keralites are people who come from the state of Kerala which is situated in the southwest coast of India. The official language of Kerala (Keralites) is Malayalam. They are also called Malayalees.

changes in the ethnic composition of the U. S. communities.

MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Since the 17th century, America has attracted migrants from all over the world. During early period few statutory limitations on immigration existed and entry into the United States was virtually unrestricted (Cafferty, 1983). The nature of the migrant population shifted during the late 19th century and early 20th century when migrants were mostly unskilled workers and peasants who came from Eastern and Southern Europe (Bernard, 1970). When it came to migrants from non-European countries, however, the United States placed entrance restrictions.

The National Origin Quota System of the 1920s imposed immigration quotas and had as one of its goals the ethnic "integrity" of the American population (Burki and Swamy, 1987: 514). These laws regulated immigration from the East but set no numerical limits on immigrants from the West. The McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 superseded previous laws by setting minimum quotas of 100 for each eastern hemisphere country. Within each quota, preference was given to skilled workers whose service and education would be useful to the nation (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980: 91-94).

The new amendments to the U.S. immigration law relaxed restrictions on the immigration of Asians and gave an annual

quota of 100. This liberalization of the U.S. immigration policy facilitated an increase in the number of Asian immigrants. The typical immigrant pattern has shifted from white European to Asian. However, the 1965 Immigration law marked the beginning of the important phase of the Asian immigration to the United States.

The Immigration Act of 1965

Under the new law, while some forms of quota system remained, the justification for it shifted from national origins to skill qualifications. Only the personal merit of individuals and their potential contribution to the U.S. would be considered under this Act, although it retained the clause allowing immediate family members of U.S. citizens to immigrate regardless of their skills (Burki and Swamy, 1987).

Accordingly, there are now three types of qualifications that enable persons to emigrate under regular immigration processes: professional, familial, and economic (refugees under special status). Under the first type, persons qualify for a visa on the grounds that they possess a professional skill needed in the United States. Each year, the Labor Department determines the "needed" skills; thus the list of qualifying professions reflects annual changes in the nation's job market. Under the second category, individuals are granted a visa on the basis of a

particular family relationship to a person who has already been granted status as an immigrant or citizen. Finally, if persons are willing to invest a specified amount of capital in a business in the United States, they may be granted a visa. Given the continuation of a strong demand for immigration from Asia and a favorable U.S. immigration policy, the Asians, especially the Asian Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Vietnamese and other South East Asian ethnic groups were the beneficiaries of the 1965 law.

When the United States decided to alter its selection criteria to attract skilled and professional immigrants, irrespective of their ethnicity, emigration from Asia increased enormously because there was a huge surplus of highly skilled persons that could not be absorbed by its economy. Thus, the United States created a powerful "pull" for skilled immigrants, which was accentuated by the expanding demand for the professional and technical work force in the U.S. economy.

Besides the new selection criteria of the U.S., policies supporting family reunion has been primarily responsible for significant increases in the population of Asians in total intakes (Arnold et al., 1987). Nowadays, about 40 percent of the yearly 600,000 immigrants are from Asia (*The Economist*, 1989). The impact of these new policies on both the skill composition and volume of migration from Asia to receiving countries was rapid and

dramatic. These influences have affected the volume, direction and composition of international migration.

The magnitude of changes in direction, composition and type of migration since the Immigration Act of 1965 has been so great that there is a need to study the Asian groups to understand the complex and pervasive phenomena of this international migration and consequences of immigration. Asian immigrants are now one of the immigrant groups that dominate the immigration flow (Bryce- Laporte, 1980). The U.S. policies have changed the trends and prospects of Asian immigration so markedly that specific ethnic groups ought to be studied in order to understand their acculturation and assimilation into the American society. Their assimilation pattern could indicate whether the different Asian ethnic groups are similar or different from the European and other Asian immigrants in their process of adaptation. Thus, international migration could play an abiding and important role in the processes of socio-economic change in America.

Concurrently, the composition of immigrant population has also changed as a result of the selectivity among certain of the new immigrant groups. These patterns of selective migration are having an impact on the social demography of the country as a whole. In pointing to the interaction between immigration policy and changes in the migration flow to the U.S., this analysis provides a backdrop for studies that examine the specific effects of

immigration on the Asian immigrants themselves.

ASIANS

In 1960 the Asian American population was 900,000 but by 1980 it boomed to nearly 3.5 million and in 1990 the population reached an estimated 7 million (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990). These Asians who migrated to the U.S. in response to immigration laws were professionals, skilled and semi-skilled workers. They are sharply differentiated from the native born majority of Americans not only in terms of race and historical roots, but also in nationality and religion. Despite such drastic differences, the Asians who immigrated to the U.S. generally held a high socio-economic status in their home country (Bryce-Laporte, 1980; Kim and Hurh, 1980). Asian migrants have high levels of educational attainment and special occupational skills that are much in demand in America. Therefore, their pre-immigration social background may facilitate their experience of Americanization.

The social and economic resources the "contemporary" (Asian) immigrants brought with them are simply not comparable to those brought by the old settlers. These "contemporary Immigrants" are quite unlike, for example, the Polish peasants or "men in sheepskin coats" who flocked to America and inhabited the Canadian prairies at the turn of the century (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1927). *Newsweek* (1982)

calls America's Asians as "Model Minority" immigrants.

Their urban origins, high educational qualifications, together with professional and technical skills that are in demand, have turned out to be important assets in the creation of a new life in America for the Asian immigrants. Even those immigrants coming from the Third World have generally lead an urban life in their former country before migrating (*Metropolitan Toronto Survey, 1970*). They were a part of a brain-exchange between post-industrial societies as well as a brain-drain from less developed countries in the Third World (Grubel and Scott, 1977; Glaser, 1978) to the developed countries such as the United States.

These Asian immigrants are a special group of people who decided to leave their homeland to improve their living standards. The immigrants' willingness to endure hardships for political or economic gains, together with the socio-economic background at the time of immigration, set the stage for possible upward mobility not only for themselves, but also for the second and third generations (Chiswick, 1977). At the same time these emigrants are looked upon at home as successful social climbers. Kiray (1976) argues that immigration today is not simply a movement to improve one's socio-economic condition, it is rather a start to new form of life not only for the immigrants but also for those left behind at home.

During the past two decades, patterns of immigration to

the United States have undergone major changes. Today the typical Asian has shifted from Chinese to Japanese to Korean, Filipino or Asian Indian (Barringer and Kassebaum, 1989: 501). Although Asian Indian immigrants form an increasingly large proportion of the immigrants currently settling in the U.S., it is equally important that the lives and the perceptions of the immigrants themselves have been transformed in their new socio-cultural, economic and political environment. Therefore, before exploring these issues, I will outline briefly the history of Asian Indian immigration to the U.S. and describe some features of the Asian Indian community.

ASIAN INDIANS

Historically Asian Indians came to the U.S. much later than other minority groups. The U.S. Bureau of Census (1990) indicates that they are one of the fastest growing ethnic group in America and constitute about ten percent of the Asian American population.

Prior to 1965, Asian Indians, as other Asian peoples, were subject to quota restrictions that limited their entry into the United States to approximately 100 annually. The second wave of Asian Indian immigrants came between 1945-1965, when a total of 1,772 Asian Indians became American citizens (Hess, 1974: 593). Between 1965 and 1970, more than 26,000 Asian Indian immigrants arrived in United States

(*United States Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Report*, 1975: 42).

Asian Indians who come to the United States from India are a very select group of people for matters of their own and because of United States' immigration laws (Saran, 1980: 139). In contrast to the "second wave," the "third wave" Asian Indian immigrants who came after 1965 tend to be professionals, young, well-educated from urbanized areas in India. Since professional education in India is patterned after the British and the medium of instruction is English, the new Act caused an influx of professionals from India who were also proficient in both spoken and written English. The requirements laid down in the immigration Act thus resulted in the immigration of upper middle class professionals and semi-professionals from India to the United States.

Many of these immigrants were accompanied or were later joined by their dependents. The emphasis on family reunification in current immigration policy brought immigrant families together. This resulted in a pattern of chain migration. An immigrant family after acquiring permanent residence and citizenship brings eligible relatives into the country. This means that few Asian Indians entered the U.S. without an established network of kin and friends who can offer initial assistance with housing and daily expenses. Thus family and kinship ties

have been crucial in the migration process.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the Asian immigrant population is as follows:

Table 1:1 - Population Size: Total Asian American Population
(Current U.S. Population³ - 1990)

Total Asian Population ⁴	6,908,638
Asian Indians	815,447
Chinese	1,649,472
Filipino	1,406,770
Japanese	847,562
Korean	798,849
Vietnamese	614,547

Table 1, shows the number of Asian Indians in the United States' population in 1990 in comparison with other selected ethnic and racial groups. Like the other Asians (Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese), the Asian Indians are predominantly an urban population. These new Asian Indian emigrants are geographically dispersed and concentrate in more affluent urban areas of the country such

³ Source: This statistics was obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Census, regional office Chicago over the telephone.

⁴ The total Asian population in Illinois for the year 1990 was 282,569, and Asian Indians are 64,200.

as Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New Jersey, New York, and Philadelphia where other Asian immigrants have settled for employment, service facilities, business activities and education. The largest Asian Indian community is in the New York Metropolitan area followed by California and Illinois (U.S. Census, 1990). Asian Indians have not established as a single block residential enclave. Carlson (1975) compared the immigration pattern of Filipino and Asian Indians in Detroit and suburbs and found that there was a fairly wide distribution of both groups throughout Detroit and the suburbs. He attributed this settling pattern of both groups to two factors: neither group has language difficulties that encourages it to cluster together. Many are professionally and technically trained personnel with the ability to obtain employment usually anywhere in an affluent, urban area.

Though Asian Indian immigrants have distinctive linguistic, cultural and historical characteristics, they are perceived as different from the earlier European or other Asian ethnic groups. In fact, differences of cultures and colonial heritage set Asian Indians apart from the rest of the immigrants. In America they are also physically different in color, appearance and dress from other ethnic groups but similar in certain respects. Thus they represent a complex and fascinating immigrant culture in America. Given this diverse structure of the Asian Indian society,

the question is: How do Asian Indians deal with and perceive their various new roles and statuses in American society?

Along with the physical movement from India to America we can expect new roles for men and women, new problems associated with living in a new country and changes in status upward or downward. Asian Indian immigrants by migrating to the United States affect the life of this country in special ways. And, as immigrants play a role in giving a "new look" to the country, the country in turn influences them.

In addition to the new roles, for Asian Indian couples living in this country, the western life-style has added a new dimension to their marital expectations. In America immigrant couples had to adapt to a new culture. In the process of acculturation the immigrant couples had to play new roles. The culture contact, culture shock, and acculturation did influence differently the values, attitudes, and behavior of men and women since their fundamental roles are also different. The perceptions of values, attitudes and behaviors that Asian Indians bring with them to the U.S. are infused with new content and meaning in the new social setting.

Asian Indians' ethnic identities in the U.S. are shaped by a complex set of factors: their cultural tradition, the specific role demands of their positions in the life cycle and their individual life experience. Moreover, Asian

Indians' ethnic identities vary and are not simply acted upon by external forces that shape their identity. Asian Indians themselves are actively involved in making choices as they develop strategies to cope successfully in the U.S.

Such strategies entail emphasizing certain aspects of their ethnic identities in some situations, down playing them in others. Asian Indian couples may find out that the social skills, activities and values that mean acceptance and status in one society may not easily transfer to another society. The old and new blend in many ways in response to circumstances in the host country. For example, shifts in the division of labor in the family might be necessary and the wife's contribution to the family income might influence her self-concept, status in the family and personal aspirations as well as introduce new conflicts.

However, sociologists have paid less attention to the effects of immigration and on the personal lives of individuals, especially the Asian Indian families. Official records and some studies deal only with evidence of the process of Asian Indian immigration and settlement. The records contain little or no information on various groups of Asian Indian immigrants such as the Bengalis, Gujaretis, Malayalees, Punjabis, Tamilanians, etc. Individual case studies, of specific nationality and cultural groups moving into a developed country, could add new sociological knowledge and lay a foundation to new theories of

immigration, especially to female migration from India. It could determine whether migration leads to greater independence in women or the degree to which migration is thought to offer women a more satisfactory life and improve their status. Much of the sociological knowledge of family and community, drawn from problems of 19th and 20th century adjustments of old immigrants to America, is not appropriate in the twenty-first century and needs revision to understand the effects and consequences of immigration of the Asian Indians.

Therefore, this study focuses on one of the Asian Indian groups living in Greater Chicago area the Keralites and examines their patterns of acculturation to determine whether they have changed and if they are satisfied with their lives in this country. Before I deal with these issues, some preliminary comments are needed to show why and what type of Keralites have immigrated to the U.S. in such large numbers in recent years. I will also describe some characteristics of the Keralites and set the stage for studying Kerala immigrants in the United States.

Keralites

The Keralites, who are the focus of this research, is a distinct ethnic group not only in this country, but also in India because out of a population of 817 million, only two percent are Christians (*Manorama Year Book*, 1990). These

Kerala Christians⁵ are a minority group in their own country. However, they represent 85 percent of the original Asian Indian immigrants to the U.S. (Andrews, 1983). This fact raises the question of why and how did so many people immigrate from this one state alone.

The fact that Kerala Christians dominate the immigration flow is significant for several reasons. First, Kerala has the highest population density⁶ in India. This has resulted in the lowest worker participation rate⁷ in the country and the highest unemployment rate⁸. Second, Kerala is the most literate state in the whole of India with a literacy rate of 70 percent for men and 66 percent for women (*Manorama Year Book*, 1990). Inadequate work opportunities, together with the relatively much more well developed educational infrastructure in the state of Kerala indicates that there are significant numbers of well-

⁵ Kerala Christians are also known as St. Thomas Syrian Christians because they claim their origin to St. Thomas the Apostle (52 A.D.) their historical connection with Syria and the use of the Syrian liturgy.

⁶ Kerala's density is 655 persons per square km. as against the national density of 216 in 1981. Kerala has an area of 38,863 sq. miles which represents only 1.18 of the total area of India. It supports a population of 25 million which is 3.71 of the total population of the country (*Manorama Year Book*, 1990).

⁷ Thirty one percent of Kerala's population was in the workforce as against the national average of 38 percent.

⁸ Twenty-five percent of the labor force in Kerala was unemployed when the national average was eight percent.

educated but unemployed persons in Kerala. Madhavan (1985) suggests that one major impact of the brain-drain from India was to reduce the pressure on unemployment among educated Indians. Third, Kerala's birth rate is a third lower, infant mortality two-thirds less, and life expectancy 14 years longer than the rest of the states in India (*Manorama Year Book*, 1990). These facts indicate that Kerala has a rapid population growth. At the same standard of living much above the subsistence level. Given this situation, and the fact that there are few laws preventing Keralites (Asian Indians) from leaving their country, Keralites emigrated in large numbers.

At the same time the pull factor that attracted Keralites to immigrate was the demand for professional and skilled workers by the U.S.. At the same time relatives and friends were instrumental in minimizing the intervening obstacles of immigration. Kerala has a large number of professional and skilled workers (medical personnel) and because of the social and economic characteristics of this state, the Keralites were ready to take the first available opportunity to immigrate. According to Thomas and Thomas (1984) "the scarcity of medical personnel, especially nurses, provided the opportunity for people in the Kerala state of India, . . . to find jobs in the United States." It is significant to add that the Keralites are mainly Christians because India's Christian population is

concentrated in Kerala state.

Another factor which encouraged immigration is that from the United States point of view the Keralites are not perceived as a "problem." Illegal immigration is relatively nil. Thus the Keralites are atypical population and an underinvestigated population for closer observation and study. This minority group also has not yet been studied though there are a number of other studies on local ethnic groups. Therefore, I have pioneered this study of Keralites (Asian Indians) in the United States and Chicago because of the impact of this growing population in fashioning the composition and cosmopolitan characteristics of the U.S. and Chicago in the next century.

My objective was to investigate whether the Kerala couples perceived they changed as a result of immigration to the U.S., more specifically, it was to determine whether husbands' and wives' perceptions on personal characteristics and selected aspects of life in the U.S. were congruent and whether their degrees of congruity determined their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the United States.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE

Each society constructs its own understandings of reality according to the conceptual frameworks available to its members. What is real in one society is not necessarily real in another. But whether a society's understanding of

reality is accurate has little consequences for social behavior. The American sociologist, W. I. Thomas (1966) made a simple but profound observation that points to the importance of perceptions, including the statement that "if people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." Another proposition of this concept is Merton's (1968) idea of the self-fulfilling prophesy, a prediction that leads to behavior that makes the prediction come true. Again the study of *When Prophecy Fails* (1956), which deals with the question of the difficulties people face when their expectations are not fulfilled. Studying perceptions of this new immigrant group is a useful strategy because people's perception influences their attitudes and their behavior. These perceptions in this study may be related to the difference between "easy" border crossings and long-distance transoceanic travel to enter the United States, with the latter suggesting greater motivation and commitment by Asian Indians and an intention to remain in the United States.

I observed and recorded perceptions carefully. Usually the importance is not the action itself but it's interpretation. For example, in a family it is not what a spouse does or does not do that is crucial, but how the spouse's behavior is interpreted (i.e., he/she is not doing his/her fair share that is important for life satisfaction.) Gender-role patterns, the experiences and perceptions of

Kerala husbands and wives at home, at work and in the community usually differ after immigration. Immigrant groups are heterogeneous, yet internal distinctions are often ignored in migration studies.

Most sociological literatures assume that the pre-migration values, attitudes, customs, cuisine, native languages, family and religious patterns undergo change as immigrants adjust to and develop new cultural and social patterns. Change in marital roles can also be expected to take place on the part of immigrants because of migration and settlement in America. Such changes are perceived and evaluated by the participants. Until the differences in these changes are perceived by the spouses, the validity of separate bases of life satisfaction will remain in question. Therefore, studying perceived change is important because these perceptions should tell us whether the immigrants are satisfied with their life in their adopted country.

This dissertation investigates the relationship between life satisfaction and perceptions of change in various aspects of family life and community by husbands and wives. Husbands and wives have different perceptions about attitudes and behavior. In most studies wives only have been interviewed principally because it would appear they are more willing to be interviewed and are easier to find at home. However, when both husbands and wives have been interviewed (Wilkening and Morrison, 1963) considerable

discrepancies have been reported between husbands' and wives' responses. While the discrepancies between the husbands and wives perceptions could give insights into the family dynamics and probably could be explained by means of the prevailing authority and influence patterns, most investigators have ignored them. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether partners actually differ in their perceptions, or whether they just believe they have different perceptions. In this study of couples I intended to fill that gap about Asian Indians, specifically the Keralite group, in the United States.

I will examine in this study, therefore, the husbands' and wives' perceptions of change and describe the changing dynamics of members of immigrant families and households as they themselves perceive these processes. My concern is to assess changes in the family lives of Keralites and to identify similarities and differences between husbands and wives in their perceptions about these changes. The extent to which assimilation and acculturation has had an impact on ethnic identity and life satisfaction is the key question encountered by these group of people.

Before exploring these issues, I will sketch briefly the chapter outlines in this study. Chapter two will discuss the theoretical perspectives and their pertinence and contribution to this study. Chapter three will present husbands' and wives' perceptions of change in the family and

the Kerala community. Chapter four will elaborate the methodology used in this study. Chapter five will examine the conceptual approaches used in studying the Kerala couples. Chapter six will put the study in perspective and give a demographic profile of the sample. Chapter seven will indicate the relationship between life satisfaction and the socio-demographic and interactional aspects of life. Chapter eight will accent the couples' congruence of perception and degree of life satisfaction. And the final chapter will provide an overview of the results of this study.

CHAPTER II

MIGRATION AND LIFE SATISFACTION

As already noted, a rich body of literature exists on immigrants from Europe, Japan, and China. However, very few ethnographic and empirical studies exist on immigrants from other South-East Asian countries such as Burma, Ceylon, India, Philippines and African countries to the United States. Many sociologists have noted the relative neglect of research on Asian Indians, and one of the reasons cited for this neglect is the small population size in the U.S. But this population has increased during the past decade. The present study was undertaken to fill the gap about Asian Indians immigration and their life experience in the United States.

An intriguing relationship evolved from the two problems under consideration in this study: migration and life satisfaction. Would immigration effect the couples' life satisfaction in this country? What would be the effects? Immigration could have a profound effect on the life of immigrants such as the Keralites (Asian Indians). Their experience in the U.S. is mediated by the diverse cultural beliefs and social practices that immigrants bring with them as well as by other socio-demographic features.

At the same time the immigrants are influenced by dominant American cultural attitudes and behavior. However, the immigrants may not have wiped out the old nor are they fully ready to assimilate or socialize into the new. The cultural and social patterns that emerge among each group in response to migration and life satisfaction, are important insights with respect to understanding immigrant experience in the United States. The more specialized study of the Keralites would also yield the same insights for this immigrant group.

The field of migration and life satisfaction is rich in theoretical formulations. However, there does not appear to be any theoretical work that directly links life satisfaction with migration. Literature concerning "migration" and "life satisfaction" is not linked conceptually with the literature concerning the family experience of immigrants. Much of the theoretical speculation on migration discusses the pattern of acculturation of the immigrants. This study, does so also, but it studied Kerala couples' acculturation pattern with reference to the host country (the U.S.) and their role perceptions within the family setting. Due to the paucity of previous studies and literature on the Asian Indian immigrants as noted earlier, the theoretical framework for this study is based mainly on the migration theories-the push-pull theory, assimilation theory, and cultural pluralism.

THEORIES OF MIGRATION

The main purpose of this chapter is, to present the theoretical models through which to describe and analyze the differential patterns of cultural and social adjustment among the Asian Indian immigrants in the U.S., particularly the Greater Chicago area. This study used three theoretical perspectives to examine the general life changes and life styles of the Asian Indian (Kerala) immigrants.

PUSH-PULL THEORY

Theorists on migration argue about population movement or why people migrate. One of the most prominent theories is that migration is an equilibrating mechanism, redistributing population in response to inequalities in the distribution of social and economic opportunities (Meadows, 1980: 403). The world is viewed as an international economic system, and labor is viewed as human capital (Sung, 1987). Forces within the system become activated when equilibrium is disrupted setting up push-pull factors. The migrant is merely an object acted upon by economic forces. A depressed economy in the sending countries often underlies major migrations to other countries; the migrants are attracted by conditions, such as "lots of jobs", expanding jobs, at the destination. Thus push and pull factors generating migration stem from each of these sending and receiving countries.

British colonial rule left South Asian countries in a state of poverty, rapid population growth and under-development (Minocha, 1987: 359). Push factors contributing to the flow of immigrants were pressure of population on scarce resources, lack of opportunities for advancement, uneven distribution of land and very high unemployment rates among the educated. This population explosion has led to severe social problems - economic competition, limited resources and opportunities, low worker participation rate and high unemployment rate in India. These factors allow migration to take place. In the early 1960s, only a select few made the decision to migrate. The early immigrants from India may fit this structural paradigm. However, why some remained at home while others uprooted themselves, is not explained by the structural model.

When the emphasis was shifted to the behavioral properties of the migrant, migration was viewed as a social process, having some of his/her perceptions, motivations, values and attitudes in the culture system, some within the social system and some within the personality system of the individual (Meadows, 1980: 407). In this approach the migration is seen as "decision-making on the part of the migrants based upon a hierarchically ordered set of values or value ends" (Meadows, 1980: 407). In the case of the Keralites, however, the decision to leave their homeland for the U.S., reflects the disparity between their desires and

their limited resources and opportunities Kerala has to offer.

The image of America as a land of opportunity was for most immigrants a major pull factor. Emigration was a means of expanding opportunity. The enactment of the 1965 Immigration law was the powerful sorting mechanism that filtered the educated, professional and skilled people, and accelerated the annual flow of new arrivals from India most dramatically. The number of Indian immigrants grew from 582 in 1965 to 24,964 in 1984, and increase of about 4,200 percent (Minocha, 1987: 350). Chain migration was speeded up under the second preference¹ and fifth preference². Children were entitled to enter the country as non-quota immigrants. As soon as parents gained status as permanent residents, they filed for their unmarried children. Pull factors seem to be more prominent than the push factors for Keralites, as shall be seen in Chapter V.

At the same time having relatives in the U.S., facilitated the process of immigration and diminished the intervening obstacles. As soon as the first set of the Kerala immigrants were settled in their new jobs and had accumulated resources, they usually brought over their spouses and children, as they became American citizens they

¹ Second preference: spouses and unmarried sons and daughters of aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

² Fifth preference: brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens over 21 years of age.

began to sponsor their siblings as well. In chain migration, relatives and friends usually sponsor and assist in the outward migration. Anderson's (1971) work on Preston shows that family linked chain migration to urban areas was a well recognized form of migration. In the case of Keralites, kin networks regularly assisted in the initial urban settlement, in providing shelter, and in coping with critical life situations in the new society.

One can hypothesize that the strong sense of family ties that reassemble the family members and friends through immigration are rekindled in this country to provide a cohesive Asian Indian community. Push-pull theory helps explain the balance in migration and also provides an explanation for the Kerala immigration to the United States.

THEORIES OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

In the United States explanatory theories of racial and ethnic relations have been concerned with migration and social integration of immigrants. Theoretically, assimilation involves change in the basic structure of two or more cultures that come in contact with each other. These differing structures (Asian Indian and American) must act reciprocally as supplementing each other to create a new culture milieu in which a cultural fusion occurs. The major conceptual frameworks used to study immigrants are the assimilation and cultural pluralistic models.

ASSIMILATION MODEL

The major theoretical framework used to explain Americanization of immigrants is the assimilation model. This model, has been the theoretical bedrock of sociological research on race and ethnicity and the dominant paradigm until the 1960s. According to Park (1921) the assimilation process starts with contact and progressively moves on to competition, accommodation, and eventually to assimilation. Immigrants become integral parts of the larger American social system as soon as they adjust themselves to the values and norms of the dominant group.

Gordon (1964) argues that there are two kinds of assimilation: cultural and structural assimilation. Cultural assimilation (acculturation) occurs when the immigrants or their descendants have undergone extrinsic and/or intrinsic changes from their own cultural patterns such as religious beliefs and practices, ethical values and customs to those of the host society. It is realistic to expect that acculturation would occur first in the immigrants' life, as they make an effort to be accepted into the host society. On the other hand, structural assimilation involves participation in educational, economic and political institutions of the host society. In other words, this occurs when members are accepted by members of the dominant society (Gordon, 1964: 71).

The assimilation theory rests on two basic assumptions

(Newman, 1973:53) that the longer the immigrants stay in the United States, the more they are Americanized along some dimensions of life. The second assumption is that the more Americanized immigrants become, the more they tend to discard their ethnic ties, thus completing the Americanization process. In the older sociological literature the issue of absorbing immigrants and their descendants into the mainstream of American society are known as Americanization (Gordon, 1964; Newman 1973). Americanization closes the gap between immigrants and the native-born majority Americans and solidifies the foundation of national unity (Gordon 1964; Newman 1973). In short, the assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964) assumes that in adjusting to American society all people have to conform to the ways of the dominant group, of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants in the United States.

Assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964; Hirschman, 1983), maintains that ethnic groups are integrated into the U.S. cultural and economic mainstream over time. The distinctive language, culture, and kinship ties of immigrant groups become weakened as successive generations adapt to Anglo-Saxon norms. Gordon also argues that while acculturation of racial and ethnic minorities have taken place to a considerable degree in the United States, their social assimilation has not been extensive. Kitano (1974) suggests that this has been true of all ethnic minorities in the

United States.

Migration literature reveals that different immigrant groups have employed different strategies of assimilation. Blacks have chosen strategies of dissociation, while various white Protestant groups such as the Welsh and Scots have simply integrated. Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Irish have assimilated on a behavioral level, since they were not physically distinguishable and retained few of the distinctive cultural traits of their predecessors (Allen, 1971: 18). Sherman (1961), for example, attributes Jewish survival in America to their techniques of accommodation. Among the Germans and Scandinavians substantial assimilation to the core culture and society also came in a few generations, although some community distinctiveness persists today. By the nineteenth century English Americans were marrying with other British Americans, Scandinavians, and Germans.

Among the Asians, Japanese have followed a basic strategy of accommodation. For example, the Japanese-American family over the course of generations has undergone many changes, bringing it more in line with the family system of the dominant Anglo groups (Kikumur and Kitano, 1976: 56). Exposure to the American system has resulted in changes in such factors such as areas of residence, group size, community cohesion, contact with the home country, and attitudes that have combined over time to change the old

Japanese ways (Kikumur and Kitano, 1976: 58). It takes more than one generation for the home culture to be significantly displaced.

Studies of newly urbanizing and industrializing societies show variations in their degree of conformity to acculturation. The work of Whyte (1943) in the 1930s and Gans (1962) in the late 1950s demonstrates the ethnic inclusiveness of social contact and institutional participation of second generation Italian-Americans. Information on two generations of Norwegians (1945) in the prairie town and a prairie farming community shows that assimilation may proceed at different rates in different spheres, and still the original cultural background may be retained (Allen, 1971). Lopata (1976: 116-117) found:

The old emigration Polish Americans had progressed from the first generation of largely uneducated former peasants living in poor, urban, ethnic neighborhoods to the financially well-off second generation that did not use higher education as a means of upward mobility and thus stayed in blue-collar jobs and life styles, to the increasingly educated third and fourth generations who can be expected to move up the socioeconomic ladder.

The above studies look at adaptation of immigrants as a process in which immigrants modify their attitudinal and behavioral patterns in order to maintain and improve their life conditions in a manner that is compatible with the new environment. Gordon's view of cultural and structural assimilation seems to hold for most European immigrants. Since very few Asian Indians were present in the United

states during that period, no significant empirical research was carried out about their pattern of acculturation or to test Gordon's theory. Only few studies were conducted on Asian Indians during this period, and most of these studies were either historical or descriptive, of Asian Indian students in this country (Singh, 1947; Peterson and Newmeyer, 1948; DuBois, 1956; Ross, 1961; Desai, 1963; Seal, 1968).

However, the Asian Indians who came after 1965 were educated with professional backgrounds, proficient in the English language and from urban centers. This made them quite different from earlier immigrants. The assimilation theory portray the immigrants as passive emigrants waiting to be assimilated into the American society does not seem to apply to the Keralites (Asian Indians) because their pre-immigration background is different from the European immigrants. The myth of the "melting pot" and complete assimilation recedes farther and farther into the distance both in this country and abroad for these Asian Indian immigrants.

Gordon argues that while cultural assimilation has taken place to a great extent, structural assimilation for many immigrant groups has been minimal. Structural assimilation, for example, moving into pre-existing employing organizations, such as corporations or public bureaucracies as well as educational and political

institutions, takes a longer process than cultural assimilation. In the case of the Keralites this assumption is contrary to the pattern observed in the United States. Keralites maintain their cultural heritage because generally they resist change in values and attitudes. The partial cultural acculturation of the first generation did not form protective immigrant communities and associations. At the same time, their high socio-economic status and social and vocational skills make their structural assimilation relatively easy. Structural integration is far more complete among the (Asian Indians) Keralites than the earlier immigrants. At the same time it must be mentioned that these Keralites are the first generation so it is too early to predict anything substantial.

CULTURAL PLURALISTIC MODEL

Perhaps, the model of "cultural pluralism" may be a better fit to explain the acculturation of Asian Indians. The theory of cultural pluralism states that the immigrants become Americanized in time, but at the same time, they retain much of their own cultural heritage. The pluralism paradigm emphasizes the value of maintaining ethnic diversity and co-existence within the American society as a realistic solution to ethnic problems. The pluralism model rejects the notion that inherent virtues are associated with the Anglo-Saxon group. Thus it substitutes the "salad-bowl"

for the "melting pot" concept (Mookherjee, 1984:71).

Glazer and Moynihan (1963: 13-14) observe that:

The assimilating power of the American society and culture operated on immigrant groups in different ways to make them, it is true, something they had not been, but still something distinct and identifiable. The impact of assimilation on the groups is different because the groups are different and also because American society does not assimilate immigrants fully or in equal degree.

They advocated the theory of cultural pluralism to explain American society. Cultural pluralism largely accepted the existence of cultural divergences between immigrants and native-born Americans and among different groups of immigrants and insisted that these differences should be maintained so long as they did not lead to national disunity.

ADAPTATION MODEL

For Asian Indians the definition of an American lies in a pluralistic model. They may see themselves primarily as Asian Indian, believing that the meaning of America lies in the recognition of diversity. According to Hurh and Kim (1984) Americanization does not weaken Korean ethnic attachment, the immigrants ethnic resources offer them valuable resources for an effective adjustment to the host society. Such valuable resources would strengthen their desire to retain their ethnic social and cultural ties. They postulate an "adhesive" pattern of adaptation, progress in

Americanization in many dimensions of life without significantly weakening the intensity of their ethnic attachment. In other words, the Korean immigrants display a strong sense of attachment to the Korean culture, for example, but there is also an adherence to some of the ways of the American culture. Keralites seem to follow a similar pattern of adaptation in the American society.

Cultural pluralism for Keralites means that they maintain their basic value orientations brought over from the Indian society on the one hand and accept the institutional arrangements of the American society on the other. In other words, cultural pluralism for Keralites involves a "selective adaptation" pattern. For them it is a synthesis of what they want in both cultures at the same time a retention of both cultures as separate entities. It can be argued that based on the Keralites high socio-economic status, the Kerala immigrants assimilate easily into the American society. But as Saran (1985: 30) argues, ". . . because of their very strong family ties both here and in India, as well as a deep rooted social and cultural heritage, they would maintain their Indian identity in a strong way."

An examination of the history of Asian Indians' acculturation outside the U.S. in British Guiana (Nath, 1950), in Mauritius (Hazareesingh, 1950), in Trinidad (Klass, 1961) and Guyana (Rauf, 1969) shows such a pattern

of limited acculturation. Klass (1961: 201) remarks towards the conclusion of his study,

It is my contention that the (Asian) Indian immigrants to Trinidad who founded the village of Amity was able to reconstitute a community reflecting their society of origin. ... they had become part of what was for them the alien socio-cultural system of Trinidad. Finally, the community they constituted had to exist within the framework of the larger Trinidad society and its culture. But such a community did in fact come into being, making possible the persistence of major elements of the Indian culture to the present time. Despite considerable modifications Amity today resembles a community of the socio-cultural system of India, rather than a community of the particular variant of west Indian culture to be found among the Negro population of Trinidad.

However, the few studies on Asian Indians done in California (Wenzel, 1966), Central Pennsylvania (Gupta, 1969) and Colorado (Solanki, 1973) reveals different patterns of acculturation in the United States. In the study of *The Identification and Analysis of Certain value orientations of Two generations of East Indians in California*, Wenzel (1966: 135) found,

The East Indians³ in the time orientation, the parents were Future orientated while the students were Present oriented. There was a clear rejection of the Past orientation by the whole East Indian ethnic group.

Compared to Wenzel's study the population of this present study differs drastically. The East Indians in

³ Wenzel uses the term East Indians to denote the Asian Indians.

Wenzel's were more like the European immigrants with little education and from rural areas. The population of this study is highly educated, professionals and they come from urban areas.

In another study *The Acculturation of Asian Indians in Central Pennsylvania* Gupta (1969: 165) indicates:

Changes in various culture components (dietary practices, dress and ornamentations, sources of recreation and amusement, religious practices and attitudes toward dating, marriage and family) are occurring in the direction of Westernization among the (Asian) Indians in the U.S. The study also reveals that these changes are related to various background variables (rural/urban residence, sex and age).

Though I test in the present study some of the claims in Gupta's study, my conclusions are more likely to be different in some aspects of life because the socio-economic characteristics of the population are different. The extent of acculturation of Asian Indians is marginal in studies done outside the United States but studies done within the U.S. show some degree of variation. For example, in the cultural aspects of diet, use of English language, type of clothing and ornamentation, children are highly acculturated but in the aspects of recreations, dating, religion, marriage and family, they were marginal in Gupta's as well as in Solanki's study.

As for the Keralites in Chicago, I will draw my theoretical framework from Hurh and Kim's (1982) "adhesive adaptation" and the theoretical studies of the cultural

pluralism by Glazer and Moynihan (1963). As advocated by Hurh and Kim (1982: 24) adhesive adaptation refers to:

a particular mode of adaptation in which certain aspects of the new culture and social relations with members of the host society are added on to the immigrants' traditional culture and social networks, without replacing or modifying any significant part of the old.

In other words, progress in Americanization in many dimensions may not significantly weaken the intensity of the Keralites ethnic attachment (Kim and Hurh, 1980). This pattern seems to fit the Kerala immigrants for the Keralites associate more with members of their own ethnic group thus strengthening their ethnic bonds so that they can fall back on them in times of crisis.

The Keralites Americanize in certain aspects of behavioral dimensions of life (e.g., clothing, food) whereas in other dimensions (attitudes to marriage and family) they remain Indian. In other words, Keralites adaptation involves external but not internal assimilation. The Keralites' acculturation is primarily functional, they learn enough about the new culture to survive, but most retain their old traditional ways. I would like to refer to this pattern as "selective acculturation-assimilation" because they are selective in their process of Americanization and in maintaining their Indianness. Therefore, as indicated by Kim and Hurh (1980), Keralites use a selective assimilation pattern a gradual addition of Americanization in some dimensions of life without significantly weakening the

intensity of ethnic attachment. Keralites are exposed to both American culture and Asian Indian ethnic community therefore, they rely on both in the process of effective adjustment in the American society. A high degree of Americanization and ethnic attachment can co-exist without weakening one or the other. It is important to note that the Keralites do not resist acculturation but adopt the new culture and society whenever needed without discarding the old. It is the old that provides support and strength in times of crises (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963: xxxiii). This probably is the pattern of "selective" adaptation of the Keralites in Greater Chicago. This selective acculturation-assimilation will remain as a separate category as long as the immigrants maintain strong ethnic attachment to remain Americanized only to a limited extent.

THEORIES OF LIFE SATISFACTION

Having explained the patterns of adaptation of the Keralites (Asian Indians) in the United States, it is germane to find out how satisfied they are with this "selective" adaption process. The immigrants' successful adaptation would ultimately be related to their overall life satisfaction in America. Life satisfaction includes a number of factors such as the American social structure, the immigrants' adaptive capability, their socio-economic opportunities, and their expectations. Thus the primary

question to be answered was if the Kerala couples were satisfied with their life because of the selective mode of adaptation.

I chose two theoretical frameworks - the social exchange and equity theory - to explain the level of life satisfaction of Kerala immigrant couples. Social exchange and equity theory help explain small group relationships in the family literature (Murstein, 1973). Exchange and equity theory suggest that relationships are maintained by the provision of rewards by both husbands and wives.

Kerala couples have to depend on each other because the support network is no longer there to help them in America. In this respect, the nature of the exchange of resources between spouses and each spouse's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the relative benefits and costs derived depends upon each spouse's perception of the on-going exchange (Safilios-Rothschild, 1976: 356). The perception of the nature and extent of the resources exchanged, as well as the satisfaction, is greatly influenced by each spouse's expectations from marriage and from the other spouse. The differential values of exchange resources explain how marriage can be stable when one spouse offers little (only economic support) and the other a lot of resources. Because of the existing gender stratification system and the unequal status of men and women in Kerala society, it would be important to find out how this exchange takes place when

couples immigrate to America.

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Writers in the exchange theory tradition have studied the nature of the rewards in different relationships and the development of interdependence and concern with maximum joint profit, which they see as the source of commitment to a relationship (Scanzoni, 1979). Social exchange theory proposes that each partner would consider the relationship most satisfying when rewards outweigh costs. It predicts that individuals will be satisfied if they are maximizing their rewards. In other words, it implies that the less one's own share and the more the spouses share in family matters such as decision-making and division of labor, the greater one's life satisfaction. On the other hand, exchange theories have also shown how conflict arises when one partner in a relationship is dissatisfied with the exchange achieved and how he/she may even use hostility to achieve his/her end (Scanzoni, 1979). Therefore, the more powerful person in a relationship would get a better balance of rewards over costs. This power could be in the form of education, occupation, income, decision-making, division of labor, or any aspect of life where power needs to be exercised.

One version of the social exchange theory predicts that if the spouses share in the distribution of family work, the

greater is their marital satisfaction (Yogev and Brett, 1985). But in India husbands and wives do not share in their household tasks. Perhaps it is because relatives and servants help in household chores so the couples are able to manage housework and office-work without any problems. In the United States, the wife is employed and there is an absence of support systems, for example, parents or widowed relatives. Therefore, husbands and wives have to share in their family chores and their roles have multiplied and become more complex. Wives are also assuming the non-traditional role of an income producer and husbands have to perform the non-traditional role of child-rearing. The adjustment of both husbands and wives to this new balance of power does not occur easily. These new immigrant family roles may be demanding; the partners will be satisfied only if the rewards outweigh the costs.

EQUITY THEORY

On the other hand, the equity theory proposes that when individuals find themselves participating in inequitable relationships, they will become distressed (Berscheid and Walster, 1969). The equity theory implies that the more equal one perceives one's own share and one's spouse's share in family matters, the greater one's level of satisfaction. It tells us if relationships are not egalitarian, the partners will be dissatisfied in marriage in both dual and

single-earner couples.

Literature on the division of labor reveals that husbands are more satisfied especially if their number of hours spent in household chores is not large. Ross, Mirowsky and Huber, (1983) found that wives who have full responsibility for the housework are more dissatisfied than those whose husbands share some of the housework. Similarly, Pleck (1985) discovered that desire for greater husband participation in family work is negatively related to satisfaction with family life.

In this study, Kerala wives may desire equity regardless of the amount of time that each spouse spends in paid work as well as work at home. Wives may be more satisfied than their husbands when they can also exercise power. For example, in making decisions in important matters such as buying a car, the wife may have a say because she also drives in America. However, when both spouses have a high socio-economic status the picture could be different. For example, if both partners are physicians and have hectic schedule who would do the family chores and child rearing? Will house-work be divided equally?

CONGRUENCE OF PERCEPTIONS

Researchers seem to agree that some congruence between husbands and wives in their life patterns are necessary for them to succeed in life (Larson, 1974). The presence or

absence of spousal congruence has been explained in numerous ways. The amount of consensus seems to vary widely from study to study on the same topic and from topic to topic in the same study. For example, Ballweg (1969) finds that only 23 percent of the husbands and wives agree on "who has the final say in child discipline?" While Ferber (1955) found 71 percent of the husbands and wives report the same figure on the size of the family's income. Few studies have examined in depth the attitudes and behaviors of husbands and wives in relation to their marriages and life in general as perceived by each; and the areas and degrees of "satisfaction" with their perceptions. The wives may perceive that they are changing in the same way; while the husbands may not be aware of their perceptions and think that they are moving in a different direction.

The assumption that both partners in a marriage change and see themselves as changing in the same way even when faced by something as significant as migration is of interest to sociologists and social psychologists and could contribute new knowledge to the understanding of marital relations. Their level of congruity could indicate whether the husband and the wife is moving in the same direction or in different directions. This could help in predicting how satisfied or dissatisfied the couples are with their life in the United States.

There is hardly any literature about the different

aspects of marriage and life in general from the husband's or wife's perspective on Asian Indians in India or abroad. Most Asian Indian family studies concentrate on changes in joint families⁴ due to modernization (Shah, 1974; Hallen, 1982), changes in the economic roles of women especially for dual-earner families (Kapur, 1972; Chakraborty, 1978), and on urban families such as dual-earner couples (Desai, 1964; Ghore, 1968; Ramu, 1977; Srivastava, 1986). But the more personal aspects such as marital roles, distribution of power, decision-making, marital disagreement, marital satisfaction and life satisfaction have been neglected because these issues would appear too personal and possibly researchers hesitate to explore them. In this study I examine spousal congruence because it is an important topic for understanding marital relations and life in general. If couples are happy with their marital life, it would follow that they are also generally satisfied with their life for it is a mutually reinforcing process.

Family researchers have drawn on a wide range of factors to explain congruence or incongruence that they found. Several studies have utilized spousal consensus as a predictor of marital cohesion or adjustment. Katz (1965)

⁴ Joint family as it is called in India (extended family) consists of a husband and a wife, their children the parents of one or both spouses and possibly the brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces of the spouses and they live under one roof, hold property in common and are dominated by male members.

found that happily married couples agree on the meaning of such concepts as "love" and "understanding" to a greater extent than unhappily married couples. On the other hand, Brinkerhoff (1976) found spousal consensus to be only moderately related to marital satisfaction and even then mostly among wives. In these studies consensus seem to represent different forms of family structure. The presence or absence of spousal consensus has been explained in numerous ways.

In this study I sought to find whether the perceived spousal congruence in objective (education, occupation and income) and subjective aspects of life such as use of the Malayalam language, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns and children's academic development indicate a high degree of satisfaction for the couples. It should be emphasized that this is a challenging task measuring satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life because the degree of satisfaction varies from couple to couple.

CONGRUENCE OF LIFE SATISFACTION

In American literature considerable attention has been devoted to factors contributing to life satisfaction (Glenn and Weaver, 1978). Male and female differences in levels of life satisfaction have been linked to objective conditions specific to the marriage. At the same time, there is considerable evidence that subjective aspects of the life

experience are the key to understanding different levels of life satisfaction.

studies on the perceived quality of life have found that personal characteristics, such as age, educational level, income, and so on, account for very little of the variance in life satisfaction and that assessments of interpersonal relationships are the key factors (Campbell et al. 1976: 331). Some current work on marital adjustment in family sociology also supports this position.

The increasing focus on husband-wife differences or congruences in expectations, role performance, perceived self-image, communication and values points to an increasing acceptance of the critical effect these processes have on overall marital congruence (Hicks and Platt, 1970). In general, the more satisfied people are with such subjective characteristics, the more satisfied they are with their life as a whole. According to Campbell et al. (1976) satisfaction is produced by the difference between an individual's perceived reality of the current situation and his/her aspirations concerning the domain.

Since the pioneering research of Hamilton (1929), researchers have examined life (marital) satisfaction from a variety of perspectives (Bienvenu, 1970; Beach and Arias, 1983; Yelsma, 1984a), but few studies have researched the dimensionality of positive and negative aspects of life satisfaction as perceived by the husband and the wife.

speaking on Kerala couples Yelsma and Athappily (1988) are of the opinion that future research on marital satisfaction should focus on Kerala couples living in the United States because it will indicate the influence of American culture on the life of the Keralites.

There is no conclusive empirical evidence that the Kerala couples are satisfied with their life in the United States. Therefore, my approach was to examine their level of satisfaction in this country by focusing on the similarities and differences of husbands and wives in demographic as well as on interactional aspects of life of couples.

In this chapter I have developed the theoretical framework to be used in this study. I have shown that from a cultural pluralistic perspective, the Kerala couples remain "selective" in their mode of acculturation to the American society. The couples' adaptation, however, is structural rather than cultural. By applying the exchange and equity theory, I have pointed out that couples are satisfied if rewards outweigh the costs and if there is an equitable sharing of the resources.

The Western thinking is that the husband and wife should jointly share in the responsibilities if they are to find satisfaction in life. When these conditions are not met, frequently divorce results. Literature on Asian Indians reveals that the Kerala couples do not jointly share

in the responsibilities. Where does this place the couple in the pattern? What factors account for the apparent differences in the Kerala immigrant families? After immigration, have the Kerala immigrant families changed?

CHAPTER III.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE OF THE KERALA COUPLES

This chapter lays the background for the reader to understand in-depth the Asian Indian society, particularly the Keralites in India and Greater Chicago area. In this chapter, I am going to relate the story of my own community of Keralites and their experiences from a participant observer's perspective because specific problems and their solutions could be better appreciated when a particular group of emigrants (in this case Keralites) is studied in its original social milieu. I examined some aspects of life of the married couples to show in what areas they have changed and the extent of the significance of these changes.

Most important are the highly institutionalized sex roles in the Kerala community. Kerala couples have patterned their conjugal relations after those of their parents. The patterned behavior as far as gender roles are concerned are related to the learning experiences during socialization. For example, Kerala husbands concentrate their skills on occupational structure by fulfilling their roles as breadwinner, and wives on the other hand, specialize in the internal working of the family. Although gender roles are complimentary they are not symmetrical.

The two gender classes are not equivalent in social power, in participation in the society or in benefits. There are two fundamentally different perspective on gender roles. Gender role ideology of Keralites codifies different roles for men and women in all institutional spheres of society.

Given these strictly segregated gender roles, in the Kerala society I expect to find changes in Kerala husbands and wives from these gender role patterns as a result of immigration to the U.S., especially when I compare the current attitudes and behaviors of husbands and wives to their recollections of India. I found that a) there were no significant differences or changes for some couples; b) some were unwilling to acknowledge change, for that would imply rejection of previous life; c) some admitted they had changed but only in certain respects (food, clothing) and not in attitudes and values. At the same time, the qualitative data suggested strongly that Kerala couples are undergoing changes.

CHANGES IN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

For the Asian Indian and the Kerala society the family is the foundation of all important aspects of life. In fact, the family is more important than the individual. Immigration has brought about changes in the structural conditions within which the Kerala immigrant families have to function. In order to understand the changes undergone

by the Kerala immigrant families, it is imperative to compare the nature of marital relations as they exist in India with the current pattern in the United States.

CHANGES IN MARRIAGE

In a highly traditional culture like India, arranged marriages have been an integrated part of the social and family life with no provision for dating and courting. Pre-marital gender is also taboo. Wedding ceremonies have social and religious significance. Since the Kerala society is Christian (Catholic) the sacramental nature of marriage is dominant in Kerala culture. This means marriage is viewed as a permanent tie and not a contract that may be broken at one's pleasure. Therefore, divorce is rare, and highly stigmatized when it does occur.

It appears that among the second and third generations in the U.S., arranged marriages will no longer prevail; instead love-marriages are becoming increasingly common. The younger generation finds the notion of arranged marriages outdated. Today, the traditional pattern of marriages has almost disappeared. One explanation may be that the younger generation no longer sees these traditional marriages around them; they have no practical examples. For example, Chandrasekhar (1982) found that to the second generation children India seemed unreal and distant and interested them only as the land of their parents and

grandparents.

Traditionally, approximately 85 percent of Kerala women marry before the age of 25 (Kurian, 1974). Marriages among most Asian Indians, irrespective of religious groups, and also among Syrian Christians, are arranged by the parents or relatives. My data reveal that 92 percent of the respondents had an arranged marriage, two percent love marriage and six percent love-cum-arranged marriage. The Kerala couples on average in this study were married thirteen years. Only three percent of the respondents married in the United States. One explanation for the prevalence of arranged marriages is the belief that they promised greater stability because they were not only a union of two people but also a union of two families. One of the respondents elaborated in the following way:

If you fall in love and share everything with your fiancé before marriage there is no fun in marriage. You spoil the beauty of marriage . . . that is what you see in American marriages. By the time they get married, it's time to divorce. Whereas in an arranged marriage, you are waiting to share your life with your partner so love has only just begun. Therefore, the chances are arranged marriages will last longer.

With regard to love marriages another respondent said:

No one in my family approved because I had a love marriage. Even after I came to America, I had very little contact with my family, but now my family feels that I have a better married life than my brother or sister who had arranged marriages, and they consider me as a part of their family.

Kerala marriages of the 1990s are taking a new twist at home

and abroad. The marriage partners are given an opportunity to meet and know each other before entering into an alliance. Now only with the partners' consent do the parents go ahead and arrange the marriage: this is a significant change in tradition.

It would be important here to stress the endogamous nature of the Kerala Christian marriages. Endogamy requires marriages within a particular group. The sample reveals the exogamous nature of marriages among the Marthomites and Syro-Malankara, but all the Syro-Malabar, Kanannya, Latin Catholics, and Pentecostal marry within their denominations. Today, this trend is also changing. Strict endogamy does not prevail either in India or in the U.S.

CHANGES IN FAMILY RELATIONS

Besides marriage, kinship bonds are also very strong for Keralites, generally stronger than in the Western culture. Keralites in the U.S. maintain ties with their primary groups in India. During the interviews I found that many husbands feel obligated to bring their parents and other relatives to this country, but once these relatives begin to live in the same house, new problems start to emerge. The in-laws not only share the physical and financial resources, but also may deprive the couple of their privacy and burden them emotionally¹. The couples

¹ Of course there are exceptions.

still retain the elements of mutual obligations to the family, to support their parents and siblings and help financially. In the U.S. the concentric circles of relationships dissolve gradually and finally are limited to immediate family members. In a patriarchal society like India, men are expected to be more traditional in maintaining family ties and kinship obligations. Males prefer the joint family to the nuclear family, but the women prefer the latter because it is presumed there would be less interference by their in-laws.

Changes in Husband-Wife Relationship

In a traditional society like India where family structure is essentially patriarchal, the husband is the breadwinner and the supremacy of the husband generally prevail. But husbands rarely assume any responsibility for the internal working of the family. The wife, on the other hand, specializes in the internal working of the family and concentrates on keeping the family members satisfied while fulfilling the role of the housewife. When the Kerala couples immigrate to the United States, there occurs a change in their traditional pattern of carrying out the different tasks. With most of the wives employed, the roles of the wives have changed (outside the home but not within the family), therefore, their statuses have also changed. However, the husbands' roles have not changed equally, as I

will show through specific examples.

From my participant observation, I found that there are some variations in how each Kerala family share its household tasks. In the majority of families, the wives do most of the housework. Women still perform the sex-stereotyped roles: cooking, taking care of children and running the household. The only new dimension is that, if both the spouses work, the husband does help the wife with household chores: this is unusual in Kerala. In some homes children also helped somewhat. One of the husbands stated that "doing housework is in the women's portfolio."

In some cases, the husband may be forced to assume or share the non-traditional role of a homemaker and a caretaker of his children in America but may feel incompetent to perform these new tasks. Conscious of the "macho" self-image, he often resists performing these so-called female roles. At the same time, the wife often assumes the non-traditional role of an income producer.

Despite the change seen in the division of labor between the husbands and wives, husbands dominate in the household. The relationships that I observed among Kerala couples have not changed from those in India. These couples think that within the family role segregation is based on gender and thus role playing by each partner within the family is practically irreversible and irreplaceable. Since it generally agree that men benefit from the traditional

system of sex stratification, it is unlikely that they will voluntarily give up their dominant positions. Even in another country, a man retains the dominant position he has in his home country and is reinforced in this role by the actions and attitudes of most of his male colleagues.

Hochschild (1989) addresses the same idea of the "superwoman" image that I observed among the Keralites. In her book, *The Second Shift*, Hochschild points out that many of the men and women she interviewed expressed that they felt they had achieved equality at some level of their lives, but this did not carry over into the homelife. The wife was still expected to come home and prepare the meals, clean, care for the children and also be a supportive to the husband and his career. This can also be seen among the Kerala husbands and wives. Most worked full-time jobs and felt that they led relatively equal lives aside from the responsibility within the house.

However, I observed differences in some families where the husband contributed to housework. With most wives in the nursing profession with demanding shifts, the couples planned out their schedules to share to housework and child-care. In these cases the husband was left with no choice but to share in the division of labor. My interviews showed that in these cases the traditional concept of the division of labor along gender lines was not practiced. However, the division of labor within these immigrant Kerala family

enhances mutual dependence between the marriage partners and helps the family from disintegrating. This would support some of the results of the recent research that shows the men are slowly changing their traditional attitudes towards housework, unlike the Parsonian model where women do all the housework. But it also reinforces the fact that men do not perceive they are changing or do not want to admit it. Several respondents had somewhat the same comments to make when asked whether they perceive themselves as changed from Indian patterns. One male respondent put it this way:

We, Keralites have changed! No, not at all! It is not possible for us to change. Where ever we go we will still be the same. (Another) . . . you know that we never change. My wife still does everything as we used to back in India.

Another husband had a different comment:

I think we are working so hard to make a living here. I just returned from India and folks back home are enjoying life better than we do. In India, when the husband or wife gets home from work, most of the household tasks are taken care of by the servant or a member of the household and you do not have this tension. Whereas I have to rush from work to take care of the children before my wife can leave for work and my wife before I leave for work. Children have a million things to do and we have to take care of all that in the midst of this hectic work schedule. What a life!

These conflicting views give the impression that some men do not want to admit this stress and strain, they still want to maintain their masculinity to prove they can handle it.

Another reason why some men share the division of labor is they have no extended family in America. In India there will always be someone to help with dishes or laundry. The

wife gets some outside help. Here she is on her own, so the husband is left with no choice but help with household chores.

Managing finance is another area that is the husband's monopoly whether in India or America. This aspect has not changed. One couple was very critical about the way American families handled money. The respondent said:

Do you know that the husband and wife have separate bank accounts? And if the husband needs money he will have to borrow from his wife and vice versa. The spouse expects the money to be repaid. If not, this could even lead to a divorce. Some Americans even, have secret bank accounts. Keralites seldom behave in this manner.

The area that wives want to share the power long a domain of their husbands is in the pattern of decision-making. The men, who have traditionally been portrayed in India as stronger, wiser and in better command of their lives, finds it difficult to share this power and feel threatened. At times during the informal conversations one of the husband (though jokingly) remarked, "This is a women's world, we have to be at their (wives) mercy. In India, it is the other way round. They control us here. We must obey them." This remark would indicate that this husband's power is being threatened and he feels his self-esteem is low. It would seem there is some change in behavior patterns and it is more evident when both partners are employed. In these cases the traditional husband-wife relationship has taken on a more democratic style, it would

appear.

My participant observations indicate that although husbands have a positive attitude towards women working, this attitude does not translate into husbands' sharing in household chores. As my sample reveals, half of my respondents were nurses, who had to work different shifts. Despite their hectic schedule, the wives had to complete all the household chores and have the food ready when the husbands returned from work. The inequality in the division of labor resulted from the rigid gender roles attained during socialization, most probably it will take a long time before changes might be seen.

Changes in Parent-Child Relationship

Many Keralites, of course, evaluate aspects of the culture of the U.S. in terms of their own culture. Most couples think the U.S. is a good environment in which to live in, to work, to earn and save money. However, they feel that the U.S. has inferior moral standards, values and therefore is not a good place to raise children. Many Kerala immigrants have teenage children; much of the parents attention is devoted to problems of adolescence.

In my observation the most significant change that has occurred is in the relationship between parents and children. As the children are exposed to the American way of life, parental ties, control and influence begin to fade.

The traditional parent-child roles take on a more egalitarian dimension. Children are exposed to two cultures - the Kerala culture at home and the American culture outside of it. For example, at home they are urged to speak in Malayalam, eat Indian food and help with family chores. While outside they speak in English, eat American food and listen to Western music. Children frequently don't know which culture ought to supersede. The trend is, however, that they lean more towards the American culture than Indian because of the influence of school and peer groups.

Kerala parents do not want their children to be completely independent of them. Socially and emotionally, parents feel that children should be independent in the sense that they do not use their parents as social and emotional crutches. One respondent remarked:

Our children should depend on us, we are there for them, but they should be independent outside the home. We want our children to be independent but not to the extent we see in American society which seems to cut off parents completely from their lives.

Since most parents are educated they pay a lot of attention to their children's growth and development, they have in turn high expectations about their children. However, couples feel that the children underestimate some of the basic values that are upheld in India. For example, they do not respect their parents and elders, they adopt the values of the American peers at school, friends and the media. This is what one of the respondents said:

you should listen to the way children talk back to the parents: "It is my life, you don't have to tell me how to run my life. I decide what to do and what not to. I don't have to get your permission. I can look after myself."

The respondent concluded that if his child spoke to him in a similar manner it would jeopardize the relationship between parent and child. It seems that very few Kerala parents have encountered such situations probably because most of the children are teenagers. But if they were, the relationship would usually take a negative turn. Kerala parents, as most parents, probably are reluctant to face such situations.

I also observed that Kerala parents seem to be more strict with their children in the U.S. than Keralites back in India. Parents act as bodyguards taking them, especially girls, to dance classes, sports or social gatherings. They are afraid that their children would marry a non-Indian and thus disgrace the family. There are instances where children have married Chinese or African-Americans. Not only the families themselves but the Kerala community look down on these mixed marriages. Fearing that this might happen to their children they take extraordinary measures to separate them from non-Indians. Children in India seem to have more freedom than children in America because they can go out with their friends and mingle much more freely than children do here. Kerala parents in the U.S. exercise more control over their children than Keralites back home.

Another significant aspect that the respondents singled out was the narcissism dominant in American culture. Most Keralites felt people in America cared for no one else except themselves. One of the respondent indicated:

I don't even think they care for their spouse and children. The wife goes one way, the children the other way and the husband his way. What a life! I can't image a family in India behaving in such individualistic fashion. Relationships are so superficial. I hope and pray we don't turn out to be that way, and especially not our children.

Another respondent put it this way:

The Americanized Keralite is individualistic, egoistic, superficial and lacks compassion like the Americans.

CHANGES IN FOOD HABITS AND CLOTHING

The Kerala cuisine has been Americanized to a great extent because of the hectic schedule of the American life. Lunch has become "fast food," though dinner has not changed. Kerala children really like American food. One of the respondent said that children eat peanut butter sandwiches, hamburgers and pizza. Since the majority of the Keralites have to eat their lunch at or near their work places, it is more convenient to carry a traditional lunch bag than the traditional Kerala lunch that is usually composed of rice and some side dishes. The frequency of eating out is minimal, but inviting and visiting friends for lunch or dinner is very common.

Kerala food is very spicy, especially the curries (rich stews made with vegetables, meat, fish and eggs.) Yet the

Kerala parents have an ambivalent attitude towards American food. They think that even though American food is rich in nutrition it is underseasoned. Usually Asian Indians can purchase any kind of spices for their native dishes from Indian grocery stores in large Metropolitan areas.

Food is the basis of hospitality in Asian Indian families. An unusual phenomenon of this hospitality is that a visitor is welcome any time to one's home. While I was interviewing some couples, there were times when visitors stopped by without prior notice and were served beverages, lunch or dinner. Usually this is not a tradition in American families where it is expected that visits have prior notice.

Most Kerala women wear pants and shirts when they go to work in the U.S., but otherwise they retain their saris. In cold weather, a silk sari will be topped by a winter coat and boots will replace sandals. Gloves are worn but rarely a hat. Women who do adopt Western dress wear the sari to Indian ceremonies and feasts. When they wear the salwar kameez², some women wear shoes and tennis shoes. Usually after puberty Asian Indian women do not expose their legs but wear long skirts, salwar kameez or sari. This is the primary reason for Asian Indian women to wear pants rather

² This is an Indian dress. It consists of a two piece dress, a pant and a loose top which goes below the knee. usually a shawl is worn on the shoulder when one wear's this dress. It is also called a suit.

than dresses and Asian Indian women tend to be more conservative in dress and ornamentation than men. Jewelry is an important part of Kerala women's attire.

CHANGES IN THE KERALA COMMUNITY

Besides observing and recording changes in the family, I also found analogies in the larger Kerala community. I contacted authorities of the various Kerala organizations and explained the purpose of my research. The leaders of the associations introduced me to the members and requested their co-operation. Whenever the associations met, I was invited and participated in many of the Malayalee social, religious and cultural functions held in Chicago. The Malayalee and Kerala associations added considerable variety to ethnic social life and provided Keralites with opportunities to interact with one another.

MALAYALEE AND KERALA ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

I participated in these association meetings to get an insight into the functioning of these organizations. According to Andrews (1983) there are more than 100 cultural and religious organizations of Asian Indians all over America. In the Greater Chicago area, these organizations brought together Malayalees for various social and cultural occasions.

The Kerala association meetings were of two kinds -

general meetings and committee meetings. General meetings met only once a year for two hours with about 90-100 people in attendance. Elections were held, new members took charge, annual budget reports and activities for the year were planned. Committee meetings were held every 8 weeks. For the committee meetings 8-11 members attended. The committee met when there were upcoming events such as a sports Day, Onam³ Celebration, Christmas or a Convention. The topics concerned the meetings were guest speakers, menus, selection of subcommittees and advertising.

I learned that despite their recent arrival, the Keralites have formed a number of associations and organizations in which most participated actively. Besides these local associations there was a number of regional organizations as well. Fisher (1980) indicated, the Indian organizations not only help maintain Indian identity, but also provide a setting for people coming from the same part of India who eat the same kind of food and often speak the same language. These organizations help to establish a close relationship between the members of the community and develop a network system. They provide the opportunity to revitalize ethnic identities for the adult members and for

³ Onam is the national festival of Kerala. King Mahabali gave up his kingdom to Vamana-Vishnu (one of the gods). But King Mahabali was granted the wish to return to his people, the Keralites, to be with them one day each year. Onam is thus the celebration of the return of this legendary King Mahabali to his people. It is a season of thanksgiving for a plentiful harvest, family reunions, and feasting.

the younger generation. They also provide a broad ethnic cultural dimension and a forum for the ethnic group to meet its own people, and strengthen ethnic bonds. These associations and organizations work as a vehicle to reproduce the cultural and literary characteristics of the ethnic group. They mirror activities as in India by celebrating important events and festivals such as the Republic Day parade, Diwali⁴, etc.

ECUMENICAL SERVICE

The Ecumenical service is a gathering of all Christian denominations from Kerala a week before Christmas. It is a prayer service conducted by the Bishop of one of the Christian denominations. The guest speaker⁵ delivers the Christmas message followed by music, hymns and skits conducted by the various Christian denominations. Members of all ages and both genders are involved in these activities. A reception follows the service.

The Ecumenical service provided an opportunity for Kerala Christians of various denominations to come together as one unified Christian group. Though the music, hymns and skits depict the Spirit of Christmas, the common element that is emphasized in the keynote address is that religion

⁴ Diwali is known as the festival of lights.

⁵ The guest speaker is usually a bishop or an archbishop (if possible) from India or a religious leader from any of the Christian denominations.

is very important for Keralites and they should continue to practice it wherever they live. It emphasizes the need for passing on these religious values to the next generation. I also observed that the reverence and respect that the Keralites show to the religious leaders did not change from the original Kerala pattern. In India religious hierarchy is highly revered and this attitude is carried over to the U.S. as well.

KERALA CONVENTIONS

The first convention of Keralites in North America was held in New York city in 1983 and subsequently the Federation of the Kerala Associations of North America was formed. The Federation holds seminars, conferences, convention and competitions. It has the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the common concerns of new immigrants in their socio-cultural environment.
2. To assess the achievements of the Keralites.
3. To increase communication and dialogue for the good of younger and future generations.
4. To draw attention to university scholars and students to the aspects of the Kerala culture.
5. To organize and conduct cultural programs for enhancement of Kerala culture.

The Federation also arranges Regional Celebrations such as

India Day Parade, Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanti⁶. It aims to "sustain the cultural identity and the integrity of the Keralites."

The second convention was held in Philadelphia in May 1986, the third convention in Chicago in 1988. I was a participant observer in this convention. Some 2,000 people from all parts of North America attended this three-day convention. The Chicago Malayalees were the hosts.

Dr. Anirudhan, President of the Kerala Convention made the purpose of this convention in the following words,

The most pressing test facing our family today is the conflict of views and values with regard to our children. Our faith, practice and tradition and the cultural heritage that we proudly cherish is more often in direct conflict with the peer pressures and demands faced, especially by our teenagers and young adults. The goals which we idealized for them become the focal point of confrontation leading to anger and frustration. We must address this issue at this Convention giving equal weigh to both viewpoints.

The main theme, as abstracted from his remarks, is that the second generation is now entering adolescence and it is experiencing conflicts between the Indian and American cultures. In group discussions and debates during the convention, I learned that this Indian-American cultural conflict is due to the two cultures the family lives in; the American culture in which the family resides and the Indian cultures with which the family identifies. Parents find it difficult to understand their children's point of view, and

⁶ This is the day when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated.

the children that of their parents. Some Indian children view their parents as old-fashioned and intransigent. And some parents countered they did not want their children to get lost in America's fast-paced culture. Thus this convention was mainly called to help their children to understand the Indian culture and to uphold the Indian attitudes and values. The first generation fear that this ethnic identity would be lost.

It is evident, therefore, that for young people growing up in North America far away from their roots in Kerala, that such Malayalee conventions are an opportunity to learn about their culture and form a lasting friendships with people of their age groups from all parts of America. It was also an opportunity for other members to meet relatives and make professional contacts.

RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR PARTIES

I also attended informal gatherings such as Christmas and New Year parties. The custom is that a few Kerala families get together to celebrate Christmas and New Year in one of the family's home. They ordinarily have a potluck dinner on the 25th and 31st of December. Men play cards while women watch a Malayalam movie or converse. The main topics of discussion are usually events in Kerala and in India. Women also discuss clothes, work and children. As the New Year dawns, champagne is opened to celebrate the New

year. Some families go home, others sleep over at the host family and return to their home the next day.

visiting friends and holding parties are important events for Keralites in the absence of extended families. Friends are substitutes for extended family. Parties and get-togethers are typical characteristics of Asian Indians and Keralites and ought to be explored in future research.

To summarize, my participant observation revealed that Keralites who participated in these organizations, group activities, conventions, and ecumenical services meet and talk in their mother tongue (Malayalam) to people in their own ethnic group, celebrate religious and cultural festivals with their community to give their children a cultural and ethnic awareness of the home country. They wear traditional dress (sari or salwar kameez) and serve regional foods. It is through conversation, interaction and performance in these religious and cultural gatherings that the Keralites reconstruct their ethnicity, their Kerala culture and pass it on to their younger generation.

It ought to be mentioned that in their sphere of organizational, religious and cultural activities the importance of gender differences was very evident. Men and women were separated in these gatherings and men were usually the office bearers in these associations and organizational activities. Role differentiation was very conspicuous in all the activities of the Keralites. This is

not surprising since the traditional view is that men are better than women and Asian Indian parents cannot debunk the idea that boys are better than girls.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on my participant observation I drew the following comparisons between the similarities and differences of husbands and wives in the Kerala family and community. Women seem to have changed more than men. Wives felt it was necessary to work in order to provide the family with luxuries. They still assumed most of the responsibilities for housework and childcare and did not expect or want their husbands to have an equal share in these matters. On the other hand, the wives do not perceive their husbands to be superior to them, rather, they perceived them to be basically equal to them. Some women expressed anxiety and felt torn because they were neglecting the family for the sake of their careers. Others felt overburdened juggling a career, household, children and a husband. This is probably a universal reaction for women in the same circumstances.

Most of the women in my study have had fruitful lives and are for the most part were satisfied with their life in the United States. Some aspects, for example, managing housework without outside help, have changed for these women over the years. Despite their high level of education,

these Kerala women still held to old traditions, values and ideas that some would say "held women back." Among Keralites male dominance still persisted despite women's education, their increased entry into the labor force and their contribution to the family income.

Husbands on the whole, have changed very little. They still held the primary authority and wield power and took things for granted. In some cases, where the wives are employed, the traditional concept of the division of labor along gender lines was not practiced. The marriage partners in such cases emphasized mutual understanding, partnership and emotional interdependence to define their conjugal relationship. I saw a mixed picture of the Kerala family in America. They had changed in some ways, but remained significantly unchanged in most important aspects. At this point it is difficult to predict the degree of change. But my observation reveals that basically the immigrant family has changed very little. The assumption might be made that in order to live a satisfactory life couples needed the traditional, the unequal sharing of responsibilities. This would appear to legitimize their achievement because they did not relinquish traditional roles and obligations, but instead expanded and added new roles to old ones. It can also be assumed that this traditional division exists because of husbands' resistance towards increasing their part in family work. As Rice (1979) observed, "men in dual-

career couples do not change in terms of sharing more of the load around the house until their backs are against the wall, so to speak." This is also true in the case of Kerala couples. However, the wives did not seem to object, or think that it was unfair, or try to change the existing balance.

I conclude that significant changes are taking place but rather at a slow pace. Husbands frequently did not want to admit they were changing. They were afraid to lose their power and self-esteem in their family. The wives also did not want to admit this fact, apparently because traditionally they deferred to male superiority. To a great extent, the Kerala immigrant families have settled down in America without losing their traditions. At the same time, some Kerala couples are changing in their traditional attitudes and behaviors because they are forced by circumstances. And there were a few that tried to blend in with the American life style. Whatever be the trend, fundamentally the Keralites, did not wish to abandon their culture and its traditions. They did, however, prefer orientation to Indian values within their families and orientation to American values in their occupational lives.

The specific Indian and American values adopted by the Kerala immigrants helped them to maintain their ethnic enclaves and at the same time practice selected American values which would help them to be successful in the

American society. In most cases the Keralites maintained a traditional outlook for the Indian value system.

My data shows that over an extent of time the Kerala values were changing but not to a significant degree. The extent of acculturation of Keralites was marginal. This might be explained from the fact that the Indian culture invests heavily on stability and not on dynamism. Stability is noted in marriage, child rearing, jobs and interpersonal relationships. In specific areas such as husband-wife relationship, parent-child relationship, food, and clothing slight changes were taking place but they are not very obvious. Although there was change in the husbands' social and intellectual outlook, the basic value system of males remain unchanged. Though the Keralites are living in a modern U.S. society, their attitudes and values remain unchanged. It could be said that in some respects these Kerala couples in America are more Indian than the Indians in India.

To summarize, despite immigration, the attitudes, values, behaviors of husbands and wives in marriage, family and society have not changed significantly in the Kerala immigrant community. The couples are probably at a critical point in their life in America because most of the children are in the adolescent stage and, therefore, the couples are in a dilemma as to what is best for them and their children.

If the fifty Kerala families in my study were

representative for the United States, I could conclude that the Kerala couples in America are changing but only in selected aspects of life and resisting changes in American society. They want to get the best of both cultures and pass it on to their children. It seems that because of the Keralites high socio-economic status in America they are able to maintain a balance between both cultures. Thomas and Thomas (1984: 141) research bears this out "Keralites will continue their life in America as an ethnic group while they maintain a keen sense of their cultural origins while they try at the same time to relate to the mainstream of life in American."

In this chapter I have provided a descriptive account of the Kerala family and community in the Greater Chicago area. I turn now to the research design used in analyzing the couple data.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH DESIGN

In the preceding chapter, I argued that changes in the Kerala family and society are taking place, but that the change process is rather slow. The purpose of this research was to find out how these changes have affected the Kerala couples in Greater Chicago. The fundamental hypothesis is that changes in objective and subjective aspects of life may affect husbands' and wives' life patterns leading both to satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

A review of the various theories and the literature presented in Chapter II suggests the need for operationalizing the variables that are relevant in the analysis of the determinants of life satisfaction. First I will state my hypotheses and operationalize the dependent and independent variables; second, I will describe the sample and methods of data collection; and finally, I will state the statistical procedures used in this study.

Data from the U.S. census of 1990 gives a comprehensive picture of the Asian Indian population. According to the census data, the Asian Indian community primarily consists of married couple households. This seems to be the basic residential arrangements in the U.S. Therefore, married

couple households seemed to be a good unit for this study.

In spite of this, a review of Asian Indian literature shows that there are no empirical studies using couples' data. Most of the studies have only husband or wife as their unit of analysis, although studies of Mexicans, Cubans, and other immigrant groups have used couples' data. A couple study would help to understand how the husband and the wife perceive change for himself and for herself. Therefore, I decided to study couples in order to get a better understanding of their adaptation process and to see how congruent the couples were in their perspectives of life satisfaction.

Several hypotheses will be tested in this study. The first two hypothesis will examine the relationship between life satisfaction and socio-economic status of husbands and wives. The second set focuses on traditional family attitudes and life satisfaction of the couple. The third set will examine decision-making patterns and life satisfaction. And the final hypothesis will test whether husbands' and wives' similarities in personal characteristics and selected aspects of life are congruent with life satisfaction. Operationalization of these variables will be discussed after I review the hypotheses.

HYPOTHESES

A number of studies has been carried out to determine

whether there was a relationship between wives' employment and their feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with diverse aspects of their lives. The findings indicated that employed wives were more satisfied than housewives. Studies examining working wives' self-concept also revealed that they had higher self-esteem and self-confidence, and a greater sense of personal competence and personal autonomy (Feldman and Feldman, 1973).

Safilios-Rothschild (1975) hypothesized that the discrepancy between the achieved status for husbands and wives may differ in quite significant ways. For wives, the discrepancy between the two status lines may enhance the higher one as the determinant of her social standing. For husbands, the discrepancy through which his derived status exceeds his achieved status may involve a low social standing and a negative evaluation of him "as unable to control power in the family." This low status may thus be associated with or in fact engender psychological stress and marital dissatisfaction for husbands. Such negative consequences for husbands might be greatest where income and education is also low and this might result in positive consequences for the wives when education and income are high. This dissatisfaction that arises from conditions of status inequality within marriages is certainly not new. However, changes in the socio-economic status of wives, particularly the conditions of women attaining higher

occupational status than their husbands, add a new dimension to the hypotheses.

First of all, when a wife commits herself to work outside the home, the husband loses part of his active support system. In addition, the husband finds himself undertaking more of what was once considered the women's work in the home while continuing to perform whatever tasks were traditionally his in the household (Blood, 1963). He is in effect put in the position of playing a supportive role to his wife's ambitions and personal goals. His central position in the family is eroded, and with it his former dominance and power (Bahr, 1974). The picture that emerges is one of the husband experiencing a reduction in important services, an increase in his special status in the family. The working wife, on the other hand, receives more help from the husband in the household and increases her power in important areas in the family. Thus, the husband may have to deal with a diminished sense of self-worth in his marital relations, whereas, the wife's sense of self-worth is likely to be enhanced.

The above assumptions are grounded in the fact that education, occupation and income are important determinants in predicting the life satisfaction of husbands and wives in the U.S. The literature reviewed in Chapter I indicates that Asian Indian immigrants has been cited as having high education, occupation and income and a middle class standard

of living, in contrast to earlier immigrants. Given this data, it was germane to find out whether husbands or wives were higher in their socio-economic status and how it impinged on their life satisfaction. Therefore, I hypothesize that,

- 1a The higher the wife's socio-economic status (education, occupation and income), the more satisfied she is with her life in the United States.
- b The higher the husband's socio-economic status (education, occupation and income), the more satisfied he is with his life in the United States.

I also examined in this study the characteristics of the Kerala husbands and wives traditional family orientations and their approach to new cultural and familial values encountered in the host society. Naidoo's (1980a; 1980b) studies on life satisfaction with both traditional and contemporary attitudes revealed a duality in the nature of the South Asian women. Furthermore, her study of acculturation and adaptation to the host settings (1985a) revealed a clearly selective approach in the women's emulation of aspects of American culture. I did expect a different trend for Kerala husbands and wives. Therefore, I hypothesize that,

- 2a The more non-traditional the wife perceives her attitudes, the more satisfied she is with her life in America.
- b The more traditional the husband perceives his attitudes, the more satisfied he is with his life in America.

Testing of the above hypothesis was imperative because it should have revealed how the husband and wife perceived they had changed in their traditional attitudes as a result of immigration and acculturation to the American society. This in turn would have indicated whether they were satisfied with their life in this country.

According to Ghore (1968) the husband-father is reported to dominate conjugal decision-making emphasizing the idea that male dominance in regulating decision-making power. Lewis (1949: 602) wrote "the husband is viewed as an authoritarian patriarchal figure who is head and master of the household. It is the husband who is expected to make all important decisions for the family." The Asian Indian families are generally labeled patriarchal in structure.

Again, Saran (1977) writing on the family structure in India emphasizes that the family structure is essentially patriarchal and the husband is the breadwinner - the supremacy of husbands generally prevailed in all matters. At the same time, he also observes that this pattern of relationship has undergone change in the U.S. Based on these theoretical assumptions, I hypothesize that,

- 3a The more egalitarian the wife perceives her own share in decision-making, the more satisfied she is with her life in America.
- b The more egalitarian the husband perceives his own share in decision-making, the more dissatisfied he is with his life in America.

In the United States, more Kerala women are employed

than in India, therefore, the question might be posed: does the Kerala wives' employment status give them a greater say in decision-making or does wives still feel that husbands make all decisions without consulting them? Are husbands still the sole decision-makers though they may not be the sole breadwinners any more? This hypothesis investigates the relationship between life satisfaction and perceptions of decision-making using the two theoretical perspectives - social exchange and equity theory discussed in Chapter II.

In addition to testing the above hypotheses, the extent of similarity or agreement between husbands and wives in socio-economic status, traditional family attitudes and decision-making patterns are important in measuring the degree of congruity of life satisfaction of husbands and wives. Studies that examined the extent of congruence items have tested the hypothesis that congruence is higher on objective data such as education, occupation and income than on subjective data such as decision-making and child rearing.

In reviewing the spousal consensus literature, the topics studied can be broken down into several types. The first is events or conditions shared by both spouses such as perceptions of family income, family roles and marital disagreement (Ballweg, 1969). The majority of the studies of shared events, are those related to the distribution of power in the family. Some studies query husbands and wives

about who makes the final decisions on housing, medical care, wife's working, and auto and food purchases (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970). Other studies that try to understand family power and role structure, ask husbands and wives to indicate who perform various family tasks such as child care, paying bills, cleaning and odd jobs (Brinkerhoff, 1976). Other demographic information is also sought such as husband and wife's education, length of marriage, and social class (Niemi, 1974).

The second type of topic receiving attention in consensus research is the similarity of attitudes of married partners. Researchers have examined spousal consensus on such matter as family planning (Jaco and Shepard, 1975), wife working (Klein, 1965) and political behavior (Niemi, 1974). Religiously heterogenous couples were found to have less consensus on family planning matters than homogeneous ones (Jaco and Shepard, 1975).

A third type has relied on structural factors such as age, urban-rural, religion, education, socio-economic status, community of origin and length of marriage to explain spousal consensus. Structural heterogeneity may be a source of low consensus because of the different perspectives people from different backgrounds bring to a particular decision. However, couples with the same education report income with significantly more consistency than pairs in which the husband and wife had a different

level of educational achievement (Haberman and Elinson, 1967).

In this chapter, I intend to examine the extent of congruence by using both objective and subjective data. Therefore, I hypothesize that,

4. The more similar the husband and wife in their perceptions of socio-economic status, traditional family attitudes and decision-making patterns, the greater the extent of congruence in their life satisfaction.

I will attempt to explain the dynamics of life satisfaction of Kerala husbands and wives in America by testing this hypothesis. It will provide insights in their marital relations and enable me to understand whether the husband and the wife are changing in the same direction or in different directions.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

MEASURES OF DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable in this study is life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is a function of the salience of certain satisfying aspects of life. It denotes a combination of satisfaction in several separate roles such as marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction and work satisfaction in an overall evaluation. Bradburn and Caplovitz (1965) found that happiness in life is not a single dimension but rather a complex state resulting from

satisfaction and dissatisfactions. Orden and Bradburn (1968) used a similar approach in their study of marital happiness and concluded that global marital happiness is the result of the balance between these two uncorrelated dimensions. In other words, life satisfaction is a balance between positive and negative aspects of life.

Life satisfaction was assessed using an eight item Likert-type scale to find out how satisfied the couples were with regard to the different roles they played. The scale includes two items each asking about satisfaction with specific aspects of marriage such as earning a good income, housekeeping; child-rearing, teaching children; listening and discussing spouse's problems, sharing sexual intimacy; keeping in touch with relatives, and spending leisure time (adapted from McNamara and Bahr's study, 1980).

Satisfaction in each of these roles was ascertained through response categories on each question, coded 1 to 5, formed a scale with higher values denoting "very satisfied." The categories were "very satisfied," "satisfied," "undecided," "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied." A sixth response category was provided for persons who had never performed a given role. Responses in this category were treated as missing data in subsequent analyses.

Life satisfaction the dependent variable of this study was factor analyzed in order to reduce the complexity of the data and achieve a more parsimonious description of the

variables involved (Cohen and Cohen, 1975). Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated between the eight items. The correlation matrix was factor analyzed using the principal-components method with varimax rotation in order to identify orthogonal factors (Nunnally, 1967). Three orthogonal factors emerged, which I designated "marital satisfaction," "parental satisfaction," and "work satisfaction." All the three factors together or by themselves measure "life satisfaction" of the individual. The three factors accounted for 30.4, 15 and 13.4 percent of the total variance, respectively. The rotated factor matrix is shown in Table 1.

Besides the above method used in measuring life satisfaction there were other open-ended questions such as: "In what aspects of your life since immigration do you find the greatest sense of fulfillment?" "Are you or your spouse satisfied with the new family roles in America?" They also measured the couples' level of satisfaction in this country.

THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The independent variables in this study are age, rural/urban residence, education, occupation in India, social class, reasons for immigration, order of arrival, length of stay, and socio-economic status of husbands and wives in America. First, I operationalize the three independent factors used to test the hypotheses' socio-

Table 4.1

Factor Analytic Results of the Couples Perceptions of Life Satisfaction

Items	Varimax-rotated factor loadings		
	Marital Satisfaction	Parental Satisfaction	Work Satisfaction
Sharing sexual intimacy	.77		
Listening and discussing spouse's problems	.74		
Housekeeping	.70		
Spending leisure time	.53		
Teaching children		.78	
Child rearing		.62	
Earning an income comfortably			.76
Keeping in touch with relatives			.67

economic status, traditional family attitudes and decision-making patterns. Then I define the other independent variables used in the path model.

The most important independent variable is the stratification variable socio-economic status, measured by years of education, occupation and income of the husband and wife. Education is measured by the number of years spent in schooling. Years of education were divided into three categories up to 14 years of education (i.e., high and some college), 15 to 17 years (undergraduate degree), and 18 years or more (graduates and higher). Occupational categories are 'professionals', 'semi-professionals' (includes other white collars), 'blue collar workers' and 'not working' (students and homemakers). Income (individual earnings) is measured by the yearly salary, divided into three groups those earning less than \$24,999, between \$25,000 and \$39,999 and those more than \$40,000.

The other subjective independent variables were obtained through factor analysis. I ran a factor analysis to reduce the sixty subjective items into several factors, to find out whether there was loading on specific factors. As a result of iteration and orthogonal rotation, I found seven factors with eigenvalues greater than one. A scree test was also done to determine whether the factors were plotting the variance explained by each factor. According to the scree test, the curve flattened out at the seventh

factor and hence I worked with seven factors. Each factor had a unique set of variables that could be identified by their salient loadings on that particular factor. On further iteration, however, I found that the last factor had relatively low communalities, so in the final analysis, I retained only six factors for husbands and wives and the last factor from both respondents were eliminated from the subsequent analysis, since the last factor was found to be relatively insignificant. The final five factors are presented in Table 2. All the five factors have loadings of greater than 0.4.

Each of the selected items in all five factors consists of one to five and six (in some cases) categories in ordinal scale. Weights ranging from one to five and six were assigned to the categories from strongly positive to strongly negative. After determining these five factors for each respondent, I computed a total score for each factor. These are the subjective, independent variables in addition to the objective independent variables in the model. I expected each of these factors to influence significantly the mode of adaption of the husbands and wives.

The first independent factor variable is: Traditional Marriage Attitudes. In its meaning the word,

traditional pertains to values, beliefs and customs handed down from generation to generation, often firmly adhered to, and less subject to forces of acculturation as migratory groups come in contact with other culture (Stein and Urdang, 1966: 258).

Table 4.2
Factor Analytic Results for the Perceptions of Couples in Interactional Aspects of Life

Items	Varimax-rotated factor loadings				
	(1) Use of Malayalam	(2) Traditional Family Attitudes	(3) Decision making patterns	(4) Decisions on children's academic dev.	(5) Marital Disagree - ment
Self-speak Malayalam with spouse	.84				
Speak Malayalam with Malayalees	.80				
Speak Malayalam with relatives	.76				
Write personal letters in Malayalam	.72				
Speak Malayalam with siblings	.56				
Count numbers in Malayalam	.52				
Children's dating or courting		.70			
Arranged marriages		.67			
Love marriages		.59			
Traditional, expensive weddings		.53			
Children marrying non-Indians		.52			
Dowries		.51			
Wearing skirts & dresses		.43			
Men wearing suits		.42			

Table 4.2 (Cont.)

Factor Analytic Results for the Perceptions of Couples in Interactional Aspects of Life

Items	Varimax-rotated factor loadings				
	(1) Use of Malayalam	(2) Traditional Family Attitudes	(3) Decision making pattern	(4) Decisions on children's academic dev.	(5) Marital Disagree - ment
Budgeting on family needs			.74		
Whether wife should work			.67		
Supporting parents and relatives			.67		
Grocery shopping			.67		
Vaction destination			.57		
Dealing with school authorities				.72	
What type of school children should go				.71	
Who should help with child(ren)'s home work				.60	
Dealing with in-laws					.68
Spending more time at home					.65
Financial matters					.64
Wife's working					.64
Bringing up children					.63
Leisure time activities					.62
Jobs to be done by the man in the house					.62

In this study this variable is defined as acceptance of traditional marriage attitudes, such as taboo on dating and courting; endogamy and arranged marriage is the rule; costly wedding ceremonies with social and religious significance; mandatory dowry; taboo on divorce; and taboo of children's marrying non-Indian partners.

Respondents were asked questions on their perceptions of change in attitudes of self and spouse in America and in India, such as attitudes toward children dating or courting, arranged marriages, love marriages, traditional expensive weddings, dowries, divorces, and children marrying non-Indians. Responses were coded on a five-point scale with higher value denoting strong agreement. The categories were: "strongly agree," "agree," "undecided," "disagree" and "strongly disagree."

The second independent factor under discussion is: Decision-making Pattern. The role of the spouses in decision-making in various family matters is taken as an indication of their power and authority in decision-making (Scanzoni, 1979). The most widely used measure is that introduced by Blood and Wolfe (1960). I constructed a similar measure for my study.

This measure is derived from the couple's answers to 11 questions about who generally makes decisions regarding the following matters: vacation destination, what house to purchase, whether the wife should have a job, budgeting for

family needs, supporting parents or relatives, shopping, choices of children's schools, career choices of children, visiting in-laws, relatives or friends, whether the family should attend church on Sundays, and birth control, (a) in India (b) in America. The respondents could answer each question with one of the following: "husband always," "husband mainly," "joint," "wife mainly," "wife always," and "others." Weights were 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively, and 0 when it did not apply to the couple. The summed scores may range from 11 in which others decide always, to 66, in which husband decides always.

These questions were asked because they are questions that nearly all couples have to face, and because they range from those traditionally held entirely by the husband to those held entirely by the wife. These scaling questions were followed by open-ended questions: "If there have been changes, how satisfied are you and your spouse with them? Have you or your spouse encountered any difficulty?"

Other independent variables include the background variables: age, rural/urban residence, education¹, occupation and social class in India. I grouped these background variables into three categories that seemed to make the most sense theoretically. Age was divided into: 25 to 35; 36 to 45 and 46+. Rural/urban residence was also

¹ Education was discussed with the socio-economic factors.

divided into three categories "village," "town" and "city." Husbands and wives social class background was divided into "upper," "middle" and "lower."

The intervening social and economic variables were reasons for immigration, order of arrival, length of stay, occupation and income in America². Reasons for immigration are two: those that came for study or jobs and those who were sponsored. Order of arrival was grouped into four, husband first, each separately, both together, and wife first. Year of arrival in the U.S. was divided into three categories, before 1975, 1976 to 1980 and 1981 to present³.

Besides the background variables, the three independent factor variables were: use of Malayalam, children's academic development and marital disagreement. Use of Malayalam is considered an additional qualification in the case of Keralites. Unlike other Asians most Keralites read, write and speak English well. Therefore, Malayalam (native language) though it has only a limited use in America, helps to bind people who speak the same language and who come from the same region to stay as a unified group.

In this respect use of the Malayalam language is considered a measure of cultural identity. Thus respondents

² Occupation and income is again discussed under socio-economic status.

³ Note: age, education and length of stay were treated as continuous variables while performing correlation and regression.

were asked two questions on each of the above categories, as well as their perception of their spouse. "To what extent do you and your spouse currently use Malayalam at home, with relatives, and friends?" The answers were "always," "frequently," "occasionally," "rarely" and "never." A sixth answer was coded 0 when it did not apply to the couple. This second part of the two questions could be answered by comparing the answers to the first part. "How much more Malayalam do you and your spouse use than you used to in India?" The answers to both these categories were scored on a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 to 5, with higher values indicating more usage of Malayalam.

The next independent factor children's academic development was also another measure of the husband and wife's decision-making pattern. It is used particularly to find out whether the husband or the wife is more involved with children's academic development. The items grouped under this factor were obtained through factor analysis for they are part of the decision-making patterns⁴ and others come under family chores (division of labor).

For the variables on family chores, I created six different measures of household chores for my interview schedule. Respondents were asked for each household chore

⁴ Three questions are from decision-making patterns (factor analysis items) and one from family chores. They all pertain to decisions concerning children's academic development.

to tell me whether it was done by "husband always," "husband mainly," "joint," "wife mainly," "wife always," and "others." My response categories were developed from Klein's (1975) response categories. Six response alternatives were provided, ranging from 1-6. The tasks were cooking, grocery shopping, taking out garbage, maintenance of the house, helping with children's home-work, dealing with school authorities, maintaining contact with family and friends, and financial transactions. This question was followed by an open-ended question: "Are you and your spouse satisfied with these new family roles? Have you encountered any difficulties?"

The last independent variable is marital disagreement. When spouses disagree at least to some extent on issues such as financial matters, wife's working, bringing up children, dealing with in-laws, jobs to be done by the man in the house, and leisure time activities, it can be termed disagreement. It is apparent that in many, if not most, instances a spouse might wish to compromise, or at least avoid the appearance that one partner has lost the argument.

To measure disagreement on various roles the following questions were asked, "To what extent do you have disagreement with your spouse on the following matters?": financial matters, leisure-time activities, jobs to be done by the man in the house, dealing with in-laws, bringing up children, wife working, and spending more time at home.

Responses were coded 1 to 5, with higher values always indicating conflict. The response categories were "always," "large extent," "somewhat," "small extent," and "never." Again, a sixth category, not associated with a numerical value was provided for whom this was not applicable.

The instrument was divided into three sections. Section A consisted of standard demographic items, migration history and measures of life satisfaction. The topics studied in section B and C can be broken down into two types. The first type of topic that I looked into was the perceptions of change in attitudes and behavior. The second was events and conditions shared by both spouses. Therefore, in section B respondents were asked questions on Perceptions of Change in Attitudes of Self and Spouse in America and India. And the final section C focused on Perceptions of Change in Behavior of Self and Spouse in America and India⁵.

THE SAMPLE

The unit of analysis of this study is the Kerala Christian couples from India who are immigrants to the United States. I chose this particular population to illustrate as a case study social integration and life satisfaction of recent immigrants. Further, I chose to focus on the Christian community alone because I expect that

⁵ For details on interview questions refer Appendix A (interview schedule).

it would help me to understand what impact this Christian population would have when moving into another Christian country. I limited my study to Kerala Christian couples of Greater Chicago for convenience. Most of the Keralites in Illinois are located in this region.

I found my informants through lists maintained in all the Kerala Christians churches and Kerala/Malayalee associations of Greater Chicago. Since a complete list of Keralites was not available from the Indian Consulate, the sample was generated from two sources: church groups, and personal contacts. The list from the Kerala/Malayalee Associations could not be used because they represented mixed religious groups and both married and unmarried people were included in the list. At the same time the church registration lists were more complete and more reliable frame of reference than the Association lists. Therefore, the church membership served as a sampling frame for the selection of representative samples of Keralites, because of the absence of other reliable sources. According to church records there are approximately 900 Kerala Christian families living in Greater Chicago area. The church⁶ lists

⁶ The Roman Catholic Church is divided into two major divisions. The Syrian and Latin Christians. The Syrian Christians of Kerala are divided into several denominations such as the Syro-Malabar, the Kanannya (Southist), - they form the Catholic denominations and the Protestant denominations are the Marthomites, Syro-Malankara, Church of South India, Christian Missionary Society and Pentecostal. Each of these denominations use distinctive rites and rituals in their church services. All, except the Pentecostal, are Episcopal

contained the following: Syro-Malabars (205), Kanannya (157), Marthomites (150), Syro-Malankara (142), Latin Catholics, Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S.) and Church of South India (C.S.I.) (200).

From the Syro-Malabar, Kanannya, and Marthomite lists I was able to draw a sample somewhere between 20-25 percent. I was not able to draw the same percentage of sample from other denominations because some lived outside the Greater Chicago area, some did not have a church affiliation and some were reluctant to be interviewed. Therefore, for these small groups I used personal contacts. I used a combination of random and snowball sampling to arrive at my interview sample.

The criteria for sample inclusion were that respondents had to be immigrants from Kerala State and living in America for at least four years or more. This benchmark provided at least a rough guide, in the absence of a better alternative, for grouping respondents into those having relatively long experience with American life and those of relatively short experience; third, I focused on Christian couples from Kerala. Thus my sample consisted of fifty Kerala Christian (Asian Indian) couples (employed and unemployed) with and without children residing in Chicago and suburbs.

in structure. Pentecostal is congregational in structure. The Portuguese missionaries introduced the Latin Church in Kerala and they use Latin for their liturgy and they are Catholics.

It is important to emphasize the fact that the socio-economic status of the respondents was unknown to me from the sampling frame. A random sample was drawn, first, by selecting every fifth name on the lists. After the first set of names had been removed from the original lists, because they agreed or disagreed to an interview, then a selection was performed from the remaining names with the same selection criteria until a total of seventy-five Kerala Christian couples was achieved. After interviewing forty-five couples I reached a saturation point where I was getting stereotypical answers. I interviewed another five couples more to make sure that I was not missing any significant differences. These ten interviews did not show any significant differences. Therefore, my final sample consists of 100 respondents (50 couples). The sample represents a small cross-section of the Kerala population in the Greater Chicago region.

DATA COLLECTION

Two principle methods of data collection used were participant observation and the interview. My impression regarding collecting data about interpersonal events is that the significance of events may be unclear when observed by an "outsider." When outsiders are present certain types of behaviors are likely to be avoided or altered. For this reason, observational techniques alone are not valid or

reliable. Therefore, I used both participant observation and interviews for my data collection. I have combined sociological and anthropological methods to understand the process of cultural change, the level of congruence and the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction among Kerala couples in the United States.

As a Keralite myself, I was able to observe change better among Keralites living in America than presumably a non-Keralite would be. I used both husbands and wives in this study expecting a broader perspective of how each partner view changes within himself/herself.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION⁷

I observed the Kerala community for over a year by participating in Malayalee and Kerala association meetings, Onam, New Year party, Christmas, Ecumenical, church and prayer services and the Third Kerala Convention. I sought to study the current patterns of assimilation and interacted with people of all generations and age groups to understand their views of family and their life experiences in the United States. The Kerala association meetings proved an important source of information. One of the major purposes of these associations is to serve the social and cultural needs of the Kerala community and to keep them unified as an

⁷ Each event that I observed is explained in depth in Chapter III in my qualitative analysis.

ethnic group as I already indicated in Chapter III. The meetings gave me a clearer understanding of how these organizations work and how they bring the Kerala community together.

I observed the social events such as Onam, Christmas and New Year parties that gave me an opportunity to understand how Kerala culture converged with the American way of life. The church and prayer services that I attended enabled me to speak again to the members of the various Christian denominations to find out whether the Syro-Malabars community was different from the Marthomites or any of the rest of the denominations. This gives a better picture of the Kerala community as they interacted with the American culture and how in turn the Indian culture influenced them. Asian Indians are a small segment of the larger American society. After participating in each of these activities, I took extensive field notes and reflected on how these events would be perceived in India as well.

INTERVIEWING

The major portion of the data for this study was collected in the winter and early spring of 1988-89. I employed a structured interview schedule to collect my data. The instrument was first tested on five married couples with whom I discussed each section of the interview schedule. On the basis of this pre-test, some questions were revised to

measure more exactly what I was seeking.

I contacted prospective respondents by telephone and explained the goals and purpose of this study. By telephoning I learned that when there were teenagers, especially girls in the family, usually parents or male members picked up the phone. The parents wanted to screen calls from boy friends. These calls testify to the strict nature of the Kerala parents. During the telephone conversation English was used for the most part. Occasionally this was an obstacle because my name was not an Asian Indian name, and because I did not talk with a Malayalam accent. In India, language and region bind people very strongly. Therefore, as soon as I spoke in Malayalam, the respondents were more responsive in scheduling an appointment for interviews.

The respondents were interviewed at their convenience. Since most couples worked different shifts, I scheduled interviews to suit them. For example, I had ran interviews from 8 A.M. through 8 P.M. In some instances I made two trips, once to interview the husband and the next time the wife. Husbands and wives were interviewed separately. The average length of interviews was one and a half hour each. My familiarity with the Indian culture enabled me to ask more focused questions than researchers in unfamiliar terrain. I took extensive notes during these structured interviews. Even if the interview schedule was structured,

I began with a free flowing interview. This gave the respondents a chance to talk about their family and allowed me to direct their attention to my more specific agenda of the interview schedule.

The first section of the instrument was presented in questionnaire format; other sections consisted of direct face-to-face interviews. While one spouse was being interviewed, I gave the other the questionnaire section of the instrument and asked him or her to complete the form. All interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes. There was no need to translate any of the questions to Malayalam because all of them could understand and talk English. There were, of course, instances when explanations and clarifications were in order. In these case, my ability to speak Malayalam was helpful. I also learned in depth about the Asian Indian experience through informal talks after the formal interviews ended. People spoke about topics that interested them and told me more about their lives. We frequently had lunch or dinner after the interviews. My close relations with a number of people have significantly deepened my understanding of what the migrants' lives are like and what the move to the United States has meant to them.

The interviewing in the Greater Chicago area took four months. Occasionally, I had to stay overnight at one of the respondent's home to interview other respondents. All my

interviews were done in the months of December, January, February and March. Once I arrived at the couples' homes, my being a Keralite, eased some of their concerns and thus were ready to share their thoughts with me. The parting words usually were something like "Keep in touch or give us a call, and we will come and pick you up."

Several husbands and wives showed considerable enthusiasm about the study; some said it was the first kind of interview that really challenged them to think through how little they knew about themselves. The couples felt they never perceived how they felt about each other because they had always taken many things for granted. When I asked for minute details they generally thought hard before responding. Some wanted to talk about their experiences from the time they set foot on the American soil, and some couples wanted me to share my findings with them. The fact that this study could instill the respondents to think about their life experiences in the U.S. gives validity to my questions and general approach used for interviewing.

Through the techniques of participant observation and interviewing, I obtained pertinent data in the study of Keralites in Chicago. I transcribed verbatim key quotes from the interviews and participant observation for qualitative analysis and to illustrate the complexity and intensity of response.

STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

The statistics used in this research are fairly straightforward. They are appropriate given the substantive issue. I entered the interview data into the computer using SAS, after which the data was "cleaned" for errors. Corrections were made and the data was analyzed using SPSSX. This quantitative analysis was supplemented with qualitative data from my participant observation wherever appropriate.

Data analysis consisted of procedures such as frequency distributions, cross-tabulation, standard deviations, t-tests, correlations and multiple regression. Frequencies were used to get the means of the key variables in question. Cross-tabulations used significance tests such as chi-square and gamma as a measure of association. I used standard deviation as another measure of dispersion to measure the mean of interval-level variables. The advantage of the standard deviation is that it has a intuitive interpretation being based on the same units as the original variable. T-tests provided the capability of testing whether or not the difference between two means (e.g., husbands and wives) was significant. This statistical analysis helped to ascertain whether there was a difference between husbands and wives in selected aspects of life and whether the difference was significant.

Correlations allowed me to assess the relationship between independent variables (socio-economic status, use of

Malayalam, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, children's academic development and marital disagreement), on the one hand, and the dependent variable (life satisfaction) on the other hand. Factor analysis was used to extract dependent and independent variables (see section on dependent and independent variables) so as to reduce the complexity of the data and achieve a more parsimonious description of the variables involved.

I employed multiple regression analysis to assess the relative and cumulative impact of the relevant objective and subjective independent variables on the dependent variables and to set up the path model for the analysis. Multiple regression techniques determined the magnitude of direct and indirect influence that each variable has on other variables that follow it in the presumed causal order. Through regression techniques, I estimated the strength of each path. This estimation actually involved several regression operations. For path coefficients it is customary to use the beta values. In assessing the overall effect of one variable over another variable in the same population, I used the standardized coefficients. But while comparing husbands and wives, I employed the unstandardized coefficients. Path analysis is a method for tracing out the implications of a set of causal assumptions upon a system of relationships. Regression analysis requires that variables be measured at the interval level. However, in this study,

I performed regression analysis on some variables that were measured at the ordinal level. Multiple Regression analysis under these circumstances is considered warranted since it is employed as a measure of association and not as a means of predicting the values of the dependent variable from the independent variables.

In short, participant observation and interviewing allowed me to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data about the Kerala couples and their experiences in the Kerala community. It gave me the opportunity to arrive at a deeper understanding of the forces at work in the process of assimilation of the Keralites into the American society.

CHAPTER V
CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF FAMILY
AND LIFE SATISFACTION

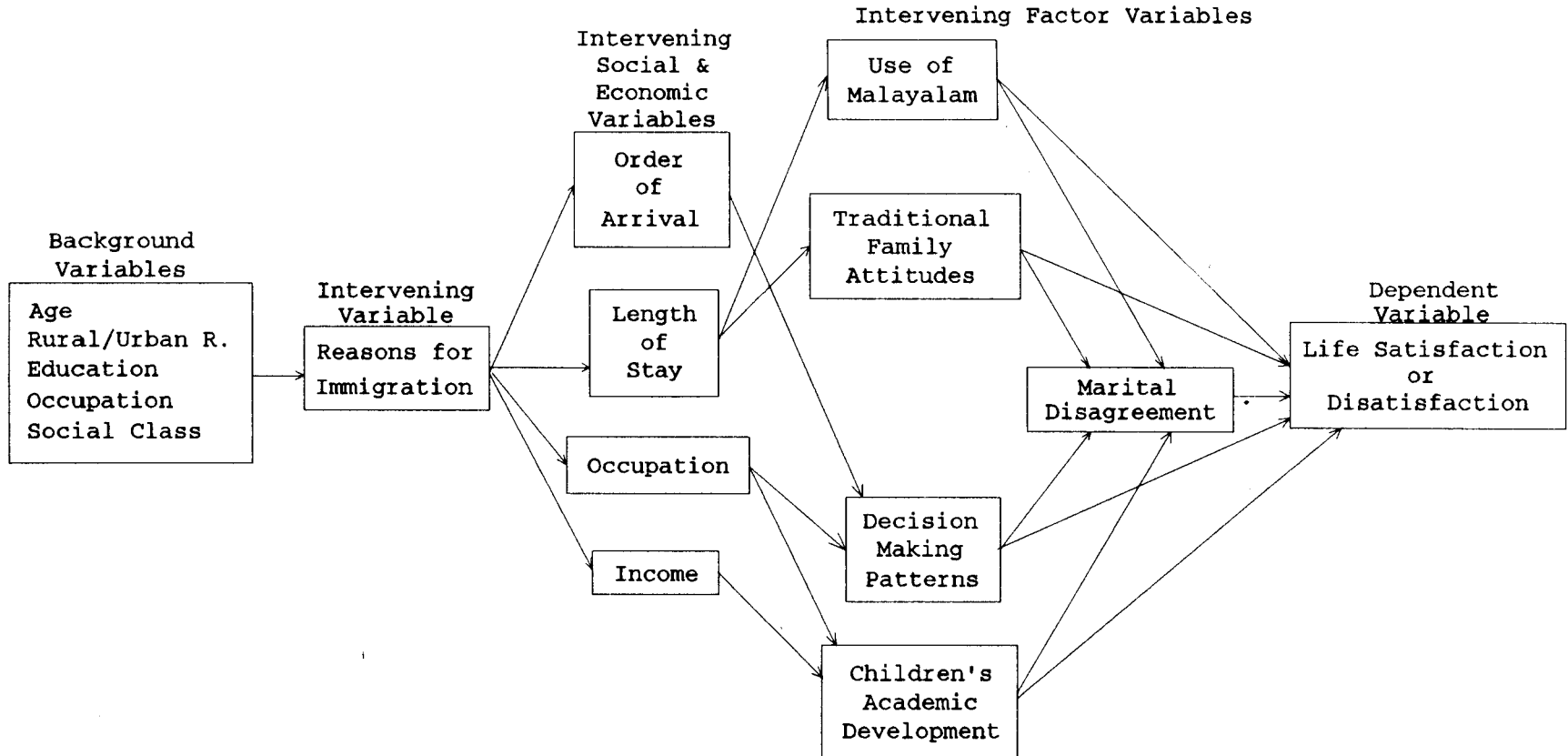
This chapter will build on the methodology presented in chapter IV and will conceptualize the relevant variables in the analysis of a path model for determining life satisfaction of the Kerala couples. I will use here several sets of variables such as the immigrants background, intervening social and economic variables, and other factor variables as correlates of life satisfaction. They will be used to represent the objective and subjective aspects of life of the individual in understanding life satisfaction of the Keralites in the United States.

Figure 1 represents the path model and the causal relationships among the variables to be investigated in this study. I will demonstrate how my sample fits into the model by examining each of the independent variables in their causal relationship by using path analysis¹.

¹ Path analysis of the data under consideration is useful, since the causal processes can be more clearly delineated and the importance of the path's influence can be explored.

Figure 5.1

Diagrammatic representation of the Model to be used in this study



BACKGROUND VARIABLES

I would argue that one's social background shapes one's life and opportunities. Immigrants do not and cannot cast aside the basic personality structure or value orientations acquired during growing up (Parson, 1951). They build upon what is already ingrained (Kim and Hurh, 1980). In order to understand the Kerala immigrants' lives and opportunities, it is important to review the background variables. The Indian background variables - age, rural/urban residence, education, occupation and social class of the immigrants are a reflection of the social, economic and cultural traits that the immigrants bring with them from India to the United States. Hence, it is important to examine first the impact the Indian background variables have on the couples' adaptation process. Second, it is crucial to see whether these background variables facilitate or hinder the couples' acculturation process. And finally, it is necessary to examine how these variables influence the couples' level of satisfaction in America.

AGE OF THE IMMIGRANT

The age of the immigrant has often been cited as an important variable in the adaptation process (Richmond, 1973). Migration studies have shown that younger immigrants have the potential for making the necessary adjustment to life (in U.S.), while the older immigrants could differ in

their exposure to the process of adaptation. Consequently, the age of the respondents could have positive or negative effect in their process of adjustment in this country.

Like most earlier immigrants Kerala immigrants to the U.S are young. Following from this, I would speculate that for younger husbands and wives it is more likely that the process of adjustment could be easier than for older ones. I would expect the older couples to acculturate faster.

RURAL-URBAN RESIDENCE

It is generally assumed that growing up in a rural or urban area represents different levels of exposure to economic, social, cultural and demographic opportunities. This exposure is important in the sense that urban origins could help the Kerala immigrants adapt positively to the country of destination. The rural/urban background of the immigrant will affect the dynamics of acculturation, since people coming from an urban background have already been exposed to modernization and Westernization while those from rural have not. Thus acculturation may be faster among the individuals from an urban area as opposed to those from a rural area.

In addition, changing stipulations in the U.S. immigration policies have reduced the number of immigrants from rural settings. After world war II immigration has been greatly tailored to suit the needs of a modern

technological society. This is a pattern that has little resemblance to what happened in the 19th and early 20th century. Most of the early immigrants were not only unskilled but were also predominantly from rural areas. However, today most of the Kerala immigrants come from urban areas or have already experienced urban life before immigrating. This urban experience could facilitate their acculturation into an industrialized and urbanized country like the United States.

But the process of transformation and acculturation is understood better if the socio-economic context of the immigrants is also examined. What other resources are being transformed? For this understanding, the stratification variables that determine the Keralites' socio-economic status in their country of origin is important. In other words, social class background in the home country gives some groups an occupational head start in the U.S. and helps explain their social and economic advancement (Steinberg, 1981).

SOCIAL CLASS

The move to the U.S. affects immigrants differently not only because of particular cultural background but because of the class composition of the husband and wife. On the "cultural heritage" side many scholars emphasize various cultural characteristics immigrant groups bring with them

from the homeland, most notably education and religious values (Sowell, 1981).

What is key in class theories is the relationship between immigrants class background and the ability and motivation to succeed in the new home. Class channels include educational, professional, socio-economic status, business and other occupational skills that the immigrants bring with them. The status of the immigrants' class could affect the adaptive process in this country. Couples with high socio-economic status have new opportunities for better life-styles. Families with higher status are also aware of the advantages of higher education and occupation for themselves as well as for their children. Thus, couples with high socio-economic status will be motivated to take more risks than couples with lower socio-economic status.

Social class origins of immigrant groups are important in their relative occupational and economic achievement in the U.S. For example, in the case of the Koreans the social class resources Koreans brought with them - advanced education, professional experience, high economic motivation and money - is their success in small businesses. Social class could emerge as a key variable in explaining the success of the Asian Indian (Kerala) immigrants compared to the early immigrants. The two variables that fall under social class are education and occupation.

Education

In terms of prior educational achievement, immigrants reflect a broad cross-section of the populations of sending countries. Depending on the U.S. Immigration policies and selection criteria used by the U.S., the educational level of Kerala immigrants exceeds that of the U.S. Caucasian population.

Keralites have always regarded education and training as a required route to a good job or career advancement. Keralites come from a country whose educational system has a distinct western European (particularly British) orientation. As a result, most are fluent in English and have had exposure to the values and beliefs that both facilitate and enhance entry into modern American society.

Education, probably more than any other single factor, explains the degree and extent of subsequent socio-cultural adaptation, and the precise form that the adaptation takes (Smolicz, 1979). Therefore, it is an important determinant of the pattern, mode, and sequences of socio-cultural adaptation. Saran observes (1985: 100-101)

At the present time, the educational profile of (Asian) Indian immigrants is much higher not only than that of other immigrant groups but also than the largest segment of American society as well.

Solanki (1973) reports that the educational level has some positive relationship with the extent of acculturation of the Asian Indians in Colorado. In addition to facilitating the learning of new roles and the

internalization of new values it also enables the individual to preserve his/her self-image in case of degradation of status. Therefore, education is directly correlated with a psychological openness to change.

Furthermore, education is a good measure to analyze power in marital relationships since external status translates into internal status in family especially for women (Erickson et al., 1979). Educated Kerala women might find that they not only have a higher status but they also have a greater say in important decisions in the family. Decision making power in turn could have a positive effect on wives marriage. At the same time this balance of power could have an adverse effect on husbands. Most Kerala husbands also possess high education, therefore where does this leave the couple in the balance of power?

Occupation

The answer to the above question probably could be found in occupation the one closely allied with education. The influx of Keralites to America occurred at a time when the opportunity structures existing within the American society could absorb immigrant skills and professional experience. One of the stipulations of the 1965 Immigration Act was that only persons with professional skills could immigrate to the United States. This gave women with employed backgrounds a greater chance to migrate. The

requirement laid down in the Immigration Act thus resulted in the immigration of upper middle-class professionals who came to America for better job opportunities and education.

As a result, the Kerala men and women who immigrated were not only well educated but also held good occupations in India, e.g., physicians, engineers, accountants, lawyers, managers, nurses, etc. This flow of highly trained people is, understandably, a great brain drain for India. These professionals and semi-professionals found jobs in the U.S. for which they have been trained in India. Keralites with less training found whatever opening is available but their numbers are very small. A comparison of the couples' occupation held in India with their occupation in the U.S. (discussed in Chapter VI) clearly shows that most of the immigrants (professionals and semi-professionals) continue in the same profession in the United States.

These pre-migration values, attitudes, customs and structural factors do not simply disappear, rather they shape, often in a complex fashion, the way immigrants adjust to life in the new country. It is likely that the couples' high educational and occupational skills could have a positive effect on their marriage and life in general. Because of this high socio-economic status in India, it is especially important to find out what motivated them to immigrate.

A survey of immigration literature reveals that most

immigrants (European and Asian) did not possess the skills (high socio-economic status, language, urban experience) that the Asian Indians (Keralites) had. The high socio-economic status held in India as well as the push-pull factors have been strong for Keralites to migrate to this country. Therefore, it is germane to find out specifically what were the reasons behind this highly skilled Keralites to immigrate to the United States.

REASONS FOR IMMIGRATION

There are many possible factors for people to immigrate; rarely can an individual motivation be reduced to a single factor. According to push-pull theory, people moved either because social and economic forces in the place of destination impelled them to do so, or because they were attracted to places of destination by one or more social and economic factors there. Migration studies find income at the point of origin to be negatively and income at the point of destination positively related to the propensity to migrate.

Though the push factors were strong for Keralites to immigrate, it was mainly the pull factor - America as an economic paradise- that served to stimulate migration of a large number of Keralites to America. The immigration laws were liberalized in 1965 and the migrants in the United States exerted pressure on relatives and friends to join

them and they served as sponsors. This resulted in a chain-immigration process, in which the migrant followed relatives or friends. Fawcett and Carino (1987: 23) suggest,

Immigration theorists need to give greater attention to the non-economic conditions in sending countries, for example, and especially to take account of kinship networks functioning not only as a passive linkage but also as a pro-active shaper of migration flows.

These factors significantly shaped and structured both the pattern of migration, the characteristics of Kerala migration flows, and above all, the experience of migration. Migration for Keralites is a positively sanctioned strategy to achieved employment and upward mobility for both men and women. Additionally, when the immigrant has family and friends in the new country, it makes the acculturation process a little easier. However, for Keralites with their knowledge of English, high level of education, occupational skills, and support of family and friends it may not be difficult to make the transition from one culture to another. Of course, this would depend on the social and economic characteristics that the United States had to offer them.

Thus the immigrants' adaptation process is influenced by pre-migration conditions, the transitional experiences in moving from one country to another, the characteristics of the migrants themselves and conditions in the receiving country, including government policies and economic factors

(Richmond, 1988). These pre-immigration conditions operate as a filter through which they view and experience life in America. Some of their former beliefs and social institutions may persist intact, while others undergo change in response to circumstances. What needs stressing is that these pre-migration values, attitudes and customs do not simply fade away, rather they shape, often in a complex fashion, the way individuals in each group adjust to and develop new cultural and social patterns in America.

Likewise the social and economic intervening variables in the U.S. are important in determining the pattern of acculturation of the Kerala husbands and wives. The intervening variables help in understanding how the Kerala couples fit into the American society and what role they play while adjusting to their life in the new country.

INTERVENING OBJECTIVE VARIABLES

Intervening variables include the order of arrival, length of stay in the U.S. since immigration, occupation and income of the husband and wife in the U.S. These factors are important because the process of adaptation is multidimensional. Acculturation interacts with economic adaptation, social integration, satisfaction and degree of identification with the new country.

ORDER OF ARRIVAL

With very few exceptions most of the migration literature talks about men dominating the migration flow. This trend seems to be undergoing a change in international migration. Migration literature shows that more women are migrating from Asian countries. Studies by Fawcett, Khoo and Smith (1984) provide evidence that in India, men dominate migration streams to large cities, but women dominate in short distance moves within rural areas. At the same time they also add that differences in gender ratio of migrants by type of destination are more evident in India than elsewhere. Fawcett et al. claim (1984) that the percentage of female immigrants from Kerala (India) to western and Middle East countries surpass any other state in India. Does this apply to the Kerala immigrants in the United States? By examining the order of arrival in the United States, it may not only be possible to support Smith et al.'s claim but also to illustrate the role of women in the migration process.

Thadani and Todaro (1979), in developing a theory of female migration, include the pattern of employment opportunity (but emphasize other factors) as a significant cause of female migration. Nowadays the migration of women, like that of men, is indeed likely to be job-oriented. Regardless of whether female migrants are single or married at the time of migration, like men they tend to move out of

areas where economic opportunities are available. This could result in a female immigration pattern or a growing trend towards convergence with that of the male migration pattern. This is what is evident in this study. Demand for nurses in the U.S. brought Keralites to the United States. The migration literature for Asia indicates that next to Filipino, the Asian Indians stand out as having a highly female-selective migration pattern (Fawcett et al., 1984).

The arrival of females before males gives women a slight edge in the acculturation process. This usually puts women in a position to socialize their partners and could bring to themselves a greater sense of self-esteem and satisfaction in the long run. However, if the opposite is true, husbands would be more satisfied than their wives. It seems more likely that the acculturation will be easier when women come first because men in India are not used to doing family tasks by themselves. In America, they would have to live independently and perform all the tasks by themselves. Kerala men expect women to perform most of the household duties for them. In this context, the acculturation process could be difficult for men if they arrived first. Hence the question arises whether length of stay would make a difference in their acculturation pattern as they adapt to their life in the U.S.

LENGTH OF STAY IN THE U.S.

Most studies have shown that length of stay is an important determinant of the degree and pattern of socio-cultural adaptation exhibited by immigrants. According to the assimilation theory, the longer the immigrant stays in a country the more likely he/she will assimilate the ways of the dominant culture. However, modifying attitudes, values and behavior patterns, acquiring a knowledge of the new society's institutions and developing new social networks, all take time. The longer immigrants are away from their country of origin the more their own sense of personal identity will change. Therefore, there should exist a positive relationship between the length of stay in the U.S. and the extent of acculturation. That is, those Keralites who have stayed longer in the United States, should be more acculturated than those who have been here for shorter period of time.

Studies have shown that length of stay is important in determining how the immigrants have assimilated into the American society and what impact it has on the lives of the immigrants. Studies on Asian Indians in Colorado and elsewhere (Africa, Britain, etc.) show that their pattern of acculturation is limited. This contention is tantamount to asserting that there is no direct linear correlation between the length of sojourn and the degree of cultural and/or social assimilation (Glazer, 1954). Although, the process

of assimilation may be progressive to a point, especially during the initial periods of adjustment and subsequent occupational advancement, I suspect that the process might not continue beyond a certain point, especially among people from high socio-economic status. . At this point, the immigrant may seek his/her identity and relationship between the length of sojourn and the degree of acculturation and assimilation may be curvilinear rather than linear.

Therefore, I would expect a curvilinear relationship between length of stay and acculturation pattern of the Keralites in Greater Chicago. It is thought that since they come with high education and occupational skills, it is more likely that they would stay permanently and assimilate easily into the American culture than the earlier immigrant groups. Besides, there was already a support network in America upon which they could depend. On the other hand, given their high socio-economic status it is less likely they should assimilate into the American culture as expected of other immigrant groups. As several observers have noted, it is possible that there is no linear relationship between the amount of time spent in a given country and the amount of acculturation (Kosa, 1957).

Length of stay could thus be a key variable in this study. However, the process of acculturation of the Kerala couples is determined by other important factors such as occupation and income. The occupational status of Kerala

couples is a reflection of the immigration laws that facilitated the migration of professional and skilled people.

OCCUPATION IN THE UNITED STATES

In 1980 more than 50 percent of all Asian Indian immigrants in the United States was classified as professional, technical or scientific workers (Minocha, 1987). The labor force participation rate of Asian Indian immigrants is high, in fact much higher than the national average primarily because of the high educational level of most Asian Indians and because in most cases both spouses work.

In general, the Asian Indian immigrants have the advantage over other minorities or Caucasians with less education. Figures from the 1990 census on selected occupational categories indicate wide variation among Asians. In general the Chinese, Japanese, and Asian Indians hold more prestigious and higher paying occupations than the Pacific Islanders and Vietnamese (Kitano and Daniels, 1988: 167).

Among Keralites, the professionals and semi-professionals may be able to find jobs in their areas of expertise, especially physicians and nurses. However, immigrants in other categories will have to choose from what is available in the U.S. labor market. Students and

homemakers may start working in the U.S. because of the need for a double income as well as because they are qualified to take up jobs. This in turn could boost up their self-esteem (especially women) resulting in great satisfaction for them.

Women see employment as providing opportunities for accomplishment and creativity, the kind not possible at home, for feeling useful and competent with respect to the larger social milieu. Thus it appears that employed wives are actualizing some of their personal preferences for growth and fulfillment. By entering into the men's realm, these women may well feel they are enhancing their status in relation to the Kerala cultural values and thereby they increase their self-esteem.

There is little to suggest that husbands perceive their occupational roles as contributing to their personal growth and fulfillment. Thus, when the employed Kerala wife is making her role more compatible with her self-image, the husband may experience a serious discrepancy between his self-image and his actual role (Burke and Weis, 1976: 286). While the wife's role raises her self-esteem, the husband may feel his self-esteem threatened.

The occupational qualifications of Asian Indian immigrants facilitate their rapid entry into the mainstream of the American economy (Minocha, 1987). A study of South Asians in Southern California (Hossain, 1982) shows that at present there is a decline in the proportion of

professionals among Asian Indians. The study reports that 90 percent of the professionals are from Bangladesh and Pakistan and the Asian Indian immigrants are skilled in management and clerical occupations because of the diverse nature of this group, a distinct feature seen among the Asian Indian population.

INCOME

It can be argued that for individual couples improvements in socio-economic status open up opportunities for other life styles and material goods and services. Thus improvements in the socio-economic status of the families affect changes in other areas of life that in turn would create satisfaction or dissatisfaction for the immigrants.

In this respect income is an important stratification variable in this study. I would expect a high income (individual income) for Keralites in professional and semi-professional categories. High income could be associated with having a more affluent life style that could in turn lead to satisfaction for the couple. Individual income is also seen as the measure of the husband's and the wife's marital power. In some cases it may be that the wife's high income is inconsistent with the traditional role of the husband as the main breadwinner, and this produces a strain within the marriage (Booth, Johnson and White, 1984).

If reasons for emigration were not primarily economic

it is more likely that there will be no relationship between the two factors in question. Chain migrations seem to be the main reason for the large exodus from Kerala. If this is the case it is more likely that there could be a relationship between sponsorship and reasons to migrate than economic reasons. However, the Keralites' high socio-economic status could facilitate their acculturation process. This in turn could give them a satisfactory life in the U.S.

INTERVENING SUBJECTIVE VARIABLES

The final set of factors with direct (and in some cases indirect) effect on life satisfaction are the subjective variables. Several studies have dealt with the subjective aspects of life. Unfortunately these studies have dealt with only one or two aspects of life (e.g., decision-making and child care or division of labor and child care). Most of the studies are concerned with the U.S. population. There are very few empirical studies on Asians in this regard and particularly of Asian Indians.

It should be mentioned that it is not possible to designate a causal order to these subjective factors, because one does not cause the other, but all co-exist at the same time. The fact of the matter is that they are key factors in understanding husbands' and wives' level of satisfaction in this country. The first factor revealed,

six items with high factor-loadings (See Chapter IV Table 2). These items measure the frequency of the respondents' perception of using Malayalam in the United States.

USE OF MALAYALAM

Language is the symbol of culture and a medium through which culture is transmitted. Language proficiency is also essential for assimilation into a host society: it is a means by which an alien can understand American culture. Language, thus, has both instrumental and expressive significance. In India Hindi is a *lingua franca* for all Indians. In the U.S. Indians either converse in their native language (Malayalam) or use English as a *lingua franca*.

Educated immigrants often wish to pass on to their children the history, literature and culture of the home country. This tradition is further reinforced when language is associated with religion. Most minority groups have a sense of ethnic identity that is closely linked to both language and religion.

Though Malayalam is not useful in the Keralites' acculturation process, still the fact that they can speak, read and write in their own mother-tongue in a foreign country does give them some satisfaction. This factor, thus, measures the extent to which Keralites foster their culture in this country. The Keralites' knowledge of

Malayalam does not hinder their acculturation process but only gives them a higher prestige within their own community. From my interviews I also learned that Keralites not only use Malayalam in their daily life, but try to teach it to their children. They find satisfaction in using Malayalam. However, the longer the Keralites stay in America they are less likely to use Malayalam in their daily life.

TRADITIONAL FAMILY ATTITUDES

Closely allied to language are attitudes - traditional family attitudes - the second factor. Eight items hang together with high to moderately high factor-loadings (See Chapter IV, Table 2). Support for arranged marriages, traditional expensive weddings and dowries were positive attitudes, whereas children dating and courting, love marriages, marrying non-Indians, men and women wearing non-traditional garb were negative attitudes for the Keralites. The positive three items relate to traditional family attitudes (connotes what the factor is), while the negative five items (denote what the factor is not) concern Western family attitudes.

In India dating and courting before marriage are not acceptable patterns and arranged marriage is the rule. Divorces are still very rare because of societal disapproval, and it is almost impossible for divorced women

to remarry. In American society, dating and courting are considered a part of the socialization process, love marriage is the rule, divorces are quite frequent, and remarriage is not looked down by society. Ross (1961: 251) reports that,

In the traditional joint family, parents were morally obliged to find mates for their children, and the children to accept the choice. As the marriage was looked on as an agreement between two families rather than between two young people. Love as not necessary as a basis for marriage selection, nor was courting a necessary prelude for testing the relationship . . . Love between husband and wife was the result of marriage.

When the traditional attitudes come in contact with American attitudes there is bound to be conflict. According to the assimilation theory, some of these traits become assimilated into the dominant culture. But do the traditional family attitudes of the Keralites get assimilated into the American culture? In most cases the old and the new blend in complex ways that could sometimes result in greater satisfaction for the couple. In other cases traditional Indian culture may conflict with American culture leading to dissatisfaction between the couples because they are not ready to trade the old for the new.

Like the other immigrant groups the longer Kerala immigrants stay in the U.S., the more likely it is that they will become assimilated into the dominant culture. However, the Keralites' traditional family attitudes are so strongly embedded not only in their culture but also in their

religion that assimilation of the first generation into the dominant main stream is going to take a very long time. The Keralite values and ideals will remain in the first generation, and, I would expect, therefore, only limited acculturation into the American main stream. However, with the second and the succeeding generations these values are more likely to disappear.

DECISION-MAKING PATTERNS

The third factor with significant factor-loadings is called the family decision-making pattern. These items measure who makes decisions in the family and would ultimately depict who is dominant in the family - husband or wife. Family research conducted in India in the 1950s and in the 1960s documented the traditional model of the joint family system. According to the traditional model, the Kerala families are patriarchal with the male member holding most of the power in the marital relationship. He is older, more educated, and his occupational status is superior to that of his wife. The wife held a subordinate and subservient position.

In the 1970s, women's participation in the labor force took new turns. Still the traditional model continued to dominate the (Asian) Indian society. Whether in India or in America, it is still taken for granted in the 1980s (and probably in the 1990s) that the traditional model still is

ideal. Is this true of the Kerala immigrant population?

One of the primary determinants of family structure is relative dominance in decision-making power between husbands and wives. Historically husbands held power and were able to influence the direction or outcome of a joint course of action (Sprey, 1975). This was by virtue of their role as the main provider for the rest of the family.

However, even the original Blood and Wolfe (1960) data does not consistently show that the greater the husband's "resources" the greater is his say in the decision-making process, since lower earning blue-collar men had relatively more say than higher earning blue-collar men. According to Safilios-Rothschild (1970) decision-making as perceived by husbands and wives are "significant" variables since it is each person's perceived "reality" that affects his/her behavior, the style and quality of interpersonal relationships and finally, and the type of husband-wife relationship. When both husbands and wives have been interviewed (Heer, 1962; Safilios-Rothschild, 1969), considerable discrepancies have been reported between them about the prevailing decision-making patterns in the marriage. The degree of discrepancy between the husband and wife's perceptions of decision-making (power structure) can give a dynamic picture of the marital interaction.

One of the most important contributions in this area is the work of Bott (1971). She studied twenty London families

and collected data on four areas of family life: housework, child-care, decision-making and leisure interests. Bott settled on the distinction between segregated conjugal role relationships and joint conjugal role relationships. Many researchers have regarded jointness and equality as synonymous when interpreting Bott and their own data (Pahl and Pahl, 1971; Oppong, 1975). Young and Wilmott (1973) have likewise argued that the family is becoming more "symmetrical" (egalitarian) that is, evolving toward a pattern where each marital partner has a significant role in both work outside home and in the family. A potential change in the work-family role system is the breakdown of occupational sex segregation. Oakley (1974: 146) also examined four areas of family: life-housework, child-care, decision-making and leisure - and discussed her findings in relation to "assertions of equality within marriage." The crux of Oakley's analysis is that even in marriages that are egalitarian "a large pocket of domestic oppression" may also be present (1974: 149). Thus, the lack of an "equal allocation of responsibilities" as well as a lack of extensive task-sharing in most marriages leads Oakley to be very skeptical of the view that marriage is a "joint" or "equal" partnership (p. 160).

Additionally, Greek (Safilios-Rothschild, 1967) and Yugoslavian (Buric and Zecevic, 1967) data have shown a significant negative correlation between the husband's

occupation and education and the extent of his decision-making power. Feldman (1967) also found that in Ghana uneducated men and women reported a more traditional ideology (patriarchal authority) and a more husband-dominated decision-making than the educated respondents. In Japan, while educational superiority seems to be a "resource" in the Blood and Wolfe sense, occupational status is not, since low status Tokyo husbands enjoy more decision-making power than high status husbands. In addition, there are no significant differences between the degree of the decision-making power of educated and uneducated husbands, high occupational status and low occupational status husbands in Denmark (Kandel and Lesser, 1966) and France (Michel, 1967). In Sweden where the great majority (around 90 percent) of all decisions is made jointly, the spouses' characteristics do not alter in any significant way the basically egalitarian decision-making (Troost, 1980). These studies do not consider education and occupation as "power resources." In America education and occupation is important for both the husband and the wife.

Today with women in the labor force, the trend is towards joint decision-making in important matters. Works of Blood and Wolfe (1960) and Middleton and Putney (1960) reported that egalitarian decision-making structures typified most middle-class families. Other studies have also found an egalitarian pattern (Dizard, 1968; Rapoport

and Rapoport, 1978). As hypothesized, if husbands and wives are moving toward a more egalitarian relationship than before, the wives should be more satisfied in their marital relationships than their husbands. Husbands would no longer be the authoritarian patriarchy. And this is likely to end up in dissatisfaction for the husbands. Therefore, it is important to understand not only who now makes decisions but also in what areas, especially in family matters.

In this study, besides the commonly accepted view that men hold power and make important decisions, power in families is also determined by occupation, income, length of stay and the order of arrival to the United States. These factors may act together or separately to determine who makes important decisions. The higher the socio-economic status of the husband or wife in relation to the other, the more power he/she has in decision-making. Similarly, if one of the spouse's arrived first in the U.S., or has stayed longer in the U.S. he/she may have a greater say in decision-making because he/she is more acculturated into the American society and feel confident to speak out. For these reasons, decision-making may turn out to be a crucial determinant for the couples' satisfactory life in the U.S.

CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Another factor closely associated with decision-making patterns is decisions concerning children's academic

development. In this fourth factor, three items show high factor-loadings. They tell as to who plays an important role in making decisions and helping children academically.

White (1983) and Yogev and Brett (1985) report that child rearing is an important determinant of marital satisfaction. In America, since the husband and wife is employed, the husband's share in the division of labor increases. Pleck (1978) found that family tasks were strongly segregated by sex and that the husband's time in family tasks did not vary in response to changes in wife's family work nor paid employment. Pleck (1985) also discovered that desire for greater husband participation in family work is negatively related to satisfaction with family life. Most studies indicate that the majority of wives did not express dissatisfaction with the division of labor, although husbands' proportional contribution to housework and childcare is relatively small (Robinson, 1977).

Among most Kerala families both parents help children with their school work depending on their area of expertise and convenience. In India it is usually the wife who is more concerned with children's academic development, whether she is employed or not. In the United States, I expected to find a similar pattern, at the same time I expected children to be more independent than in India.

Not surprisingly couples are satisfied if their

children perform well academically in the United States.

One of my respondents remarked:

It is to give a better life (one better than what I had) to our children that we came to this country. And if we have failed in this objective, it is not worth coming to the United States. But I know for sure that my children are doing well at home and at school. And I think in most Kerala families children are doing pretty well and this is our greatest satisfaction.

In short, perceptions of the use of Malayalam, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns and children's academic development are important determinants in measuring the couples level of life satisfaction after immigrating to this country. These factors directly or indirectly affect the life of individuals in the process of performing various family tasks. It would seem reasonable that this could lead at times to disagreement between the husband and wife and at other times there may not be any disagreement.

MARITAL DISAGREEMENT

The last factor is marital disagreement. It consists of seven items, again with high loadings, measuring the high marital disagreement between the husband and wife.

Disagreement and conflict are common in marriage (Burgess, 1981). Overall life satisfaction is a positive function of positive interactions and a negative function of negative ones (Howard and Dawes, 1976). It can be expected that satisfaction and conflict (disagreement) vary with the power

and status that each partner hold.

In America Kerala couples live in nuclear families, therefore, some of the problems associated with extended families (e.g., mother-in-law daughter-in-law conflicts) do not exist. However, in the immigrant family tensions mount when or if the in-laws arrive. The mother-in-law, who probably controlled the household in India, does not easily adjust to having her power taken by the daughter-in-law. But other problems of stress and strain occur because of lack of support network and could result in dissatisfaction and disagreement between the couple, especially if the husband does not share in the division of labor.

In some cases there may be disagreement between the couple on family matters and in others there may not. There may be cases where husbands and wives decide not to disagree to avoid a confrontation or because the couples accept the differences. Therefore, marital disagreement is only a transitional stage for some couples before reaching the final stage - life satisfaction.

COUPLES' LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional satisfaction continuum comprising several dimensions (McNamara and Bahr, 1980). The term life satisfaction denotes a combination of satisfaction in several separate spheres or roles in an overall evaluation.

conclusions drawn from an analysis of factors extracted from a pool of indicators of life satisfaction incorporates marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction and work satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is a composite of feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a variety of specific domains of life. When measures of such satisfactions in three domains in this study (marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction and work satisfaction) are combined to a simple model, they account for an impressive portion of life satisfaction. This finding is obvious. I expected any overall sense of life satisfaction to be mainly conditioned by reactions to more specific facets of life: a happy or unhappy marital life, child care that is pleasure or a frustration and a job that is fulfilling or tedious.

Marriage is a dramatic act in which two people come together and redefine themselves and the world, each family constitutes its own segregated subworld with its own controls and its own closed conversation (Berger and Kellner, 1970). Thus, it is not what happens in that marriage, but how the partners understand or define what has happened that is critical. It is this way that marital satisfaction may be viewed as a socially constructed reality, created by the partners to the marriage. For example, factors such as listening and discussing spouse's problems - it is the marital conversation that creates and

sustains the reality of marital satisfaction, guide husbands and wives to hold similar perceptions.

COUPLES' DEGREE OF CONGRUENCE

In order to measure the degree of congruence of husbands' and wives' life satisfaction, I computed objective and subjective congruence variables. The difference between them, if significant, should indicate incongruence, while none or only very little difference reflects congruence. I repeat the regression analysis using the congruence variables in place of the original variables to measure how similarity of background attributes affect the husbands and wives level of life satisfaction.

Finally, I will test the couples' degree of life satisfaction by repeating the path analysis, this time with the congruence life satisfaction variables². This should ultimately indicate in which aspects of life the couples are similar or dissimilar and whether they are congruent in their level of satisfaction. Lack of coordination between husbands and wives in their life satisfaction makes it more likely that the couples are incongruent in their life satisfaction.

Based on the qualitative analysis, I did not expect to find significant differences between husbands and wives in

² Congruence life satisfaction variable is computed by subtracting the wives satisfaction values (marital, parental and work satisfaction) from husbands satisfaction values.

their different aspects of life nor in their level of satisfaction. However, given the fact that changes are taking place in some aspects of life (traditional family attitudes and decision-making patterns), I expected to find differences in these two areas which, in turn could indicate the husbands' and wives' different level of congruence in life satisfaction. I also expected differences in the couples socio-economic status. This could have again lead to incongruence in their life satisfaction. Level of congruity and incongruity should ultimately reveal whether the couples are satisfied or dissatisfied with their life in America.

CONCLUSION

In sum, it may be pointed out that the pre-immigration credentials of the Keralites by themselves may not be sufficient to succeed in the United States. The life satisfaction of husbands and wives will depend on the objective and subjective factors that the Keralites encounter in this country. Education, occupation and income give the Keralites a high socio-economic status in the American society. However, husbands' and wives' perceptions in areas of language, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, children's academic development and marital disagreement will ultimately determine the couples' level of life satisfaction in the United States.

In a review of the marital satisfaction literature, spanier and Lewis (1980) observe that in the 1960s demographic characteristics were significant in studying life satisfaction (e.g., age, sex, income, socio-economic status), but recent studies often fail to find any significant associations (Glenn and Weaver, 1978; Jorgensen, 1979). Today studies focusing on subjective (e.g., division of labor, child care, etc.) correlates of marital satisfaction are appearing increasingly in the literature (Davidson et al., 1983). By using path analysis in this study I am able to integrate the demographic characteristics as well as the subjective factors to identify meaningful explanations for the correlations between these characteristics and life satisfaction.

Sociologists of the 1980s have raised the question whether the objective or the subjective factors are more important in determining life satisfaction in family studies. It seems that though the demographic variables are significant in making the Keralites feel at home, their level of life satisfaction will depend on their everyday interactions or the subjective factors. In fact, both sets of factors are independent and they both complement and supplement each other. It seems to me that they both are significant in making transitions from one culture to another and in living a satisfactory life in the new country.

CHAPTER VI

PERCEPTIONS OF KERALA IMMIGRANTS ON MARITAL, PARENTAL AND WORK SATISFACTION: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

This chapter builds on the conceptual approaches in chapter IV and provides a descriptive examination of the factors contributing to the degree of life satisfaction of both husbands and wives. The normative structures that define life satisfaction are both positive and negative. The factors affecting life satisfaction can be divided into two broad categories: background variables and intervening variables.

This chapter attempts to measure the degree of assimilation of Keralites by means of the variables that have been thought to be indices of assimilation and to determine the relationship between the degree of certain background variables and the degree of assimilation that may constitute variations in the achievement of assimilation. By testing the background factors, it may be possible to determine the usefulness of these variables as correlates of life satisfaction and to predict with some confidence the probability that variations in degree of life satisfaction

will indicate that Keralites will assimilate into the American culture.

The background variables consist of individual characteristics acquired in the immigrant's country i.e., age, rural/urban residence, education, occupation and social class in India. Two sets of intervening variables are important in the life satisfaction of the couples' - objective factors, such as reasons for migration, order of arrival, length of stay, occupation and income in the U.S.; and subjective factors such as: use of the Malayalam language, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, children's academic development and marital disagreement. When each spouse perceives that the personal attributes are relatively desirable as well as that the interpersonal relationships are fairly stable, each should be satisfied with their life.

The path model¹ used in this study progresses from the

¹ Path analysis is primarily a method for decomposing and interpreting linear relationships among a set of variables. This method allows me to examine more clearly the structure of the relationship and the amount of influence of the variables in the model, upon one another and upon the model as a whole. Although no causal order is assumed to exist among some (subjective) variables, path analysis does not demonstrate causality in a strict sense. It's purpose is to examine empirically a set of causal assumptions generated from theory. It is the logic of the theory which specifies the arrangements and the direction of the relationships among the variables. Once the structure and the direction of the relationships have been specified, it is then the function of path analysis to determine if a path between the variables exists statistically. The paths which do not exist from a statistical or theoretical point of view are then eliminated from the model.

objective aspects of life through sets of intervening social, economic and migratory factors, with each set adding something more to the understanding of life satisfaction of the Keralites. In establishing the empirical validity of this model, the first step is to examine the direct relationship of the explanatory variables to life satisfaction and the relationships among the independent variables. This procedure will also provide a descriptive profile of the sample under study.

The population for this study come from the North Central region of the United States (Illinois) where the Asian Indians have not yet been studied. Data for this chapter come from participant observation as well as from 100 structured interviews conducted in the Greater Chicago area. The sample was representative of the wider Asian Indian (Kerala) population in the Greater Chicago area in terms of education, occupation and income. Because of the professional and semi-professional composition of this community, it is as a whole characterized as typical upper middle-class. In this respect the Asian Indian (Kerala) immigration is selective and includes a high proportion of well-educated urban middle-class people.

The immigration service classified 3,273 of Asian Indians admitted in 1987 to the U.S. as either 'professional/technical workers' or as 'spouse and children of professional/technical workers' (*Annual Report*,

Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1987). There does not seem to be any available estimate of the size of different professional groups. But there is indication that among the ten largest "exporters" of professionals to the United States in 1969, India ranked second (Weber, 1970: 44). United States' immigration laws, which have favored professionals and skilled workers, are mainly responsible for the relatively high percentage of professionals and other highly trained Asian Indians in the migration streams.

After the Keralites have arrived in the United States the successful acculturation depends primarily upon two factors. First, the immigrants' expectations of the life that the new country will offer and second, the extent to which the immigrants' expectations can be realized in terms of the structure of the absorbing society. The immigrants' expectations will, of course, depend upon their previous life experiences in his/her own country and his/her knowledge of the life in the new country. Therefore, to understand better what the expectations of Keralites are, I examined their socio-cultural background in India.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

The Indian background variables used in this model are age, rural/urban residence, education, occupation and social class.

Table 6.1
Spouses by Age

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Median Age ²	36	39.5
25 to 35 years	44	28
36 to 45 years	44	56
46+ years	12	16
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

My purpose in selecting age as a variable is threefold: first, to show that my sample is representative of the overall Asian Indian population in the U.S., second, to contrast the differences between the couples, and third, to find whether the process of acculturation is easier and faster for younger immigrants as some researchers have observed. In Table 1, the median ages of wives are 36 (sd=6.2) and husbands 39.5 years (sd=5.9), with ranges from 26 to 52 and 30 to 54 respectively. The husbands on average are 3.5 years older than their wives. There were no cases where the wife was older than the husband. Both sexes taken together reveal that the great majority of the sample is in the age group of 31 to 40. Due to the recency of Asian Indian immigration, there are very few respondents over 46+

² The median, rather than the mean is considered a more objective measure of central tendency because of the presence of extreme cases in the data, to which the mean is very sensitive.

years of age. An UNESCO study indicates that about 40 percent of Asian Indians come to the U.S. in their thirties. My study is consistent with the UNESCO as well as with the U.S. Census report where in the majority of Asian Indians fall within the age group of 25 to 44 supporting the fact that migrants tend to be young adults. Immigrants who are relatively young at the time of entering the U.S. are expected to assimilate more easily, since the younger are thought to adapt more quickly to a new culture.

However, age is only one of several factors that could speed up the acculturation process. Another factor would be the immigrants' rural/urban residence prior to immigration. Since the U.S. is an urbanized and modernized country compared to India, the immigrants' exposure to an urban environment in India facilitates their adaptation to this country. In this respect, the place where the respondents grew up, the second background variable, would not only help to understand what their formative environment was but also to facilitate their assimilation into the American society.

Table 6.2

Spouses by Rural/Urban Residence

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Place where grew up		
Village	64	54
Town	24	36
City	12	10
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

Table 2 indicates that individuals grew up mainly in villages, towns and a few cities of Kerala, India. More than half of my respondents grew up in villages. The difference between those who grew up in a city and village is quite large (64 percent versus twelve percent for females and 54 percent versus ten percent for males). Approximately 77 percent (Census of India, 1981) of India's population live in villages, therefore, this sample is in keeping with the general trend seen in India. Spousal difference between those who grew up in a village and a city is significant (Chi-square= 11.9; $p < .01$ and gamma= .62). During my interviews I learned that although most of the respondents grew up in villages in India, before immigration a vast majority of them had lived and worked in big cities such as New Delhi and Bombay. This could probably be another reason why the Keralites had little difficulty adjusting to a Metropolitan city like Chicago.

However, age and exposure to urban life are not the only factors that will help to make a smooth transition to another culture. More than any other single factor, education of the respondents probably explains the degree and extent of socio-cultural adaptation and the precise form that the adaptation takes (Smolicz, 1979). Migrants are better educated than the non-immigrants but the differences are particularly marked for those who migrated after 1965.

In terms of prior educational achievement, migration theorists argue that the best educated in the place of origin usually immigrate, but that usually they have lower education than other people in place of their destination. However, the Kerala immigrants reflect a highly educated class of people because of the policies and selection criteria used by the U.S. government. In this respect, the educational level of Keralites exceeds that of the Caucasian population in the U.S.

Table 6.3

Spouses by Years of Education

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Median Education	16.5	17
Up to high school + some college	22	24
College graduates	56	32
College graduates + more	22	44
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

Table 3 provides the present educational characteristics of the couples. The median educational level is 16.5 for women and 17 years for men. Though the overall population of India has a literacy rate of only 36 percent, my sample has a much higher number of educated people. The data in this study does fit the general trend seen among Keralites as described in Chapter I. In India primary education is free and compulsory. Most Keralites continue their education to high school and a large number go on to obtain a college degree.

Table 3 gives the relationship between husbands' and wives' educational level (Chi-square =5.15; $p < .01$). The gamma coefficient (.42) indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between husbands' and wives' education. In general, husbands' educational credentials are somewhat evenly distributed throughout various levels of education. At the same time, while 44 percent of husbands has professional education, only half that number of wives have the same.

During the interviews I also learned that while all women have attended college, the high educational credentials of the Kerala women in the U.S. were acquired prior to their immigration. However, the immigrants who hold professional qualifications have to take a qualifying exam to attain a license to practice, such as, physicians and nurses. In other fields, such as in academia, the U.S.

universities do not accept an M.A. from India. Indian M.A.'s are required to fulfill required stipulations laid down by each University to be considered equivalent to the U.S. degree. At present two M.A. degrees from India are considered equivalent to a Master's degree in the U.S. Despite these restrictions, compared to the average adult American population, Asian Indian immigrants among both sexes are substantially better educated (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980).

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) does not provide information on the educational background of the immigrants. Nevertheless, from the 1980 Census and the few existing studies on Asian Indians, it is apparent that Asian Indians are highly educated. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (1990), 66 percent of the Asian Indian residents in the United States have four years of college education or more, compared to 60 percent Chinese, 24 percent Japanese, 42 percent Filipinos, and 34 percent Koreans. The fact that Asian Indians are distinguished by high levels of education is also supported by Barringer and Kassebaum's (1989) study.

The pursuit of education for the betterment of employment opportunities was the motivating factor behind this high level of education for the Keralites. This supports the fact that Keralites are a selective group of people and their educational attainment has a significant effect on the process of their adjustment. The high

educational attainment levels of Keralites are reflected in the occupational profile of this community.

Table 6.4
Spouses by Occupation in India

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Occupations		
Professionals	10	36
Semi-professionals	54	22
Blue collar	0	18
Students/home-makers	34	20
Total	(98) 49 ³	(96) 48 ⁴

Table 4 shows the occupational profile of the couples held in India at the time of their emigration. The occupations of the individual in India give some insight into the self-concept and role of the individual in relation to society as a whole. Fifty-eight percent of husbands and 64 percent of wives were professional and semi-professionals in India. The difference between husbands and wives occupation is statistically significant (Chi-square= 13.7; $p < .03$). This data should be interpreted with caution

³ The total does not add up to 50 cases because one of the wives did not live in India. She lived in Singapore before migrating to the United States.

⁴ Again the total of the husbands adds up to only 48 because one migrated from Africa and the other was already living in the United States.

because 34 percent of women and 20 percent of men were students, home-makers and were not employed in India. At the same time, this high proportion of professional and skilled workers among Keralites, is one of the most salient features of the Asian Indians (Keralites) occupational pattern. It is therefore likely that the person in white collar occupations would more quickly adapt to the new culture than their counterparts on blue collar occupations.

The last of the background variables is social class. The social class origins of Keralites are important in their relative occupational and economic achievement in the U.S.

Table 6.5
Spouses by Socio-economic Status

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Social Class		
1. Upper	10	6
2. Middle	88	94
3. Lower	2	0
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

Table 5 show that a vast majority, 88 percent of wives and 94 percent of the husbands, characterizes the socio-economic status of their family of origin as "middle class." About ten percent wives and six percent husbands consider themselves as belonging to "upper class." The sample

reveals that only a very small (two) percent of Keralites from lower social class has migrated to the United States. This small percent probably had the professional qualifications as laid down by the Immigration Act but were people who could not make it in India.

Compared to the influx of population from other countries, Keralites seem to be a selective and unique population for it includes a high proportion of well-educated urban middle class. A large majority of Kerala immigrants come from upper middle or middle classes and had experience of living in large urban centers before moving to the U.S. It is important to point out that these characterizations of the social status of one's family of origin are based on the respondents' subjective indices of economic status and on my observation.

The background variables of the couples tell us a great deal about their personal characteristics. At this point to assess the Keralites' level of satisfaction a Pearson's correlation between life satisfaction and the five background independent variables were analyzed as were intercorrelations between the independent variables to determine whether there was any relationship. As a measure of accuracy, the background factors were expected to be positively correlated with life satisfaction when the husband and wife are greatly satisfied with their life in the United States.

The background variables were not significant for husbands. For wives occupation in India was positively correlated with parental satisfaction ($r = .30$; $p < .05$). Wives who were employed in India felt they played more important roles than their husbands in fulfilling their parental responsibilities and the couples were satisfied with their duties. The data also reveals that wives who were employed in India felt they were happy with their marriages ($r = .35$; $p < .05$) because there was always a family member or servant to help with family chores in India. Thus wives could carry out their job responsibilities without family pressure and this was surely satisfying. In general, the influence of the background variables on life satisfaction, whenever significant, lends support to the general argument that occupation gave women a great sense of satisfaction.

When the background variables are correlated with one another, the significant association is between wives' education and wives' social class. This brings out the importance of high socio-economic status of the Kerala wives. This high pre-immigration characteristics of the wives should facilitate them to assimilate into the American society. Because of the Kerala husbands' and wives' high education, professional background and middle class lifestyle, they did not feel the pressure for assimilation into the American main stream. Their high socio-economic

middle class lifestyle are not seen as dependent upon assimilation into the mainstream life rather, they enabled them to maintain their cultural identity to some extent unlike other immigrant groups.

However, I will consider other factors such as migratory and socio-economic conditions at the country of destination to ascertain reliably that the husbands as well as the wives are satisfied with their life in the U.S.

Table 6.6
Spouses by Reasons for Immigration

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Reasons for immigration		
Study/Better jobs	16	28
Join spouse/sponsored by relatives	80	68
Other reasons	4	4
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

As seen in Table 6, the main reason for Keralites to come to America is because relatives and friends sponsored them. Secondly, they came to better their economic conditions through better jobs, and thirdly, for education. The findings reveal two characteristics: work opportunities pulled the immigrants to the United States, and family and friends were the intervening catalyst in bringing them to

America.

Like other immigration studies, the support network in the United States seems to play an important role for Keralites. A receiving network of kin and friends from home was already in place for most Kerala immigrants. Therefore, most Keralites were able to move into the households of relatives or friends when they first arrived. Many of these friends and relatives helped new arrivals with sponsorship, immigration papers, employment, financial assistance and moral support. They wanted to share their American Dream with them.

For the majority in this study, both their migration to the United States and their early adjustment were facilitated by the previous chain migration from India and family reunification provisions contained in the 1965 Immigration law. Once the new immigrants obtained jobs, they first sent for their spouses and children, and in due course when they became green card holders or obtained American citizenship, they sponsored their siblings. Kerala immigrants are currently admitted under the fifth preference (siblings of U.S. citizens). The one significant feature that seems to stand out is the role of relatives and friends in this chain migration pattern. Furthermore, since Keralites come to America in small numbers, they tend to identify themselves as a close knit group.

Despite the help rendered by the support system, I

found no significant relationship between motivation for migration and life satisfaction either among the husbands or the wives. This is expected because at the time of migration the emigrants are generally not fully cognizant what their life in the U.S. will be like without actually living it. Older wives are more likely to have migrated for study or jobs ($r = .41$; $p < .01$) than younger wives. It is not enough to know the reasons behind the migration pattern, but it is also germane to probe further other intervening variables to understand what factors are important for adaptation ultimately leading to levels of satisfaction.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERVENING VARIABLES

This set of intervening variables includes four factors that affect life satisfaction at the normative levels: order of arrival, length of stay, occupation and income in the United States.

Table 6.7

Percentage of Husbands and Wives in the
Order of their Arrival

Characteristics	Percentage Couples
Who arrived first	
Wife	50
Husband	36
Both together	8
Separately	6
Total	(100) 50

Table 7 reveals that in most (50 percent) of these cases wives came first, found a job, obtained their green card, went back to India, married and then sponsored their husbands. It can be deduced that the scarcity of medical personnel, especially nurses, opened the opportunity for women from Kerala (India) to emigrate when the United States changed its Immigration policy. However, it takes about twelve to twenty-four months for the spouses to join their partners in the U.S. At present, this waiting period has been reduced to six months. In other cases where the women were married, still they were the first to emigrate. Women are, therefore, the qualified applicants for immigration whether they are married or unmarried. This study substantiates the fact that female migration is dominated by women from Kerala as substantiated by Fawcett et al. in Chapter IV.

I would also add that female migration gives women greater power and status because they are no longer under the control of their family. The fact that a woman accomplished this by herself gives her a greater sense of her own worth and self-esteem because traditionally, female migration has been associated only with marriage migration. Therefore, women were virtually invisible in migration processes because they were considered passive movers who followed their husbands. At the same time, this new freedom that the women now exercise, i.e., to migrate alone, is not

always appreciated by men. During the interviews some husbands acknowledged that if it were not for their wives, they would never have come to America. Husbands who arrived before their wives were more satisfied in their marital life than their counterparts ($r = .48$; $p < .01$). If husbands followed their wives they were unhappy because they had to depend on their wives for sponsorship, finance and accommodation. But the data reveals that most husbands had to follow their wives because half of the wives arrived first. Again, order of arrival is a one time event, therefore, other continuum factors may be more important. Factors such as the length of stay may be a better determinant in this respect to determine whether staying longer in America makes a difference in acculturation.

Table 6.8

Spouses by Length of Stay in the United States

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Length of Stay in U.S. ⁵	12.7	12.9
15 years of more	8	10
10 to 15 years	52	60
Less than 9 years	40	30
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

⁵ The mean length of stay of the Kerala couples is 12.8 years with a maximum range of 26.3 years.

I divided the length of the Kerala immigrants stay into three categories (Table 8) to determine what impact the Immigration Act of 1965 had on Kerala immigrants. As the data reveals, few people immigrated from Kerala before 1965.⁶ The major immigration occurred from 1976 to 1980.

The relationships between length of stay of husbands and wives and their degree of assimilation would indicate whether the Keralites are satisfied with their life in the U.S. Older husbands and wives seem to have stayed longer in the U.S. (husbands $r = .51$ and wives $r = .66$; $p < .01$) than younger couples. Therefore, I would assume that the older couples had assimilated more into the American culture than their counterparts. However, given the marginal acculturation pattern of Asian Indians in other countries, I would also assume that the extent of acculturation of the Keralites into the American society would be minimal. I will offer this analysis in Chapter VII.

⁶ It was not possible to get any estimates of the number of people who migrated before 1965 because there are no records available either with the Indian Embassy or at other reliable sources.

Table 6.9

Spouses by Occupation in the United States

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Occupations		
Professionals	14	36
Semi-professionals	76	44
Blue collar	0	18
Students/Homemakers	10	2
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

Table 9 contains data on husbands' and wives' occupation in the United States; there is no significant difference between husbands' and wives' occupation. Because of the Kerala immigrants' pre-immigration background (education and occupation), there is a considerable concentration in the professional and semi-professional categories. Furthermore, occupational requirements for permanent resident visas and strong educational credentials make finding a job relatively easy for Keralites.

It would be useful to compare at this point the couples' pre-immigrant occupations with their current occupations in the United States. There is a significant change in both men and women's occupation (Table 9) from India to the United States. Thirty-six percent of men found work in the same profession as they held in India ($p < .01$). For example, physicians and nurses were the most successful in retaining the previous occupational status. After

emigration more women are employed in the U.S. (90 percent) compared to (64 percent) India, and more women have become professionals. Similarly more women are semi-professional (52 versus 70 percent) in the United States than in India. But more men have moved into the semi-professional and middle management jobs (22 versus 44 percent) than women. Husbands with high education in India also hold high occupations ($r = .51$; $p < .01$) in the United States. Again, the occupational status of Kerala immigrants is a reflection of the immigration laws that facilitated the migration of skilled and professional people.

Significantly, employment may be a factor promoting Keralite assimilation. At work a person is more likely to be involved in interaction with American co-workers as well as with the broader American social system. The results of such an interaction, especially in more prestigious occupations, broaden a person's understanding and concepts of the new culture and increase the chance of a high degree of assimilation.

Correlations reveal that both husbands and wives with high occupations are more satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts (husbands $r = .31$; $p < .05$ and wives $r = .53$; $p < .01$), and that in turn would indicate that they are satisfied with their life in the U.S. These characteristics seem to indicate that Asian Indian immigrants with their high level of education, professional and semi-professional

expertise are less affected by various cultural barriers in their occupational pursuit in the United States. Those with fewer skills are seriously handicapped. However, this pattern is changing in the 1990s. When men fail to find a job similar to the one held in India they choose middle management jobs. Since they already possess a good education, they need only minimal training in the new profession. Today more men are moving into this job category. However, occupation alone cannot account for their level of satisfaction. I will examine next income, which is closely linked to occupation.

Table 6.10

Spouses by Level of Individual Earnings (1989)

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Wife (N=50)	Husband (N=50)
Income (in \$)		
Less than \$24,999	52	46
\$25,000 to \$39,999	32	26
\$40,000 and more	10	26
Not employed	6	2
Total	(100) 50	(100) 50

The individual income levels, presented on Table 10, indicate that the sample is reasonably affluent with the median annual income of the wives between \$20,000 and \$24,999 and husbands \$25,000 and \$39,999. Nobody in the

sample earned less than \$10,000 (Chi-square = 11.83; $p < .01$). The high median income enjoyed by many Asian Indians is to an important degree a reflection of the high level of education and the percentage of professional, technical and managerial positions occupied by this immigrant group. In 1980, the income levels of Asian Indians of both sexes were close to national levels. Besides the earnings of husbands and wives, a comparison of household income levels between Asian Indians and the household income in U.S. shows the Asian Indians earn \$30,834 (median) whereas the family income is only \$27,225 (median) of the general U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980). The Census Bureau of 1980 shows that Asian Indians, Koreans and Caucasians have larger household incomes, than personal earnings. Asian Indians and Japanese families are at the top of America's Asian high earners (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980).

Additionally, 19 percent of the couples have some form of business such as rental property, real estate, grocery stores which are a source of added income. My participant observation reveals that there are some respondents making additional income which they were not willing to disclose.

Owning a home is another reliable measure of the couples' economic status. In Kerala the most commonly accepted index of a family's wealth is the house and the extent of land owned by the family. This holds generally true for the Keralites who have migrated to the U.S. Owning

a house in America elevates the couple to higher status.

According to the U.S. Census of Housing (1990) the median cost of owner-occupied house was \$79,400 and that of Asian Indians was \$74,300 in 1980⁷. But my data indicates that the Asian Indians (Keralites) generally live in expensive homes. About 84 percent of the couples own their own homes and the median value is \$130,000. If possible they move to a "good" neighborhood, which they defined as one with a minimum of African-Americans.

It is interesting to note that 95 percent of the couples said they saved part of their family income. During the interviews I found out that some Keralites not only saved part of their income but invested some of it in real estate.

The stratification variables (education, occupation, individual earnings, family income, owning a home and savings) in my sample support the fact that Keralites have a high socio-economic status. High inter-correlations among the three stratification indices - education, social class and income of husbands and wives ($r = .54$; $r = .43$; $p < .01$ and $r = .34$; $p, .05$ respectively) provide a consistent picture of the socio-economic status of the couples. It indicates a coherence in the couples' socio-economic structure. These patterns in the socio-economic status of husbands and wives

⁷ The cost of owner-occupied house in 1990 was not available at the time of writing this dissertation.

is expected to influence their life satisfaction in the United States. I examined also whether there is a relationship between the social and economic variables and life satisfaction, i.e., the dependent variable.

In general, I found if couples had a high occupational status in the U.S. they were happy with their marriages ($r = .43$; $p < .01$). Similarly if the couples earned high income ($r = .24$; $p < .05$), they were satisfied with parenting. However, the areas of satisfaction differ when data for husbands and wives is analyzed separately.

Table 6.11a

Correlation of Husbands' Socio-economic Status by Marital Satisfaction, Parental Satisfaction and Work Satisfaction

	HMSAT	HPSAT	HWSAT
HEDUC	-.0923	.0665	.0441
HOCCUS	.0953	-.0042	.3121*
HSALUS	-.0760	.1544	.0899

Table 6.11b

Correlation of Wives' Socio-economic Status by Marital Satisfaction, Parental Satisfaction and Work Satisfaction

	WMSAT	WPSAT	WWSAT
WEDUC	-.0903	-.0016	-.1417
WOCCUS	-.1923	-.0437	.5372**
WSALUS	-.0763	.3404*	-.3858**

$p < .01^{**}$ $p < .05^{*}$

According to Table 11a and 11b if husbands have high occupational status, they were more satisfied with their work. Wives who earned high income in the U.S. were more satisfied with parenting. If the wives made less income, they were dissatisfied with their marital life, and if they were working they were more satisfied with their marriage. The above data indicates that the level of satisfaction of the wives will depend on the socio-economic factors, occupation and income. Employment status is expected to influence perceptions of professional competence as well as perceptions of personality. Occupation is the only significant variable that is associated with the husbands' level of satisfaction, whereas occupation and income for wives are statistically significant for them to have a satisfactory life in the U.S.

This finding supports my hypothesis, that the higher the socio-economic status of the husband and wife, the more satisfied he/she is with her life in the U.S. These findings are consistent with the reports of the U.S. Bureau of Census and other research on Asian Indians.

After this analysis of the objective factors, I would like to use the normative and behavioral factors to explain the second part of the model. Subjective variables could have a more direct influence on life satisfaction than the objective variables. Thus they are the focus in the second part of the study in determining the satisfaction level of

the couples.

INTERACTIONAL INTERVENING VARIABLES

While socio-economic status can be considered an important index of life satisfaction, other subjective factors may prove to be better indicators of life satisfaction because they interact with everyday aspects of life. I used five subjective factors in this analysis: - use of Malayalam language, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, involvement in children's academic development, and marital disagreement measured at the ordinal level ranging from a value of one to a value of five and six.⁸

PERCEPTIONS OF THE USE OF MALAYALAM

The role played by the Malayalam language as a means of ethnic identification is conspicuous. My qualitative data reveals that the church employs Malayalam in its liturgy, families use Malayalam in daily communication, in written correspondence and in conversations with friends and relatives. The Keralites go to great lengths to see that their children learn Malayalam. But the interviews revealed that teaching the Malayalam language to the offspring of immigrants has not been successful.

⁸ For a detailed description of the scales refer the interview schedule (Appendix A).

Another means of transmitting culture is through the media, such as the Indo-Pak TV program that provides entertainment for Asian Indian audiences as well as teaches Indian culture. Most of the programs are in the Indian languages to help children to learn their language and culture. Moreover, visits to India not only serve to maintain an interest in national affairs, but they also strengthen the individuals' ethnicity and knowledge of their language. For Keralites' regional differences are a major cohesive force for those sharing a common language and region and a divisive force in the ethnic group as a whole.

In Kerala most people speak Malayalam in addition to English. English was the official language of India until Hindi replaced it in 1965. The Asian Indian immigrant family acts as carrier of ethnic culture. Husbands and wives usually converse in Malayalam at home. The interviews revealed that children invariably used English, although in the majority of cases, they understood Malayalam spoken by their parents. Only in some cases did the children speak Malayalam; the majority did not. Even those who could speak Malayalam tended to reply in English. The Malayalam dialect plays both an instrumental and expressive function for Keralites living in the U.S. In this respect use of Malayalam is an important variable in measuring the couples' level of life satisfaction in the United States.

Analysis of the relationship between use of Malayalam

and satisfaction reveals an association ($r = .28$; $p < .05$) denoting that Malayalam is an important factor, especially for women in keeping in touch with relatives. Knowing Malayalam may not only be self-satisfying for the Keralites, but the opportunity to use it gives them great satisfaction. Keralites feel at home when they use their mother tongue. Conversely, Chinese and Korean studies have shown that linguistic difficulties in speaking English have many adverse implications for the general status of these groups in the United States. The knowledge of Malayalam is an added status to the Keralites because most Keralites (Asian Indians) have some knowledge of English when they arrive. This is because English is the medium of instruction in schools in India (besides Malayalam) as already indicated. This knowledge of English gives the Keralites an advantage over other Asian immigrants.

Another subjective factor that has its roots in the Malayalam language is traditional family attitudes. Malayalam is associated with traditional attitudes, values, beliefs and customs.

PERCEPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL FAMILY ATTITUDES

In a traditional culture like India, arranged marriages have been an integral part of the social and family life. Most marriages of Asian Indians (Kerala) are still arranged by the parents. Asian Indian marriages are considered a

sacrament and therefore divorces are rare. Divorce is not used as an escape mechanism to deal with the pressures and problems associated with marriage. Nowadays individuals in Kerala can select their spouses by parental approval, but the Western style of dating and courting is not accepted.

Arranged marriages, traditional expensive weddings and dowries are the accepted patterns in Kerala in the Asian Indian family. Keralite do not approve of dating and courting, love marriages, marrying non-Indians, and wearing of non-Indian garb for men or women. Contrary to my expectation, there is no significant association between traditional family attitudes and life satisfaction. This could be due to the fact that in a modern society traditional family attitudes may not be important in the process of acculturation. However, the interviews do reveal that even if the structural conditions surrounding the immigrant family have changed, the immigrant couples still resort to traditional norms in the family.

Since traditional attitudes have such a grip on Keralites, I pursued this aspect. Tables 12a and 12b, provide percentage of husbands and wives falling into each of the five categories "strongly agree," "agree", "undecided," "disagree" and "strongly disagree." The descriptive statistics (Tables 12a and 12b) reveal that traditional attitudes still persist. There is strong disagreement by both husbands and wives in three areas,

Table 6.12a

Percentage Distribution of Traditional Family Attitudes by Husbands (N=50)

Traditional Family Attitudes	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ISSUES						
Children dating and courting	6	16	24	20	34	100
Arranged marriages	36	50	8	2	4	100
Love marriages	4	38	32	18	8	100
Traditional weddings	14	32	18	32	4	100
Dowries	6	28	18	18	30	100
Divorces	0	2	2	16	80	100
Children marrying a non-Indian	0	2	14	30	54	100
Parents and in-laws living with couple	14	54	16	12	4	100
Siblings living with couple	6	52	14	22	6	100
Husbands provider, wives nurturer	14	34	14	26	12	100
Use of birth control	22	58	6	4	10	100
More important for husbands to have a job	44	38	6	8	4	100
Wives have just as much chance as husbands for prestigious jobs	24	62	12	2	0	100
Asian Indian wives not interested in working	4	6	4	18	68	100

Table 6.12b

Percentage Distribution of Traditional Family Attitudes by Wives (N=50)

Traditional Family Attitudes	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ISSUES						
Children dating and courting	8	12	18	30	32	100
Arranged marriages	26	50	12	8	4	100
Love marriages	4	38	30	20	8	100
Traditional weddings	12	38	18	18	14	100
Dowries	6	20	24	22	28	100
Divorces	2	4	6	18	70	100
Children marrying a non-Indian	0	8	14	26	52	100
Parents and in-laws living with couple	28	52	12	4	4	100
Siblings living with couple	14	52	14	14	6	100
Husbands provider, wives nurturer	20	32	14	22	12	100
Use of birth control	18	60	12	6	4	100
More important for husbands to have a job	36	38	12	8	6	100
Wives have just as much chance as husbands for prestigious jobs	14	66	10	4	6	100
Asian Indian wives not interested in working	2	6	8	40	44	100

children's dating and courting, divorce and marrying non-Indians. There was agreement on the rest of the attitudes, however, and this would also appear to indicate that husbands and wives are congruent in their perceptions of traditional family attitudes. At the same time the statistics are negligible in the undecided category. Some of the respondents were somewhat tentative in their response. The relative balance between the husbands and wives in most areas indicate their traditional outlook persists even in America. This would seem to indicate that both partners agree on the traditional values and attitudes.

Therefore, to examine the similarities in perception of traditional family attitudes of husbands and wives the means, standard deviations and t-tests of husbands and wives were calculated (Table 13). The results of the means and t-tests on Table 13 show that there were no statistically significant differences between husbands and wives in their traditional family attitudes except in one area - parents and in-laws living with the couple. This is the area where the marital relationship could be disrupted especially when the in-laws observe that the wife has more power in America. Therefore, it is not surprising to find this significant difference between husbands and wives. The congruity in their attitudes is also an indication that the couples are similar in the way the couples are changing.

Correlations were also calculated between husbands and

Table 6.13

Means, Standard Deviations and Results of T-tests for Traditional Family Attitudes
by Husbands and Wives

Traditional Family Attitudes	Husbands		Wives		Significant p=<
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ISSUES					
Children dating and courting	2.34	1.27	2.40	1.27	. 77
Arranged marriages	3.86	1.03	4.12	.94	. 11
Love marriages	3.10	1.03	3.12	1.02	. 90
Traditional weddings	3.16	3.20	1.26	1.16	. 83
Dowries	2.54	1.26	2.62	1.33	. 65
Divorces	1.50	.93	1.26	.60	. 09
Children marrying non-Indians	1.78	.97	1.64	.80	. 35
Parents and in-laws living with couple	3.96	.96	3.62	1.00	. 02*
Siblings living with couple	3.54	1.09	3.30	1.07	. 15
Husbands provider, wives nurturer	3.36	1.33	3.12	1.28	. 60
Use of birth control	3.82	.94	3.78	1.14	. 80
More important for husbands to have jobs than wives	3.90	1.16	4.10	1.09	. 28
Wives equality for prestigious jobs	3.78	.95	4.08	.66	. 07
Asian Indian women not interested in employment	1.82	.96	1.60	1.08	. 23

wives to determine whether their perceptions were associated with traditional family attitudes. Fourteen⁹ attitude areas were examined. Table 14 shows that in four areas, (divorces, husbands as providers and wives as nurturers, wives' equality for prestigious jobs, and Asian Indian women not interested in employment) the husbands and wives were incongruent. Some Keralites have definite opinions on these issues. In the area where the man is the provider and woman the nurturer, these attitudes were developed during socialization. Time will have to determine any change in this traditional attitude towards divorce. The fact is that men in the Kerala society cannot accept that women are capable of securing prestigious employment. Men still think that it is their birthright for such employment. A similar trend is seen in the Keralite society in American.

Husbands' and wives' attitudes and values related to marriage and family, and views about the place of men and women in society have not changed among the Keralites. Most respondents claimed during the interview that they were not influenced by Western views. This indicates that acculturation and adaptation to the host setting is a selective approach. Most Kerala couples do not adapt to American attitudes and values concerning marriage and family but consider Indian attitudes and values as integral part of

⁹ I have examined 14 traditional family attitudes. The factor variable (TFA) it is restricted to only 8 variables based on the factor loadings.

Table 6.14

Correlation of Traditional Family Attitudes by Husbands and Wives (N=50)

Traditional Family Attitudes	Children's dating and courting	Arranged marriages	Love marriages	Traditional Dowries expensive weddings	Divorces
Children dating and courting	.3291*				
Arranged marriages		.3128*			
Love marriages			.3932**		
Traditional, expensive weddings				.4218**	
Dowries					.5214**
Divorces					.2010

** p< .01

* p< .05

Table 6.14 (Cont.)

Correlation of Traditional Family Attitudes by Husbands and Wives (N=50)

Traditional Family Attitudes	More important for husbands to have jobs than wives	Wives equality for prestigious jobs	Asian Indian women not interested in employment
More important for husbands to have jobs than wives	.3287*		
Wives equality for prestigious jobs		-.0360	
Asian Indian women not interested in employment			.2222

** p < .05

Table 6.14 (Cont.)

Correlation of Traditional Family Attitudes by Husbands and Wives (N=50)

Traditional Family Attitudes	Children marrying non-Indians	Parents & in-laws living with couple	Relatives, siblings living with couple	Husbands Use of provider, birth wives control nurturer
Children marrying non-Indians	.3142*			
Parents and in-laws living with couple		.4861**		
Relatives, siblings living with couple			.4160**	
Husbands provider, wives nurturer				-.0422
Use of birth control				.4349**

** p < .01

* p < .05

cultural identity and the couples remain firmly anchored to it.

PERCEPTIONS OF DECISION-MAKING PATTERNS

As I discussed in Chapter III, decision-making pattern is a cumulative Index of five individual dimensions with husband always (high) and wife always (low) at the two extreme ends of the scale. Joint decision making patterns are associated with more sharing and less disagreement and in some cases giving in or compromising.

If decision-making is an index of life satisfaction, significant differences may be expected between husbands and wives in the nature of their respective role relationships¹⁰. Asian Indian literature and my knowledge of the Kerala culture suggest that only a small number of couples make joint decisions in Kerala families. A change in the decision-making pattern in the U.S. among Keralites was expected to be found in this study because couples do not have the support network (parents and relatives) in the United States. The spouse takes on this role in the U.S., and this makes the couple interdependent on each other. Therefore, couples tend to lean more towards joint decision-making patterns that are consistent with the American middle class families.

¹⁰ A detailed description of the seven indices is given in Appendix A.

The aspects that require particular emphasis for purposes of the present argument is the complex patterns in the decision-making process. Wives' working outside the home leads to a rearrangement of roles in the family. The husband is compelled to share household chores such as shopping, childcare, etc. While it is recognizable that decision-making patterns are not independent from division of labor, it appears that the complement of the two variables strengthens the interpretation on who is dominant in the family. In both cases egalitarianism is the norm as perceived by both husbands and wives.

Initially a descriptive examination of dominance of conjugal decision-making as perceived by both husbands and wives¹¹ is provided in this study. Table 15a and 15b presents the percentages of husbands and wives falling into each of the five categories of decision-making patterns. The categories are "husband always," "husband mainly," "joint," "wife mainly," and "wife always." The decision-making patterns reveal a preponderance of egalitarian decision-making by husbands and wives. It appears that in few cases there is a lack of perceived agreement as to who is dominant in these marriages. Also consistent is the finding that both husbands and wives report equally shared decision-making patterns. The relative balance between the

¹¹ Here 15 decision-making patterns were examined though in the factor variable has been restricted to only five variables based on the factor loadings.

Table 6.15a
Percentage Distribution of Decision-making Patterns by Husbands (N=50)

Decision-making Patterns	Husband Always	Husband Mainly	Joint	Wife Mainly	Wife Always	Others	Total
FINANCIAL							
What house to purchase	10	20	68	2	0	0	100
Budgeting	14	16	66	2	2	0	100
Grocery shopping	18	22	36	18	6	0	100
Financial transactions	38	34	26	0	2	0	100
General shopping	10	12	54	20	4	0	100
SOCIAL							
Where to go on vacations	16	12	72	2	0	4	100
Visiting siblings and in-laws	2	10	76	8	2	0	98
Contact with family and friends	2	16	72	10	0	0	100
FAMILY							
Cooking	0	2	12	54	32	0	100
Supporting parents and other relatives	12	8	76	2	0	0	98
Whether the family attend church on Sundays	4	4	80	6	2	2	98
Wife should have a job	10	8	70	12	0	0	100
Number of children	2	4	84	4	0	0	98
Taking out garbage	16	28	36	8	6	6	100
Maintenance of the house	30	36	14	10	2	8	100

Table 6.15b
Percentage Distribution of Decision-making Patterns by Wives (N=50)

Decision-making Patterns	Husband Always	Husband Mainly	Joint	Wife Mainly	Wife Always	Others	Total
FINANCIAL							
What house to purchase	12	6	80	0	0	0	98
Budgeting	8	24	64	4	0	0	100
Grocery shopping	12	20	40	16	12	0	100
Financial transactions	42	24	30	0	4	0	100
General shopping	6	6	54	26	8	0	100
SOCIAL							
Where to go on vacations	14	6	76	2	2	0	100
Visiting siblings and in-laws	2	4	88	2	0	0	96
Contact with family and friends	2	8	78	12	0	0	100
FAMILY							
Cooking	0	0	14	44	42	0	100
Supporting parents or other relatives	6	18	70	2	0	0	96
Whether the family attend church on Sundays	2	4	88	4	2	0	100
Wife should have a job	4	6	74	10	4	0	100
Number of children	4	0	90	0	0	0	94
Taking out garbage	14	26	36	4	14	0	94
Maintenance of the house	32	26	24	6	4	0	92

"husband always" and "joint" decision-making pattern indicates that this disparity is to be expected when both husbands and wives are included in the study.

In this study the role of the spouses in decision-making on various financial, social and family matters are taken as indicative of their degree of satisfaction in life. The data on Table 15a and 15b on decision-making patterns indicate the domination of the husbands but does not characterize wives as subservient to their husbands. While one third of the husbands retain power to make decisions on major items, a small proportion of wives makes decisions regarding family matters.

The authority to make decisions on various items is not as clear cut as the tabulated data represents. My observation reveals that to large extent husbands and wives tend to influence each other in decisions on social and family matters. However, wives retain considerable influence on decision-making because they are a part of the decision-making process and share the power, long a domain of their husbands in the U.S.

Table 16 gives a comparison of means and standard deviations for husbands and wives which indicate that the differences of husbands' and wives' decision-making pattern are not significant. In the interest of determining further husbands' and wives' perceptions on decision-making, a t-test was calculated. The t-test indicates whether husbands

Table 6.16

Means, Standard Deviations and Results of T-tests for Decision-making Patterns by Husbands and Wives

Decision-making Patterns	Husbands		Wives		Significant
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p=<
FINANCIAL MATTERS					
What house to purchase	4.38	.69	4.22	.91	. 28
Budgeting for family needs	4.34	.98	4.36	.69	. 89
Grocery shopping	4.04	.94	3.76	.91	. 10
Financial transactions	2.08	.90	2.04	.88	. 69
General shopping	4.04	.94	3.76	.91	. 03*
SOCIAL EVENTS					
Vaction destination	4.18	.94	4.28	.80	. 56
Visiting siblings and in-laws	3.94	.81	3.90	.88	. 74
Contact with family and friends	4.10	.58	4.00	.53	. 34
FAMILY MATTERS					
Cooking	2.84	.71	2.72	.70	. 32
Supporting parents/relatives	4.22	.93	4.12	1.04	. 56
Whether family attend church on Sundays	3.88	.91	4.00	.49	. 42
Wife should be employed	4.16	.76	3.90	.81	. 05*
Number of children to have	3.76	1.09	3.84	1.05	. 64
Taking out garbage	4.20	1.38	4.04	1.41	. 45
Maintenance of the house	4.58	1.47	4.52	1.50	. 80

or wives perceive decision making as significant. The two areas where it was statistically significant were financial transactions and wives' employment. Financial matters are solely the husbands' responsibility in Kerala families, even when wives' are employed. The other question on whether the wife should be employed is a joint decision, though husbands seem to have the final say in the matter.

To illuminate further these data, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to compare decision-making pattern between husbands and wives. As Table 17 indicates, the perceptions of husbands and wives are generally congruent in seven areas as exhibited by statistically significant correlation coefficients and incongruent in six areas. The correlation shows how strongly related particular husbands' and wives' perceptions are.

Nevertheless, in the light of extensive qualitative data, the various decision-making items suggest that the wives tend to be more satisfied with egalitarian decision making than husbands. Husbands feel they are no longer the authoritarian figure. The data also supports the hypothesis that there is congruence between husbands and wives on perceptions of decision-making patterns. Both see this as a move towards more egalitarian patterns that is likely to bring greater satisfaction for the wife and dissatisfaction for the husband despite his high education, occupational status and high income. If decision-making is taken as an

Table 6.17

Correlation of Decision-making Patterns by Husbands and Wives (N=50)

Decision-making Patterns	What house or apart. to purchase	Budgeting for family needs	Grocery shopping	Financial transactions	General Shopping
What house or apartment to purchase	.1874				
Budgeting for family needs		.2665			
Grocery shopping			.6068**		
Financial transactions				.4047**	
General Shopping					.5054**

** p < .01

Table 6.17 (Cont.)

Correlation of Decision-making Patterns by Husbands and Wives (N=50)

Decision Making Patterns	Vaction decisions	Visiting in-laws or friends	Contact with family and friends	Cooking	Supporting parents or relatives
Vaction decisions	.0129				
Visiting in-laws or friends		.4979**			
Contact with family and friends			.1316		
Cooking				.1316	
Supporting parents or relatives					.2452

** p < .01

Table 6.17 (Cont.)

Correlation of Decision-making Patterns by Husbands and Wives (N=50)

Decision Making Patterns	Whether family should attend church on Sundays	Whether the wife should have a job	How many children to have	Taking out garbage
Whether family should attend church on Sundays	.0000**			
Whether the wife should have a job		.2880*		
How many children to have			.3530*	
Taking out garbage				.4232**

p < = .05*

p < = .01**

indicator of life satisfaction among the couples, the data indicates that the husband dominates on more issues than wife. However, the overall pattern is joint. Generally, the wives are more satisfied than their husbands in making decisions in the family, supporting the hypothesis that if the wives' perceive their own share in decision-making more egalitarian then they are satisfied with their life. At the same time the data also supports the hypothesis that the husbands also perceive their own share in decision-making as egalitarian. This could result in dissatisfaction for the husbands. I will test this further in the next chapter.

Moreover, the differences in socio-economic status between the husbands and wives could reflect their influence on decision-making. Higher education, occupation and socio-economic status by wife create an egalitarian pattern in decision-making and is more conducive to the making of joint decisions, while low status is associated with husbands making decisions mainly. Since the wife has a higher socio-economic status here than in India, the findings indicate that the decision-making pattern is joint.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

As a *Time* magazine (1987) shows, many Asian children perform well in schools. To a large extent their high performance is a result of their parents' emphasis on children's education. Parents consider themselves fortunate

to be in the U.S. They strive to make the best of this opportunity to give their children a good education. Since Asian children generally performs well in schools, I examined which parent was responsible for helping the Keralite children to do well in school and guide their future career development.

Table 18a and 18b on children's academic development, indicates the husbands and wives in each of the five categories of "husband always," "husband mainly," "joint," "wife mainly" and "wife always." There is also a sixth category because some of the responses did not fall into the above five categories. This category concerns the time the children felt they could make decisions. This indicates the democratic aspect of the American society. Children's academic development again showed a preponderance of egalitarianism between husbands and wives.

The picture may not be so one-sided as the data indicates. Analysis of perceptions of children's academic development reveals that in the majority of the cases the couples make the decisions jointly. When the husbands' and wives' data was analyzed separately, again the wives perceived that the husbands made more decisions than the wives attributed to themselves, whereas the husbands perceived only a small percent of instances where the wives always made the decisions. It is slanted towards the husbands even if there are differences between husbands and

Table 6.18a
Percentage Distribution of Children's Academic Development by Husbands (N=50)

Decision-making Patterns	Husband Always	Husband Mainly	Joint	Wife Mainly	Wife Always	Others	Total
Choices of children's schools	4	10	68	4	2	12	100
Dealing with school authorities	4	22	36	14	0	24	100
Helping with children's home-work	0	8	38	28	2	24	100
Career choices of children	2	6	42	0	2	50	100

Table 6.18b
Percentage Distribution of Children's Academic Development by Wives (N=50)

Decision-making Patterns	Husband Always	Husband Mainly	Joint	Wife Mainly	Wife Always	Others	Total
Choices of children's schools	2	6	78	0	0	14	100
Dealing with school authorities	14	24	18	6	6	32	100
Helping with children's home-work	0	12	34	18	6	30	100
Career choices of children	2	4	32	0	0	62	100

the wives. For example, dealing with school authorities and helping with children's home-work (Table 18a and 18b) are primarily considered wives responsibilities in India. A similar pattern (if not joint) is perceived by the spouses in America (though more by the wives than husbands). This again supports the fact that while children are growing up wives are more responsible for their education than husbands. It is interesting to note that wives' data also indicate that they attributed more power to their husbands than to themselves.

The relative balance between husbands and wives in children's academic and career development is taken as indication of their degree of parental satisfaction. The descriptive data in Tables 18a and 18b do indicate more dominance of husbands, but does show that in certain areas (for example, in dealing with school authorities) wives played a more important role than the husbands. In other areas, such as career choices of the children's, husbands are more dominant. At the same time, the fact that children make important decisions concerning their life is also evident from the sixth category. Table 18a and 18b reveals that decisions concerning children as they grow up seem to be shifting from parents to children - a trend seen among the American families but rarely among the Keralites in India.

To verify further this aspect by a comparison of the

means, I performed standard deviations and t-tests for husbands and wives on children's academic development (Table 19). Results from the t-test indicate no significant relationship. However, there is a higher degree of congruence reported on all items than one would have anticipated given the traditional orientations toward the ideal role of husband by both spouses. There are a few decisions that can be identified as clearly husband-dominated and wife-dominated. I speculate that the husbands in this study do live up to the patriarchal image in making all critical decisions. Though they tend to lean toward mutual consultation and agreement on most items, husbands still are dominant.

Correlation coefficients (Table 20) were also computed and the analysis revealed a highly statistical significant correlation in choices of children's schools, dealing with school authorities and helping with children's homework. This is probably because children are making decisions about their future. During the course of the interviews, I learned that once the families were well settled, then primary concern was their children's future.

Kerala immigrants pay a lot of attention to their children's personal growth, development of their sense of independence and self-direction. Parents' expectation of their children's educational achievement is also very high in India. Since Keralites are successful in the American

Table 6.19

Means, Standard Deviations and Results of T-tests for Children's Academic Development by Husbands and Wives

Decisions on Children's Academic Development	Husbands		Wives		Significant
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p=<
Choice of children's schools	3.62	1.48	3.54	1.48	. 56
Dealing with school authorities	3.20	1.94	3.12	1.93	. 74
Help with children's home work	2.82	1.67	2.84	1.74	. 92
Career choices of children	2.28	2.00	1.80	1.96	. 17

Table 6.20

Correlations of Children's Academic Development
by Husbands and Wives (N=50)

Correlations	Choices of childrens' schools	Dealing with school authorities	Helping with childrens' home-work	Career choices choices of of children
Choices of childrens' schools	.7795**	.3282*	.2529	.2225
Dealing with school authorities	.4858**	.6109*	.4038**	-.0036
Helping with childrens' home-work	.5052**	.5928**	.6476**	.0892
Career choices of children	.2250	.0904	.0446	.2476

** p < .01

* p < .05

society as shown by their education, occupation and income, they expect the same success from their children. Therefore, if children do well in school the parents are satisfied. Both Kerala immigrants wives ($r = .44$; $p < .01$) as well as husbands ($r = .52$; $p < .01$) seem to be more satisfied in performing their responsibilities to their children concerning education.

PERCEPTIONS OF MARITAL DISAGREEMENT

In both love and arranged marriages conflicts (disagreements) are an inherent part of family relationships. There are probably few couples without some marital disagreement. Regardless of whether it is an Indian or cross-cultural marriage, there are bound to be areas of disagreement. An (Asian) Indian couple living in India has a different society to deal with than an Asian Indian couple living in America. Since the couples in America live in a different society, various unpredictable situations could cause turmoil in marriage. Arguments over family chores and responsibilities are important issues for satisfaction in life. Thus marital disagreement is a control variable. In some cases the couples may not go through this stage if either partner (especially the wife) compromises or gives in.

Marital disagreement interacts with both objective and subjective variables. I would expect it to have some

residual effect on life satisfaction. Analyses reveal that marital disagreement and life satisfaction were negatively correlated. If there is less disagreement between husbands and wives, the wives seem to be more satisfied ($r = -.32$; $p < .05$). Men, with their authoritarian position in the family, are more likely to impose their views on the family: this frequently lead to disagreement. Although the couples have some disagreement, the power in the family is still largely a male prerogative in (Asian) Indian culture. What is apparent from a review of literature is that husbands win conflicts in far more frequently than wives, and this holds in to Asian Indian families as well.

COUPLES' PERCEPTIONS OF LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction denotes a combination of satisfaction in several separate spheres or roles in an overall evaluation. In this study concepts associated with life satisfaction are marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction and work satisfaction. Although some researchers have made distinctions among these concepts, for present purposes they are considered cognates. I assumed that findings on the dimensionality of any of these may bear on the dimensionality of life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is rather a complex state resulting from two independent dimensions - satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The above analysis reveals that both objective and

subjective aspects of life are important for both husbands and wives for a satisfactory life in the U.S. Although the background variables were significant for both husbands and wives, except for education, the other variables were more significant for wives. Occupation was statistically significant for wives for a satisfactory life. This finding tends to support the conclusions, reached by previous researchers, especially with regard to wives from middle-class families, that employed women are satisfied with life in general and marriage in particular.

Among the other objective variables, husbands and wives are satisfied when they have a high occupational status in the U.S. This is understandable, because it is for a better life that most Keralites migrated to America. Most of the couples have succeeded in this venture and therefore are satisfied with their life.

In the areas of subjective aspects of life, wives are also satisfied if they can use the Malayalam language. In decision-making patterns there is a change towards joint decision-making. My data supports the fact that wives are satisfied with this change in the decision-making pattern. However, though husbands also perceive a joint decision-making pattern, the data does not support any fact that they are dissatisfied with their life. Again husbands and wives are satisfied when making joint decisions for their children.

The overall pattern is that wives are more satisfied in various aspects of life than husbands, contrary to the expected pattern in most family literatures. Women seem to be more satisfied as a result of immigration and settling down in America. Probably it is the high socio-economic status that they hold as well as the freedom they exercise in this country compared to India that makes their life satisfied. Men, despite their high socio-economic status, are only considered equal but not superior in this society. Husbands patriarchy and authoritarian characteristics are slowly fading away and in most cases they seem to depend on wives (especially if they have been here longer) which lower the husbands' self-esteem. However, they still seem to be satisfied if they have prestigious jobs. Further analysis would help in finding more answers to test these hypotheses.

In summary, the immigrant adaptation process is influenced by pre-migration conditions, the characteristics of the migrants themselves and conditions in the receiving country, including such factors as government policies and economic factors. I find that the Kerala couples in the U.S. present some important characteristics. In terms of demographic characteristics, the Keralites are a relatively young population from urban areas and from middle to upper-middle social class. The unique characteristics of this population are their dispersed settlement, high educational levels, occupation and income. Their high socio-economic

status is revealed in their individual and family incomes, home ownership, savings and investments.

Given these characteristics, it seems that the Asian Indian sense of being a Keralite is the ultimate frame of reference for identification. This substructure will not only endure but will be further solidified as the population grows. Perhaps assimilation will ultimately be a function of a natural configuration of desires and wishes of each ethnic group. Assuming a need for preservation of pluralistic character of American society, ethnics, living as ethnics will do little violence to the concept of a pluralistic society where tolerance for varying social patterns is valued.

The second part of the model shows the different ways in which the subjective factors, use of Malayalam language, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, children's academic development, marital disagreement, and life satisfaction can be satisfactorily explained. Based on this analysis, this study supports the argument that among the subjective factors use of Malayalam, decision-making patterns and children's academic development is highly correlated with life satisfaction.

The findings demonstrate the validity of the key arguments of the cultural pluralism. However, it does not clearly explain the whole reality. While some general patterns are evident, there are exceptions, especially when

it comes to interactional aspects of life in marital relationships. I will analyze in the next chapter how these aspects of life satisfaction fit the models selective pluralism, exchange and equity.

CHAPTER VII

LIFE SATISFACTION OF THE KERALA COUPLES IN AMERICA: AN ASSESSMENT

The preceding chapters as well as the literature on the family emphasize the influence of demographic and subjective factors on life satisfaction. An effective method to test the relationship between objective and subjective factors of life satisfaction and their degree of congruence is through the use of path analyses. As in the procedures outlined in Chapter IV, I carried out a path analysis of the life satisfaction model.

The model includes five background variables - age, rural-urban residence, education, occupation and social class - that are hypothesized as influencing the acculturation of Kerala immigrants. These background factors influence reasons for immigration. Reasons for immigration to the U.S., in turn, would determine how easily the immigrants would assimilate into the American mainstream as measured by the order of arrival and length of stay. The immigrants' socio-economic status in the United States further influence the attitudes and behaviors (subjective factors) of the immigrants as measured by the use of

Malayalam language, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, and children's academic development and marital disagreement. Finally, I expected all the objective and subjective factors to determine life satisfaction of the Kerala immigrants as measured by marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction and work satisfaction. I performed path analyses separately for husbands and wives. I examined both direct and indirect paths in progression step by step from one factor to the other. The figures at each step indicate how the model was build.

PROCEDURE

The method used to narrow down the important factors were path analyses. Pedhazur (1982) has used the term "theory trimming" to suggest that paths which are not meaningful should be eliminated from the model. I used two criteria in trimming the model: first, paths were dropped if their values were smaller than .05, the magnitude often recommended as criteria for deleting paths (Kerlinger and Pedhazur, 1973: 318); and second, paths were also deleted at each step using the .05 level of significance for the path coefficients. Once the non-significant paths were deleted, the regressions were rerun until the final model was determined.

The next methodological step was to test its adequacy. Correlations between all the independent and the

dependent variables at each stage in the causal and non-causal order were recalculated. All the reproduced correlations were either identical with or very close to the original suggesting that the model presented in Figures 11a and 11b is a tenable one.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The five background factors age, rural-urban residence, education, occupation and social class constitute the external factors (meaning not acquired in America) which influence adaptation and acculturation into the American society leading to satisfaction in life. Since there is no causal order among these Indian background variables, the inter-correlations were represented by simple correlations in the model that provided the basic description of the sample.

The inter-correlations indicate that older husbands tend to be from cities, have less education than younger husbands, came from lower social class, and had prestigious occupations. Younger husbands tended to come from villages, have higher levels of education, come from higher social class and have lower occupations. It could be assumed that the older husbands attained their higher occupational status because of seniority as opposed to merit. The younger husbands most probably had fewer choices and had to take up whatever job was available.

Table 7:1

Correlations¹ Among Background Characteristics by Husbands and Wives

	HAGE	HRUBAN	HEDUC	HOCCIN	HCLASS
WAGE		.1556	-.1271	.1598	-.1057
WRUBAN	.0468		.0976	.1182	-.0857
WEDUC	-.2423	.1661		.2366	.0495
WOCCIN	.1758	-.2391	-.0333		-.0232
WCLASS	.1277	.0916	.4515**	.0768	

** $p \leq .01$

Table 1 shows that there is a significant relationship between education and social class ($r = .45$ $p < .01$) in the wives' model. Wives from higher social class also had higher education. In fact, they have both an "ascribed status" as well as "achieved status." Such a status places wives in a better bargaining position than husbands. In addition, older wives tended to come from cities and also have higher occupations. This might indicate that wives' socio-economic status was higher than their husbands' at the time of immigration.

Some of these background variables may not be as

¹ The values above the diagonal represents the husbands age, rural/urban place of residence, education, occupation in India and social class and below that of the wives.

statistically significant as others, but still they are important for measuring life satisfaction of the couple. For example, education is an important determinant of the pattern, mode and sequence of socio-cultural adaptation. Some studies have suggested a sequence in the acculturation process in which initially rewarding experiences in the new society gave rise to satisfaction. At the same time social class background was not significant in the husbands' model. This might be because social class of the family became unimportant once the individuals migrated. Pre-migration characteristics may fill new needs and acquire new meanings or be transformed in significant ways. Therefore, these personal attributes became important when Keralites decided to migrate.

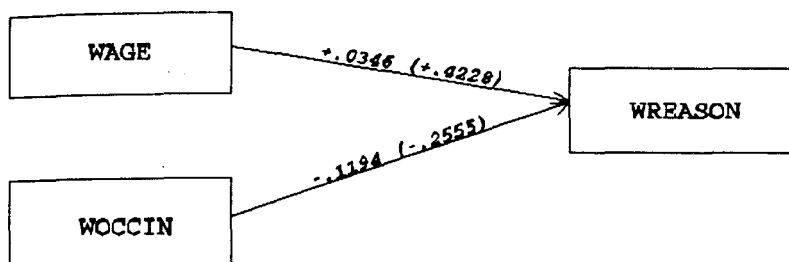
MOTIVATING FACTORS

Keralites choose to migrate to the U.S. mainly for two reasons. One group came to study or to work (pull factors), the others were sponsored by family and friends. In the husbands' model there is no association between personal characteristics and reasons for migrating. Reasons for migration need not be attributed to the background characteristics because they may have come for other reasons, in that case their personal attributes may not be important. For example, if the Keralites were sponsored, then the personal characteristics became unimportant in

their decision to migrate. This might be the reason why there was no association between the background factors and reasons for immigration.

Figure 7.1

Wives' Reasons for Immigration



On the other hand, Figure 1 shows that there is an association between age, occupation and reasons for immigration in the wives' model. Older wives migrated for jobs or study (path= .42)². Women who were employed in India also migrated for jobs or study to the U.S. (path= .25). These results support the finding that nurses who were employed in India migrated for better jobs or study. Richmond (1988) argues that the motivations for migration and personal characteristics of the immigrants are just as important to successful socio-cultural adaptation. Additionally, the passing of the Immigration Act of 1965 was another incentive for these older and employed women to

² When explaining the relative amount of variance within the model, the standardized coefficients are used.

migrate because United States needed skilled workers in its labor force.

This analysis reveals that the reason for immigration for husbands is not so important because wives were in a better position (because of their occupation - nursing) to immigrate (demand for nurses in the U.S.), and husbands were sure they could follow them. This also indicates that wives were more motivated to immigrate because it was easier for them to find a job than for their husbands.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Given the above, it is imperative to find out the order of the Keralites arrival to this country.

Figure 7.2a

Husbands' Order of Arrival to the U.S.

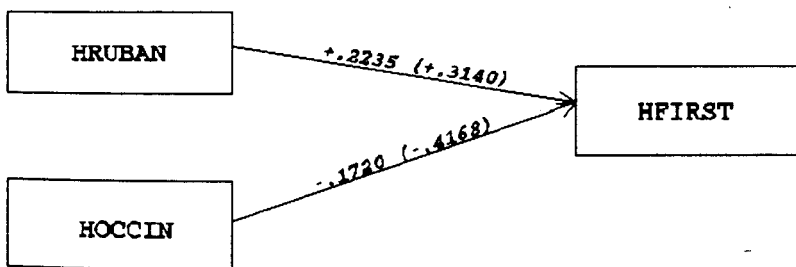
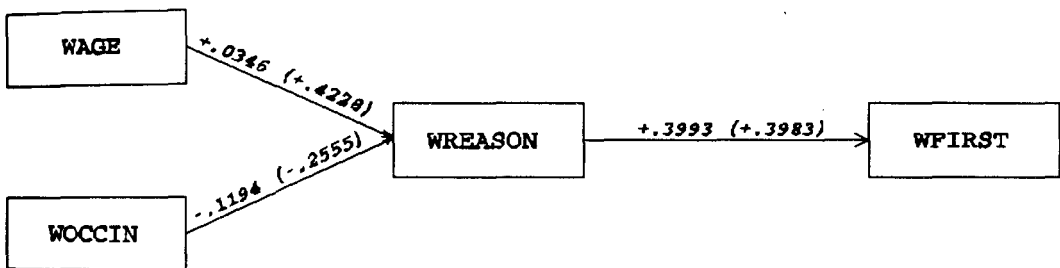


Figure 2a indicates husbands who lived in cities (path=.31) came first to the U.S. as did husbands with low occupations (path= -.41). The reason for husbands from cities and with low occupations to arrive first in the

United States are the same: both needed jobs to improve their economic condition. The city husbands were already exposed to urban life, whereas husbands with low occupations probably had no city exposure. But both waited for the right opportunity to immigrate. U.S. Immigration laws and friends and relatives were conducive in bringing both types of people to the U.S. When husbands arrived first, their wives followed later.

Figure 7.2b

Wives' Order of Arrival to the U.S.



At the same time, wives were qualified to take up jobs in the U.S., therefore, those who came to work or study arrived first (path= .39) and their husbands followed later. Chapter V support this finding showing that 50 percent of the wives arrived first. The indirect effect is that older wives who came for employment or study came first (path= .16). So too, wives with higher occupations in India came for employment and therefore arrived before their husbands (path=.10). Migration per se does not enhance occupational

success, but it operates instead as "selective mechanism by which the more able are channeled to places where their potential can be realized" (Lane, Blau and Duncan, 1967: 274).

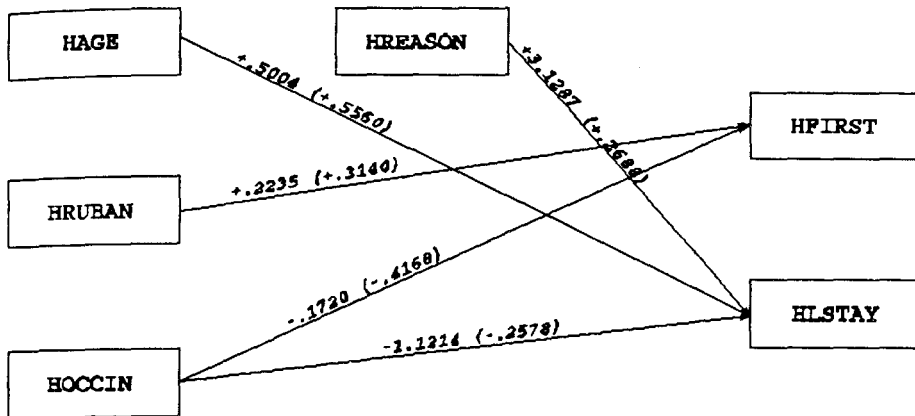
In cases where wives arrived first (Figure 3b), they became the main bread-winners. Wives had more freedom when they arrived first than if the couple came together or they followed their husbands. It takes usually two years for one spouse to join the other because of the immigration policy. By the time the husband arrived, the wife has already learned how to live in the American society.

The fact of arriving first does not guarantee assimilation into the American society. The extent of acculturation can be understood only if we examine how long the immigrant has stayed in the country. The assimilation theory states that the longer the immigrant stays the more likely he/she assimilates into the American mainstream. Therefore the length of stay in the U.S. is an important factor in determining the extent of acculturation of the Kerala couples, which in turn illustrates their level of satisfaction in this country.

Path coefficients in Figure 3a reveal that older husbands have stayed longer in the U.S. compared to their younger counterparts (path= .55). Furthermore, husbands who came for study or employment have been in the U.S. longer than those who were sponsored (path= .26) and husbands with

Figure 7.3a

Husbands' Length of Stay in the U.S.



lower jobs in India have also been here longer than husbands with higher jobs (path= -0.25). Some of the immigrants who came for study found employment after their education and continued to live in this country. Husbands who had lower jobs migrated for a better life and stayed longer to achieve their goal.

Figure 7.3b

Wives' Length of Stay in the U.S.

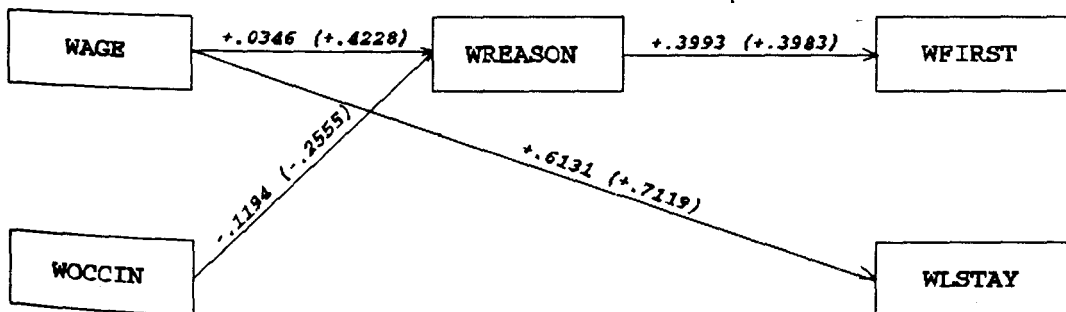


Figure 3b indicates that older wives have stayed in this country longer than their husbands (path= .71). A comparison of relationships between the age of the husband and wife with length of stay indicates that older husbands and wives have been here longer (Hpath= .50 and Wpath= .61³). A similar result was obtained when a simple correlation was performed ($r=.51$ and $.61$ respectively). This is to be expected because most of the immigrants came when they were young. According to the assimilation theory, these couples should have partially acculturated into the American society because of their long period of stay. But path coefficients also show that if the couples stayed longer in the U.S., they were dissatisfied with their life.

The most plausible interpretation of the findings would be that either they are making real progress toward cultural assimilation into American culture and society as time lapses or they are just passing through a temporary adaptation stage. It seems from the qualitative data that it is only an ad hoc stage. The couples miss their family and relatives who were a source of support and strength to them.

If they continue to stay in the United States, there could be other factors that hold them back in the United States. One important characteristic among them is

³ When comparing the husbands' model to wives' model, the unstandardized coefficients were used.

occupation. The endogenous variables such as occupation and income will illuminate further the immigrants desire to live in the United States and to what extent they would assimilate. If the immigrants do not have a good job even if they stayed long in the U.S., I would hypothesize that they will not be satisfied with their life. In this respect occupation is an important variable.

Figure 4a and 4b indicate husbands and wives with higher levels of education also have higher occupations in the U.S. (Hpath= .40 and Wpath= .36) respectively. When husbands' and wives' education is compared with occupation, the paths are (Hpath= .08 and Wpath= .11)⁴. A causal link can be established between husbands' and wives' education and occupation. Husbands and wives with high levels of education and specialized training, unlike the older immigrants, are more committed to participate in the realization of the American dream. This finding is supported by Barringer and Kassebaum (1989: 505) who state that 39 percent of Asian Indians are classified as professionals, compared with 16 percent of Koreans and 13 percent of Caucasians. Similarly, more Asian Indians are in the technical positions than Koreans or whites and nearly as many in executive, administrative and management posts.

Besides education, husbands who held higher occupations

⁴ Paths here refer to the product of the unanalyzed correlation between husbands and wives.

Figure 7:4a

Husbands' Occupation in the U.S.

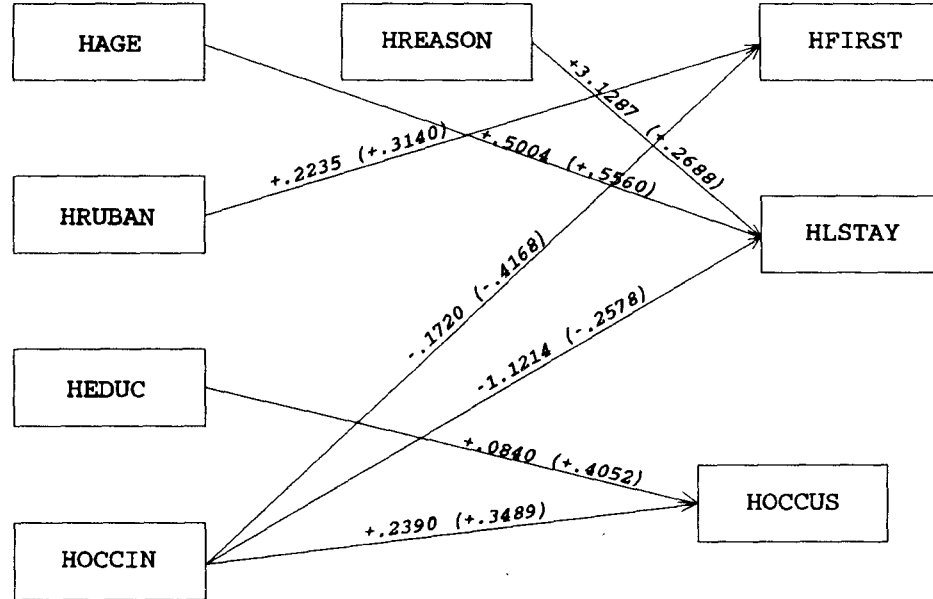
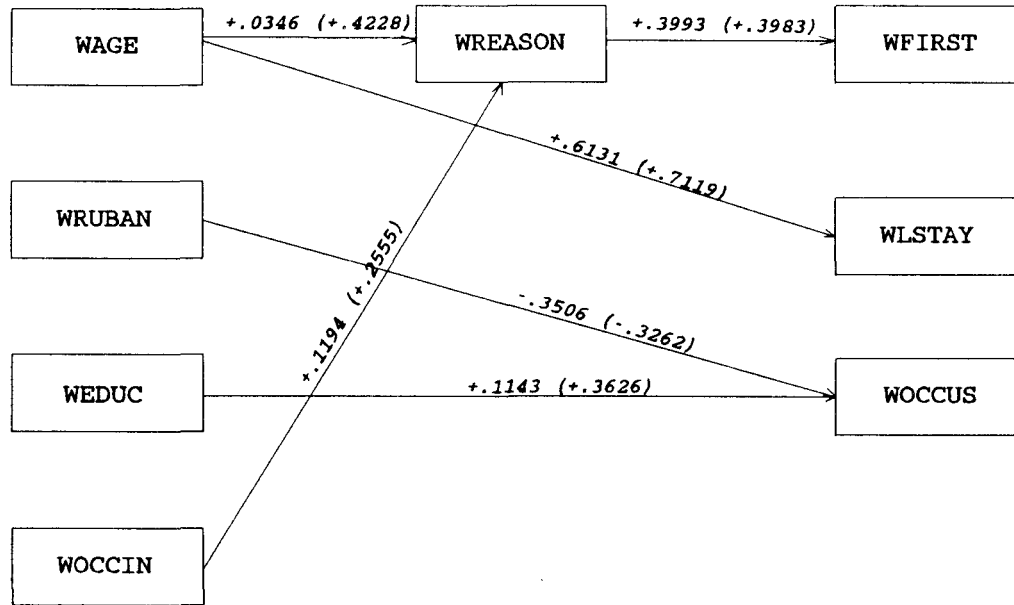


Figure 7.4b

Wives' Occupation in the U.S.



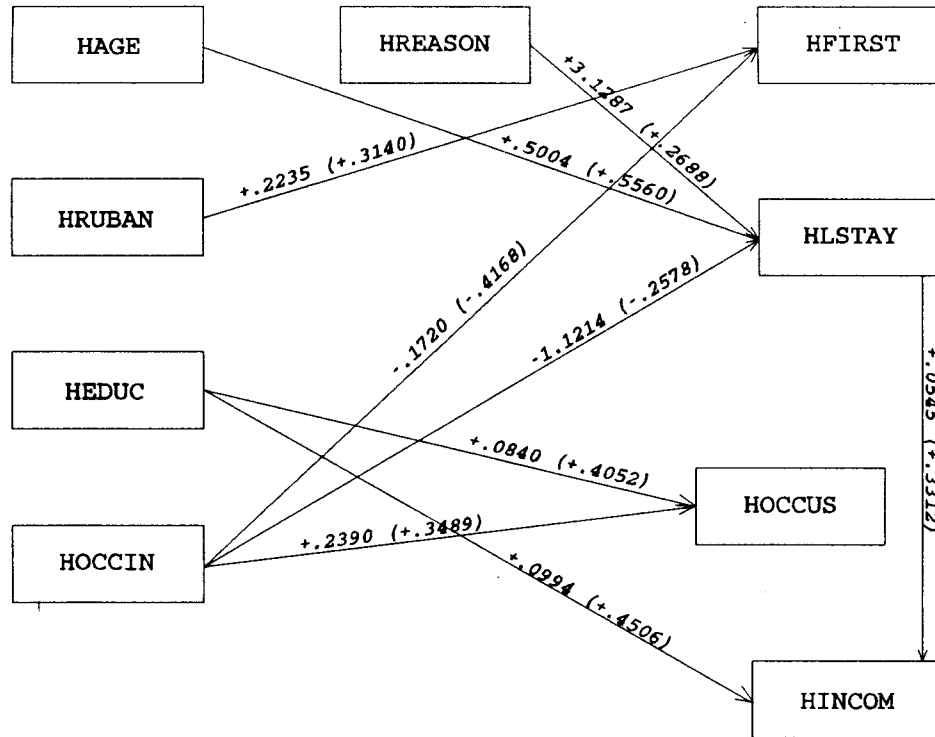
in India also have higher occupations in the U.S. (path=.34). As is evident from the demographic profile of the sample (Chapter VI), there were quite a number of professionals who migrated. There is a large number of Kerala physicians in the U.S.

Wives who came from villages also have higher occupations than those from cities (path= -.32). This could be due to two reasons: though they came from villages, they frequently have higher levels of education which give them access to desirable jobs in the U.S., and some probably continue their education in the U.S. leading to better positions. Higher education and occupation also change the values of marriage and society for these women and their families. In either case, coming from a village does not prevent wives from attaining a higher status job if they have the motivation to work. For both husbands and wives, as length of stay increased, so did their occupational status.

Income, the last of the stratification variables, is important for the couple but in different ways. Figure 5a indicates that husbands who came with high education from India have also higher incomes in the United States (path=.45). This is to be expected since most of them are professionals and semi-professionals. Husbands who have stayed longer also have higher incomes (path= .33). The assimilation theory does imply that income of immigrants

Figure 7:5a

Husbands' Income in the U.S.



should increase over time spent in the host country, both in terms of years for immigrants themselves and over generations.

Additionally, the indirect effect⁵ is that husbands who came for study/job have stayed in the United States longer: and length of stay in the U.S. and income are positively correlated as was already indicated (path= .08). Similarly, older husbands who have stayed longer in the U.S. are also in the higher income bracket (path= .18).

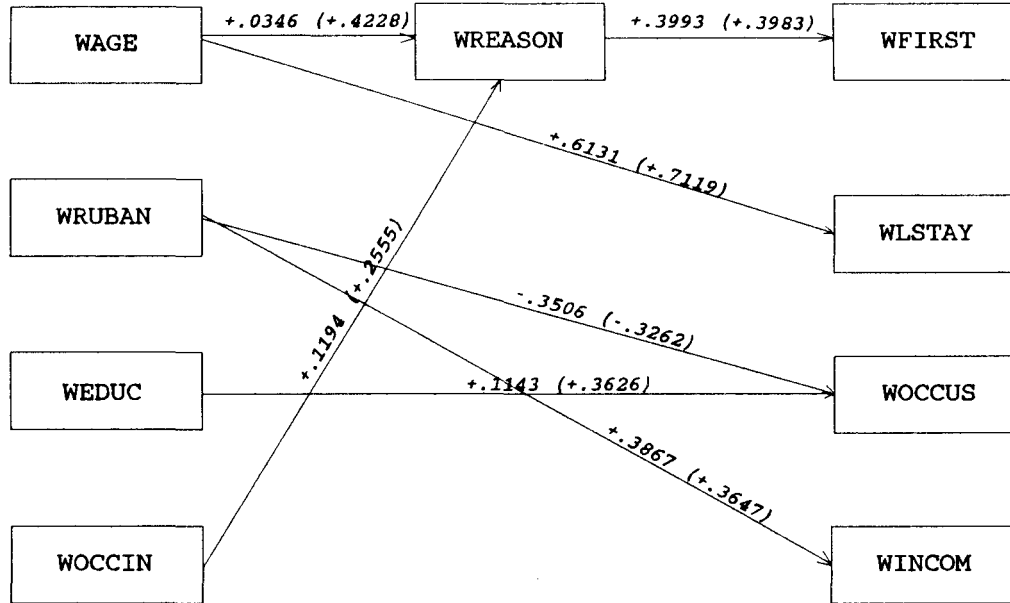
On the other hand, Figure 5b shows that Kerala wives from cities make higher income than their counterparts from villages (path= .36). Working wives enjoy an outside income and some acquire independence as a result. Besides, women in city jobs usually earn more and thus are motivated to seek employment in cities.

The structural factors (age, rural-urban residence, education, occupation in India and social class) have a dominant influence on the couples' occupation and income pattern. What is significant is that education has a dominating influence on wives occupational status (path= .11) compared to husbands (path= .08). At the same time, husbands who have high levels of education earn higher income than their counterparts (path= .45). Keralites, for

⁵ The beta coefficient of an indirect path between any two variables is calculated by multiplying the beta coefficient of all the direct paths between these two variables.

Figure 7.5b

Wives' Income in the U.S.



the most part, are well-educated and hold high occupational positions. Given these characteristics, the Keralites usually have no difficulty in adapting to a satisfactory life in the U.S. It also follows that Keralites who have stayed longer in the U.S. have a higher socio-economic status. Length of stay in the U.S., of course is an important determining factor about the future of Keralites as well. Their background and the length of stay places them in a high socio-economic status which usually leads to satisfaction with their life in the U.S. This high socio-economic status places the Keralites above other immigrant groups. Other immigrant groups, such as the Europeans as well as the Chinese and Japanese, had to strive hard to attain a high socio-economic status. Most of the Keralites are able to attain a higher socio-economic status rather quickly after immigration because of their high social class background. These characteristics play an important role in facilitating the process of adaptation into this country. Keralites who are exposed to city life and have higher education may have little difficulty adjusting to a Metropolitan city like Chicago. Some older Keralites, from a rural setting with less education, may have difficulty adapting themselves to life in a big city.

Satisfaction in life cannot be measured only by personal attributes, it includes, of course, other factors that the individual encounters in every day life. These

subjective aspects of life are important for a satisfactory life in the U.S. As seen in the first part of this analysis, the Keralites have the necessary attributes to make a smooth transition from one culture to another. The extent and willingness to assimilate, however, will depend on the subjective aspects of life.

INTERACTIONAL ASPECTS OF LIFE

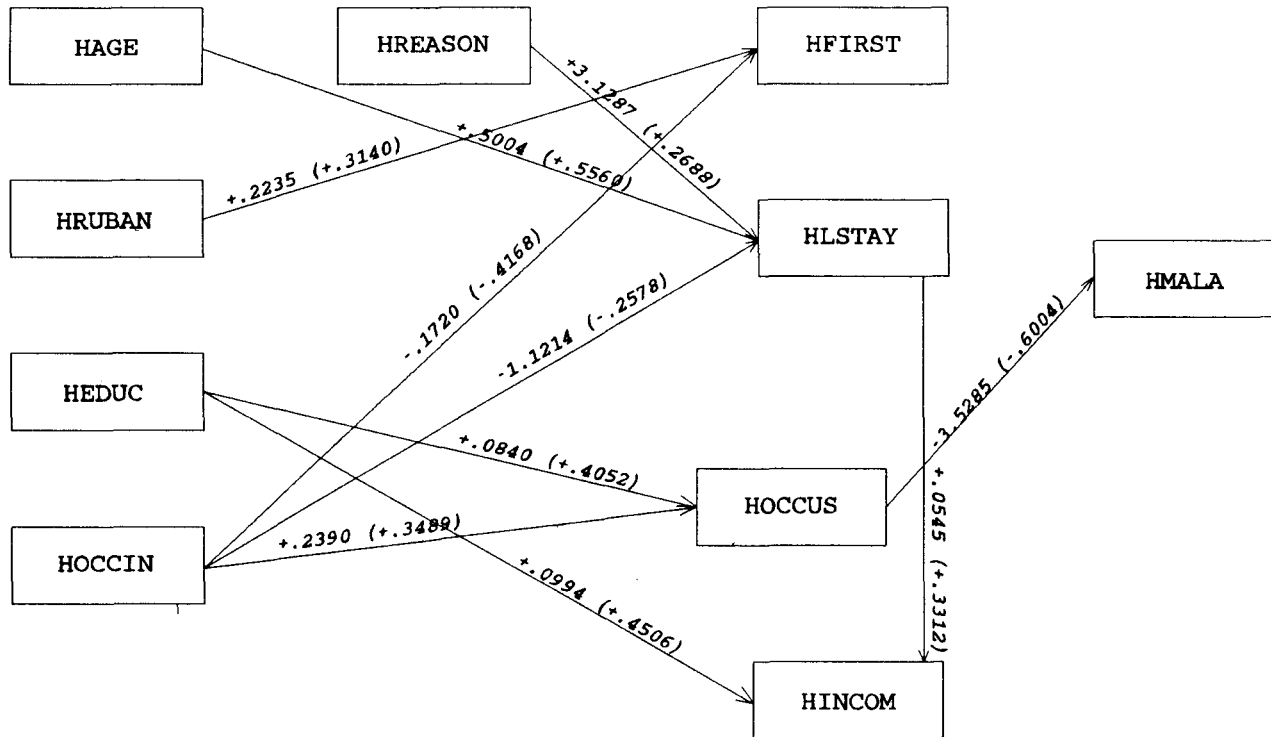
In the second part of the model, there is no causal order among these endogenous variables - use of Malayalam language, traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns, children's academic development and marital disagreement. It is not possible to assign a causal order for these subjective aspects of life because these are attitudes and behavior that each individual encounters in daily life. Again they may or may not all be important at the same time. For example, knowledge of Malayalam is not necessary for decision-making, but it is important because its use leads to satisfaction for immigrants. Similarly, traditional family attitudes and involvement in children's academic development are two different aspects of life. They are both equally important for couples to lead satisfactory lives in this country. But one does not cause the other and vice versa. These factors play an important role in the life of immigrants because they deal with everyday life problems encountered.

These socio-psychological factors govern life relationship that will ultimately depict the couples' level of satisfaction in the U.S. The relationships refer to a system of values and attitudes about marriage and family that govern the nature of relationships between husbands and the wives in their familial role. Hence husbands' and wives' perception of the different aspects of life is a good assessment while studying life satisfaction.

For Keralites immigrating from a completely different culture, language, as indicated, plays an important role in their life. Primary interaction is viewed as the most important step in acculturation. In a positive sense, McGoldrick notes (1982: 544), "the language of the country of origin will serve to preserve its culture". Figure 6a shows that husbands in higher occupations use more English than Malayalam (path= $-.60$). The indirect effect is that education and occupation in India influence occupation in the U.S. and that in turn influences the use of Malayalam. Figure 6a indicates that husbands who have high levels of education, held high occupations in India also hold high positions in the United States and use English. Husbands with high levels of education are more likely to speak English (path= $-.19$) as do husbands with high occupations (path= $-.25$), compared to their counterparts. English language skills affect the adaptability of foreign education and experience to the United States labor market. It is

Figure 7.6a

Husbands' Use of Malayalam



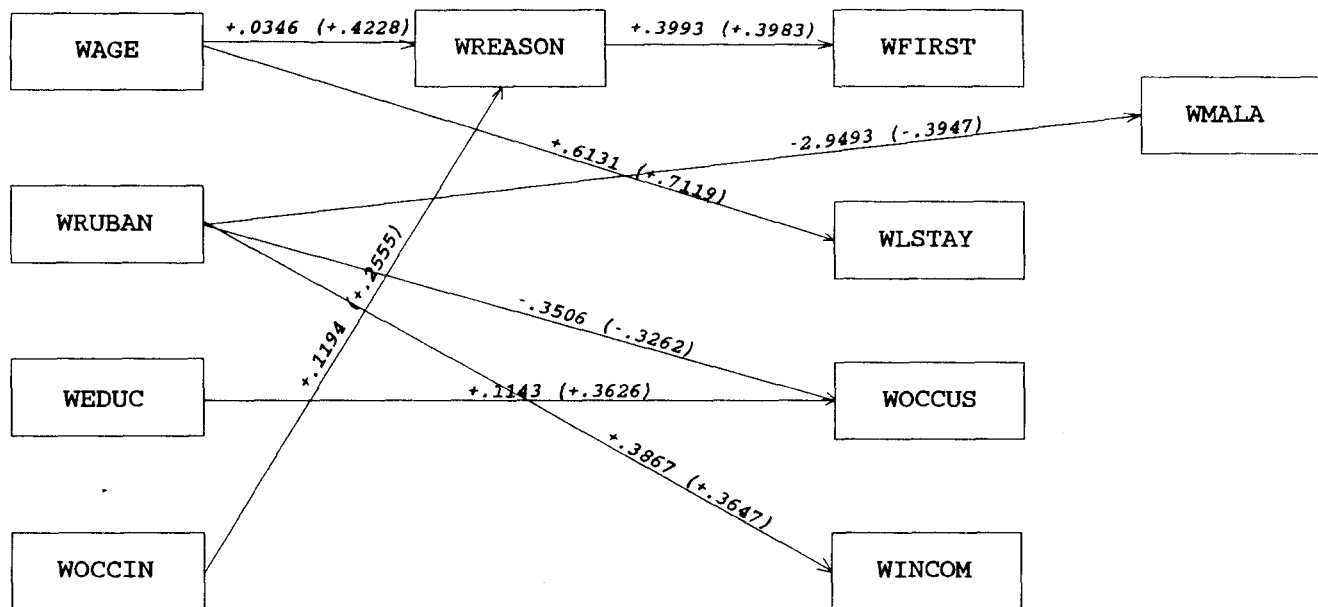
evident that greater English proficiency is associated with high occupations. In high occupational situations there is usually the need to speak only in English, and Malayalam does not play any part there. Malayalam has only a limited use of communicating with the family members or with members of the ethnic group.

The wives (Figure 6b) who come from villages use Malayalam more than those who come from cities (path= $-.39$). For Keralites who grew up in villages, Malayalam is the spoken language as well as the medium of instruction until high school. Since these individuals were socialized in a Malayalee culture, they use more Malayalam over any other language.

Because tradition plays such an important role in the life of Keralites, I explored various aspects of these traditional attitudes. Traditional culture is assumed to be the culture brought to the U.S. by the original immigrants. Marital and family attitudes and behavior of Kerala couples are subject to a complex interplay of contradictory forces in the American society. There are values and norms that reinforce traditional attitudes for husbands and wives. They are derived from cultural assumptions about masculinity and femininity. When Keralites live and work in American society, and especially when wives work, husbands and wives face a dilemma regarding adherence to traditional patterns of behavior.

Figure 7.6b

Wives' Use of Malayalam



As discussed, Indian society is extremely complex and its social and its economic structures are significantly different from those in American society. The familial and societal roles of Kerala men and women are closely linked to these fundamental Indian traditions and are also governed by its own religious and cultural traditions.

Usually, material culture changes fast, but the non-material culture lags. In a country like India this divergence is more apparent since its roots are so strongly embedded in tradition. Figure 7a shows that older husbands are more traditional in their family attitudes than younger ones (path= .27) and husbands who use Malayalam are also traditional in their family outlook (path= .50). The indirect effect is that the husbands' education affect traditional family attitudes through occupation and use of Malayalam. Husbands with high education are non-traditional in their attitudes (path= -.05), and husbands with high occupations are also non-traditional (path= -.06). It is statistically significant ($r = -.31$; $p < .01$) to observe that husbands who have high education and occupation are non-traditional in their attitudes.

Figure 7b points out that wives with less education still cling to their traditional family attitudes compared to wives with high levels of education (path= -.12). Among wives the results also show that the wives with high education ($r = -.42$; $p < .01$) are traditional in their

Figure 7.7a

Husbands' Traditional Family Attitudes

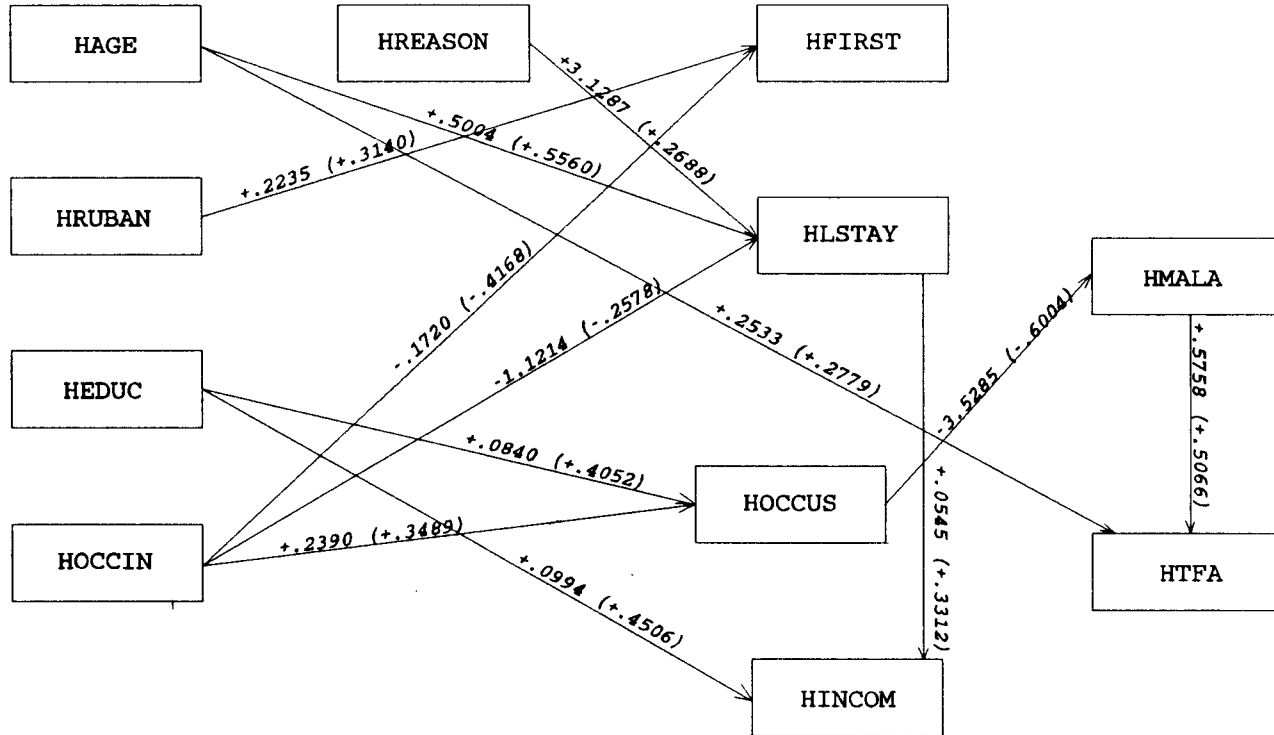
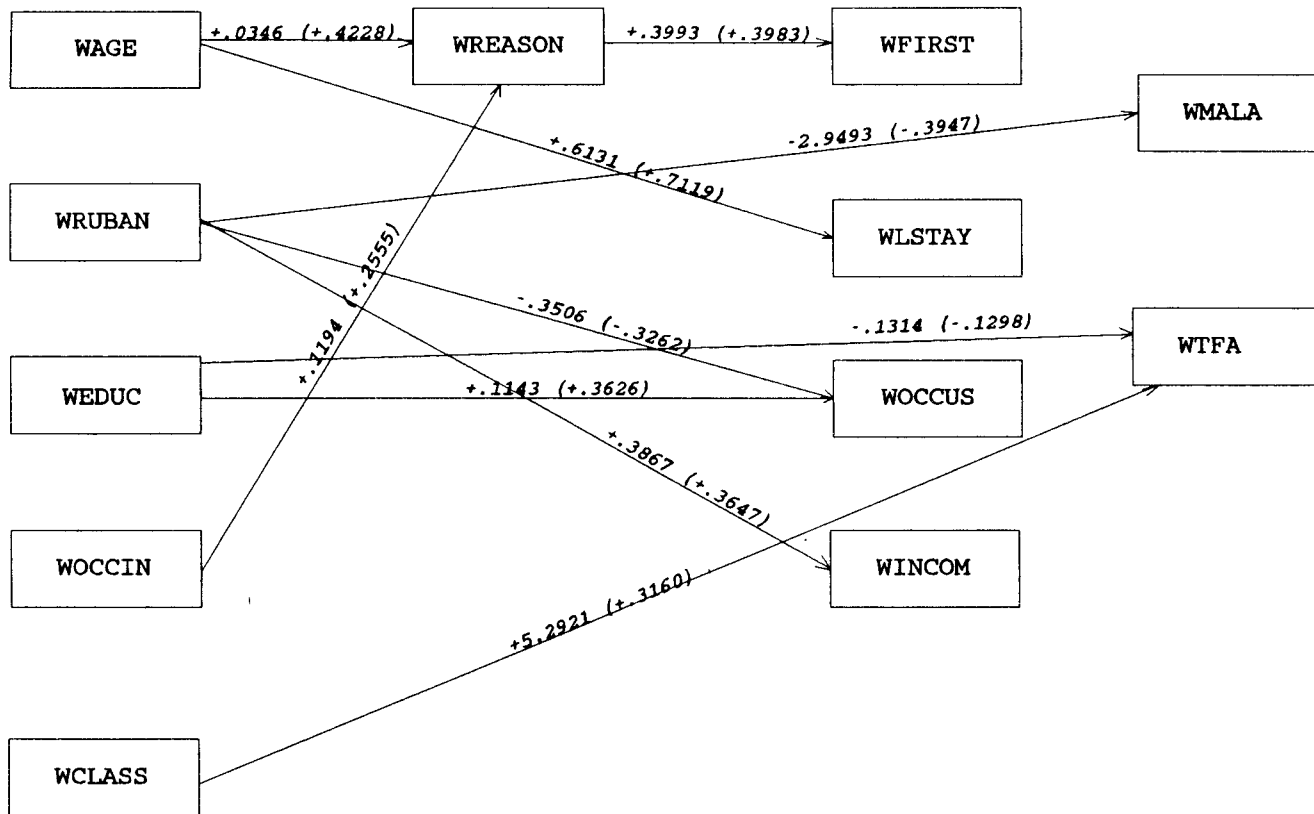


Figure 7.7b

Wives' Traditional Family Attitudes



outlook. And wives from high social class are traditional (path= .31) as well in their attitudes towards marriage and family.

Though there is less pressure to preserve the traditional attitudes and values, some still are kept in America. Keralites prefer the traditional family attitudes and values to American attitudes and values. As indicated, ideas and values do not change in India as rapidly as they may appear to change in America, where the swings of the pendulum seem to bring always back the past values. The Keralites' traditional Indian values and American values are potentially adversarial. This may cause difficulties for some Kerala couples. Generally, though, Keralites do not want to change their traditional attitudes and values in favor of the American value system.

Family studies have shown that perception of decision-making patterns vary considerably not only from society to society but also from study to study. Decision-making patterns have a strong effect on husbands' and wives' life satisfaction. Joint decision-making is a reflection of the equality in the status of the man and the women. The results of the path analyses in Table 8a reveal that when husbands came from rural areas they are more likely to make all decisions compared to husbands from urban areas (path= -.34). A similar trend (Table 8b) is seen among wives who come from lower social class than those from upper class

Figure 7.8a

Husbands' Decision-making Pattern

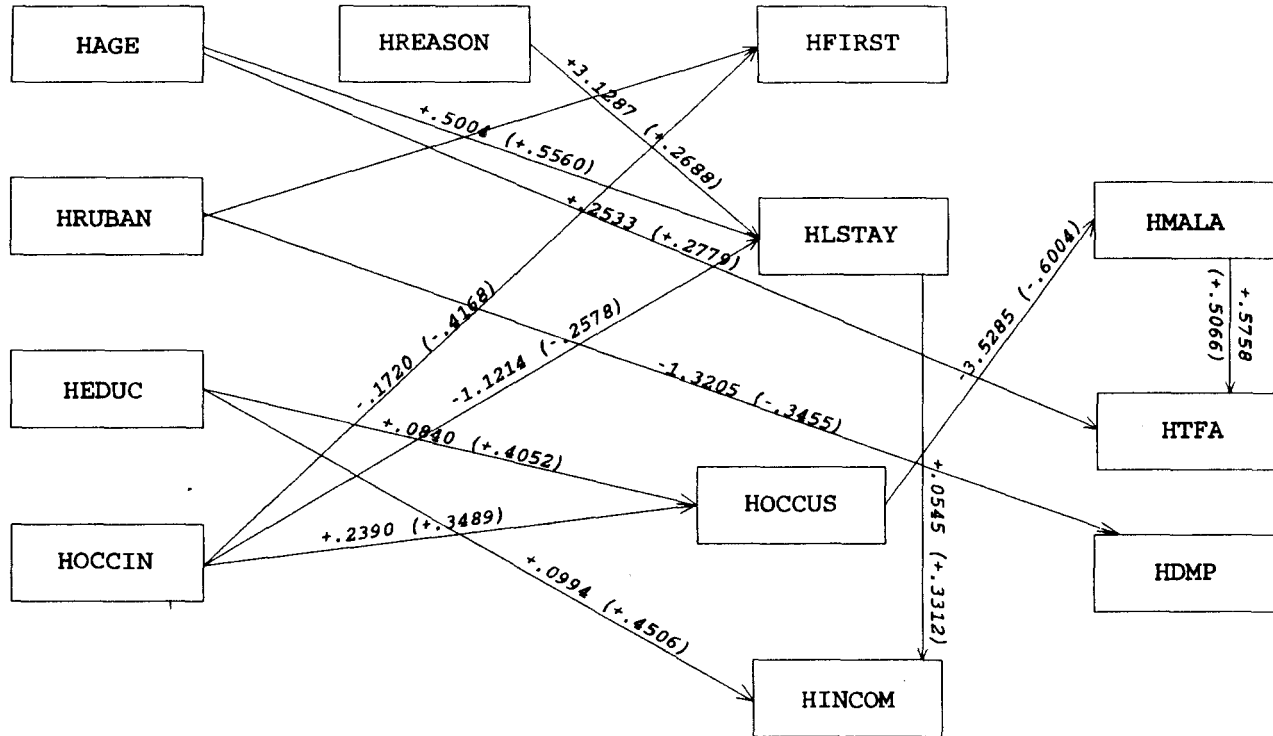
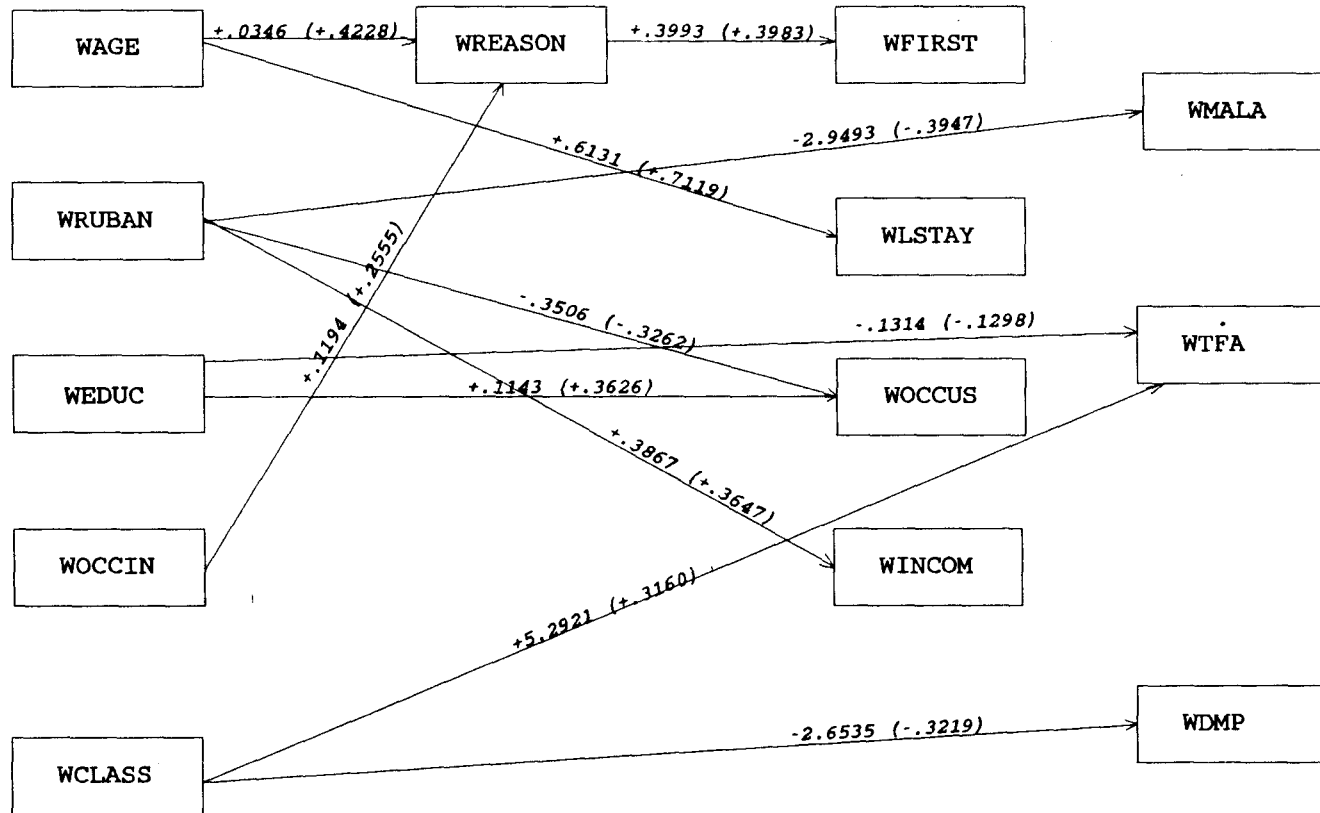


Figure 7.8b

Wives' Decision-making Patterns



(path= -.32). These husbands find it hard to change their authoritarian decision-making patterns. These wives still hold that husbands should make all decisions. Even in the U.S. wives are more satisfied (path= .41) when husbands make decisions in the family. Wives fear to make decisions solely and later be held responsible if decisions are wrong. They would rather prefer to stand by their husbands' decisions. These traditional attitudes diminish for husbands and wives with higher levels of education and occupation.

Given the authoritarian and patriarchal family structure of Kerala families, this data supports the finding that the husband is still the patriarchal head of the family. However, results from descriptive statistics, means, standard deviations and t-tests (Chapter VI) support the finding that Kerala couples are egalitarian in their decision-making patterns. This discrepancy is due to the fact that I have emphasized concern only with the two extreme items such as "husband always" and "wife always." "Joint" falls in the middle. Though it may not be quite obvious at first, the descriptive statistics show (Chapter VI) that if decisions are not made jointly, husbands are dominant.

In the preliminary analysis, simple correlations between children's academic development and other independent variables suggest there is no significant

relationship between the subjective variables. In the husbands' model (Figure 9a), none of the preceding variables affect the children's academic development. On the contrary, Figure 9b shows that wives who have high occupations still prefer husbands to make decisions regarding their children's academic matters (path= .31). Similarly in families where wives have high incomes, husbands make decisions for children (path= .39). The indirect effects are that wives from village have husbands make decisions for their children (path= -.10) even if they are employed. Another significant feature is that even educated wives have their husbands make decisions for their children even if they are employed (path= .14). So too wives' from cities even if they have high income, allow husbands make decisions for their children (path = .14). In short, making decisions for children seem to be a domain of the husband. Even if the wives' socio-economic status is high, wives prefer their husbands to make these decisions.

Marital disagreement is the last independent variable to play an important part in the husbands' model. Table 10a shows that husbands from rural areas are more likely to disagree with their wives compared to husbands from cities (path= -.30). Furthermore, contrary to expectation, there is more disagreement between the couples if husbands have stayed longer in the U.S. (path= .33) and if husbands have traditional family attitudes (path= .35) than those who

Figure 7.9a

Husbands' Decisions on Children's Academic Development

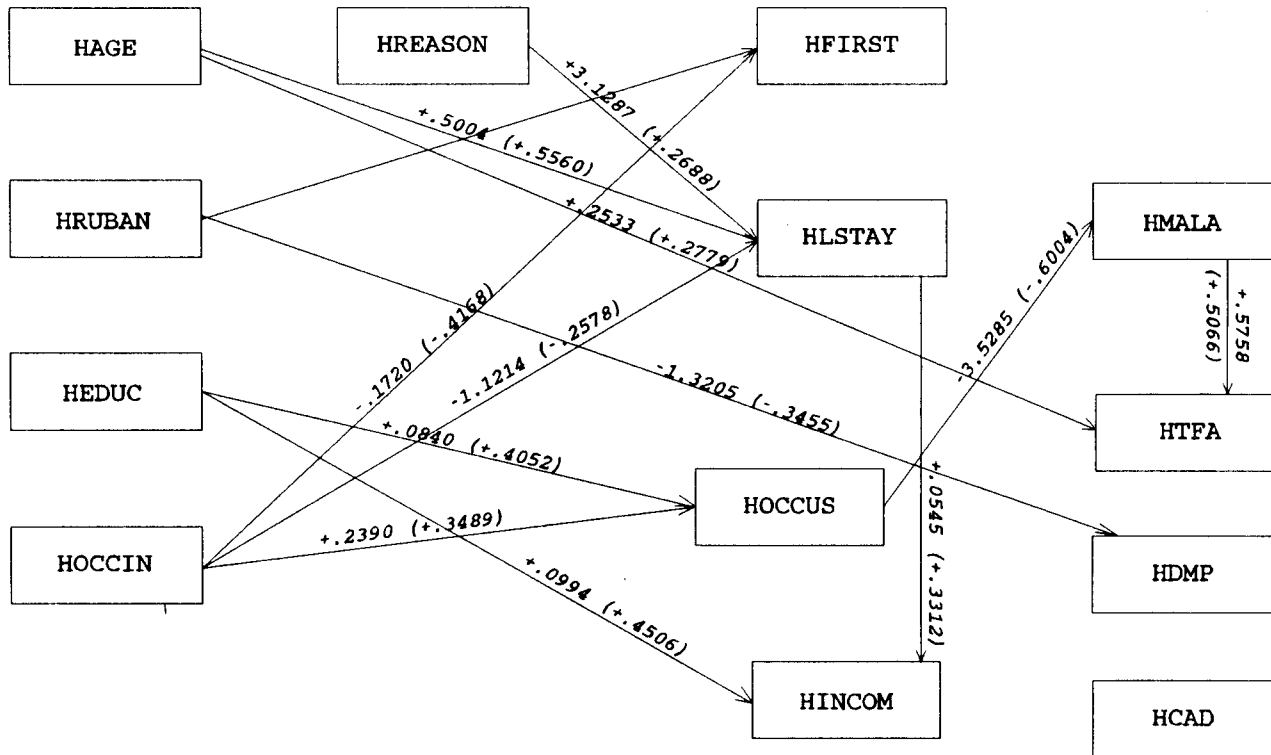


Figure 7.9b

Wives' Decisions on Children's Academic Development

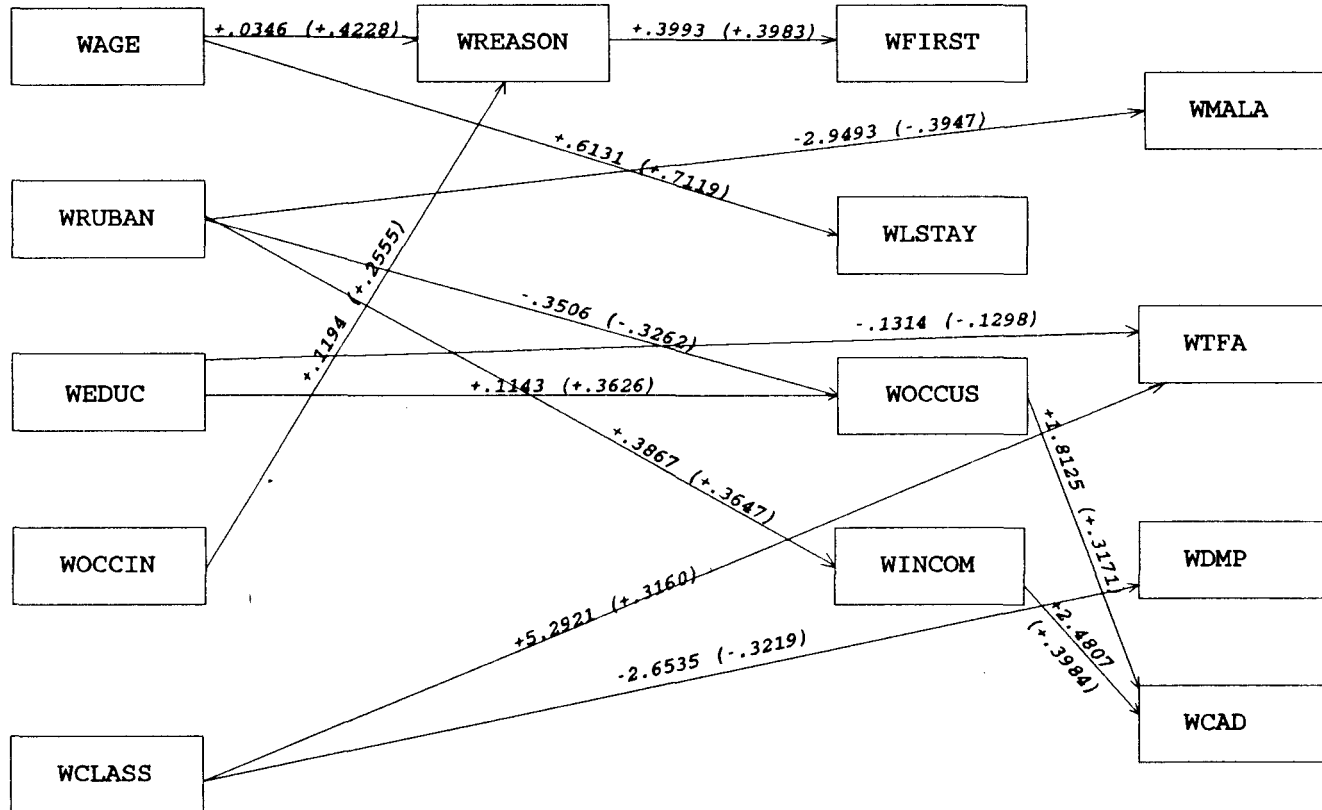
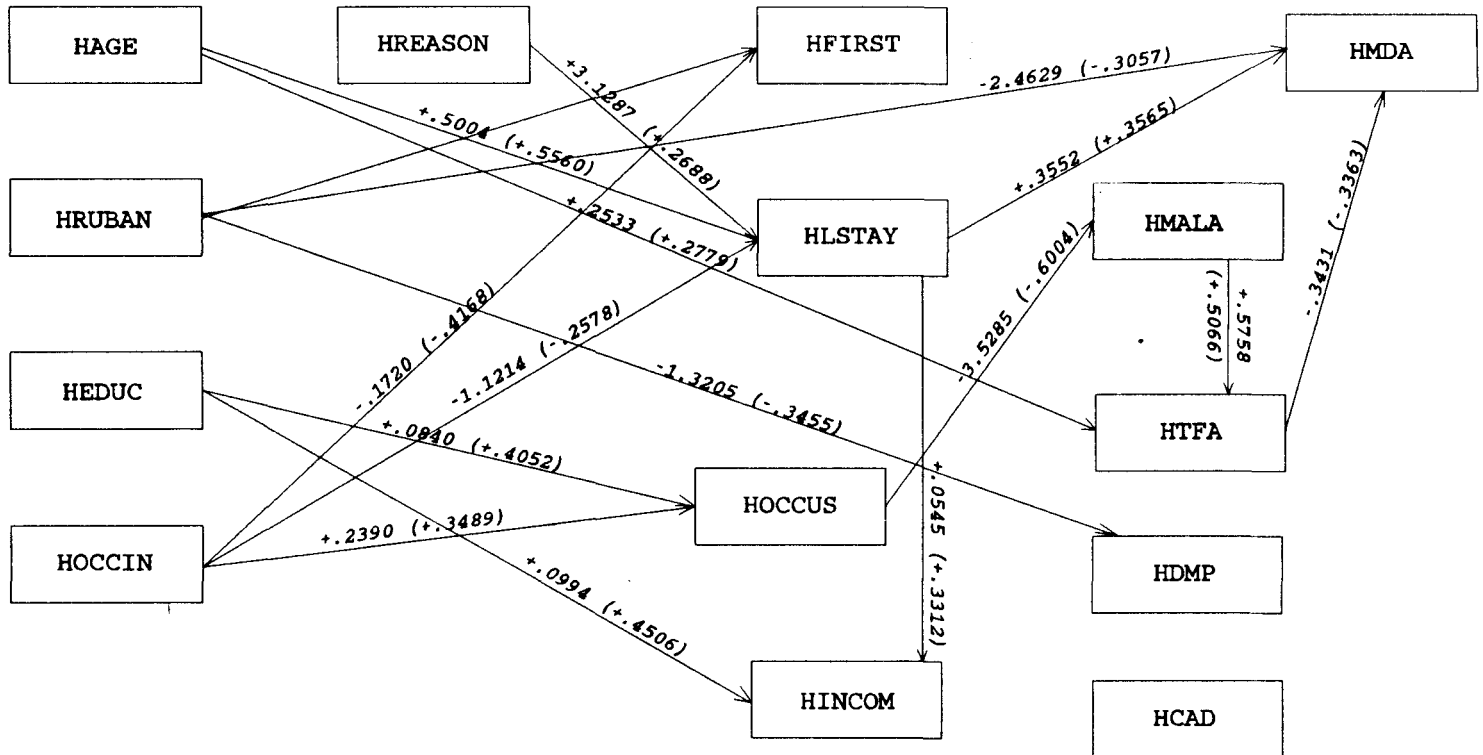


Figure 7.10a

Husbands' Marital Disagreement



stayed for shorter periods and those with non-traditional attitudes. It seems more likely that disagreement is due to the traditional attitudes that husbands hold and probably the non-traditional attitudes of the wives. Older husbands seem to continue in their traditional ways despite staying longer in the United States.

The indirect effect shows that if husbands are older and have stayed longer (path= .19), or if they had low occupations in India (path= -.09), or if they came for study/job (path= .09), there were more disagreements between the couples. However, the indirect path through occupational status in India did not provide any substantial interpretation. The path coefficients are too small ($p > .05$) to support the fact that husbands are dissatisfied with their lives in the U.S.

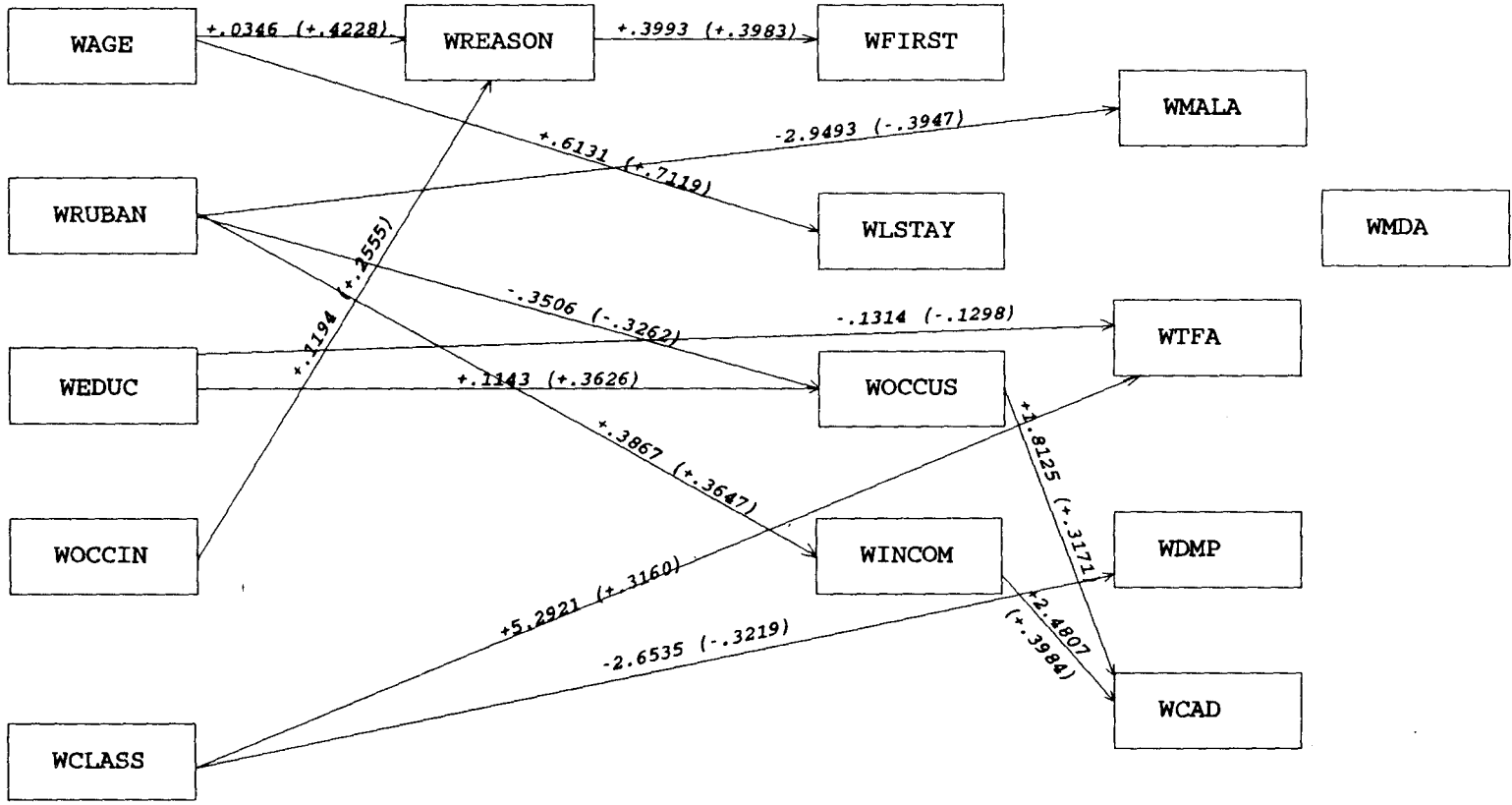
The wives' model (Figure 10b) does not have a direct or indirect effect on marital disagreement. This is probably because the wives try to avoid disagreement whenever they can, or they might give in, and just accept the husbands' opinion. However, if there is disagreement, it is only a transitory phase for wives. They may keep quiet for a while but after that carry on with their routine work.

LIFE SATISFACTION - DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Keralites' satisfaction in life is measured by three factors - marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction

Figure 7.10b

Wives' Marital Disagreement



(satisfaction when performing parental duties) and work satisfaction. For husbands, marital satisfaction and work satisfaction are linked together and marital satisfaction is also linked with parental satisfaction. Therefore, usually those who are satisfied with parenting are satisfied with life in the United States.

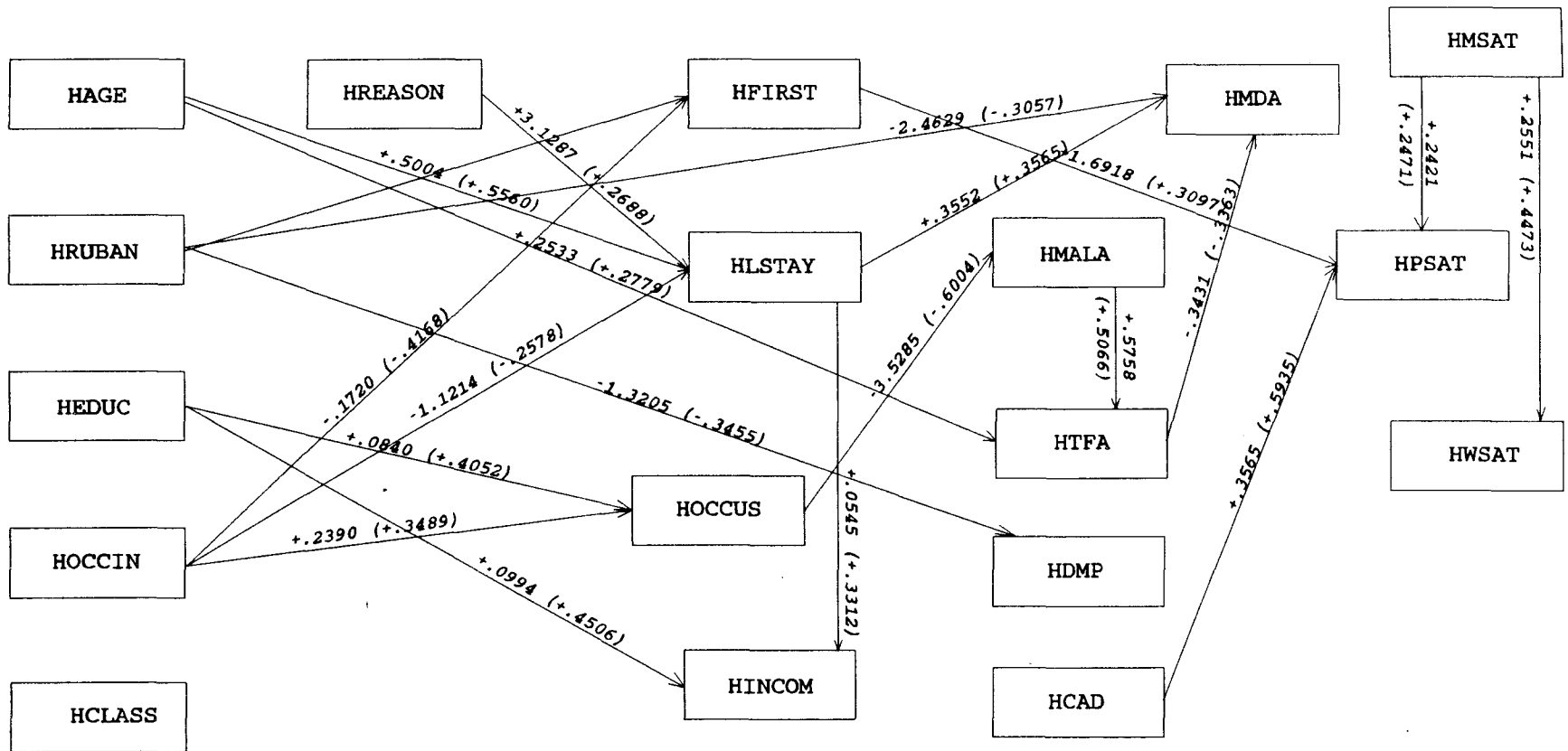
In Figure 11a an analysis of husbands life satisfaction reveal two direct effects on parental satisfaction - the order of arrival and involvement in children's academic development. Husbands who arrived first are satisfied with their parental responsibilities (path= .30) and husbands who decided about their children's academic development are also satisfied with parental duties (path= .59).

The indirect effect shows that husbands who came first from cities are satisfied with their life (path= .09), and husbands who came first but who had low occupations in India are also satisfied with their life (path= -.12). The order of arrival to the U.S. is important to the husband for a satisfactory life in this country.

In the light of Kerala's patriarchal family structure, it is understandable that if husbands arrived first they would have more authority and power than if they followed their wives. Therefore, they would be more satisfied with their life than their husbands who followed their wives. In making decisions for children husbands exercise more power than wives. The same pattern that is followed in India is

Figure 7.11a

Husbands' Life Satisfaction



carried over here. In short, husbands are satisfied when they have control and power in the family. One way to achieve this is to immigrate first.

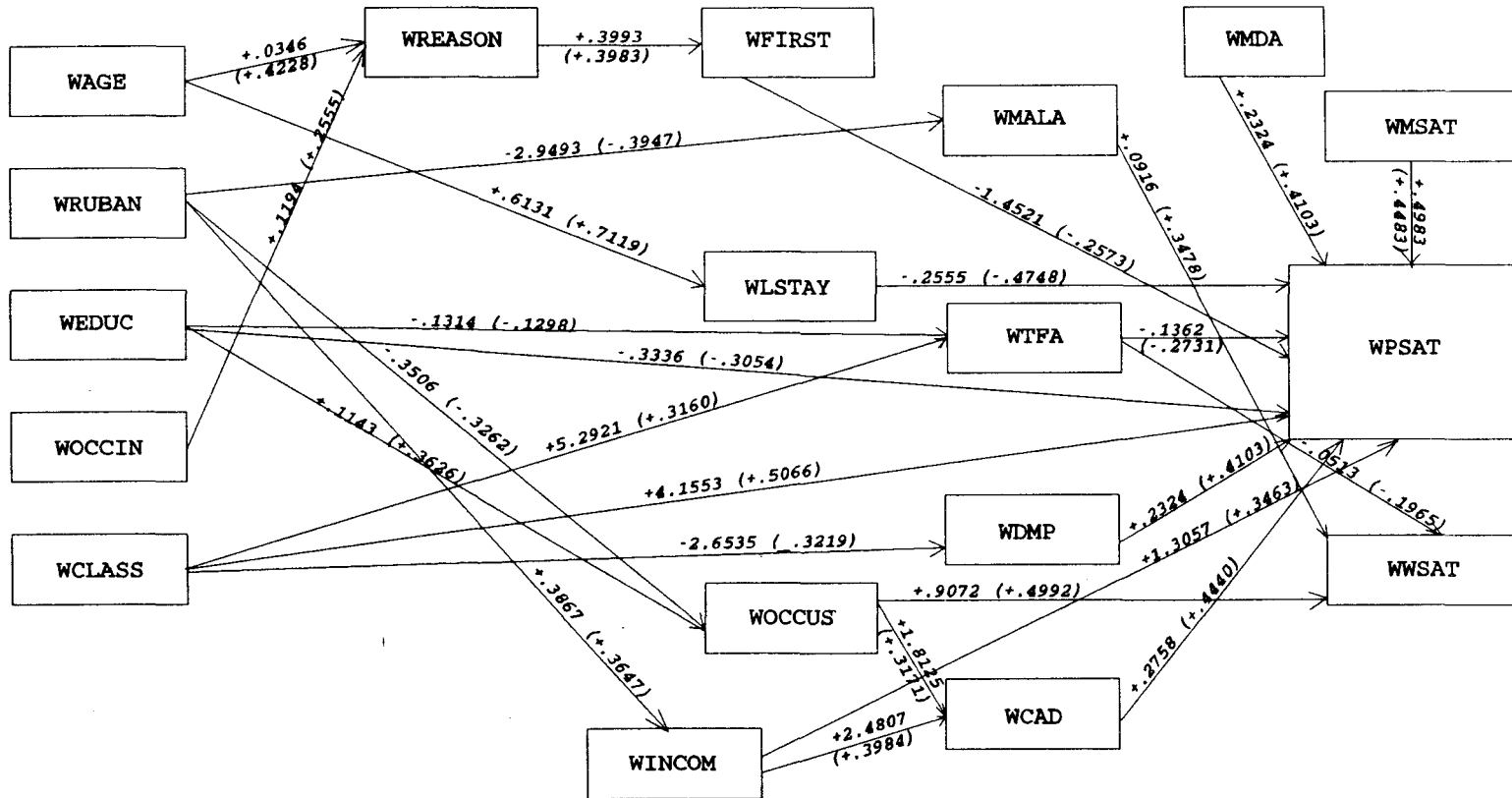
Figure 11b indicates that wives have two distinct areas of satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is linked to parental satisfaction and work satisfaction is separate from these two. Parental satisfaction is also high for wives. Aside from direct effect, several indirect paths also indicate wives' level of satisfaction. I would explain these direct effects first and then the indirect effects.

Wives' education has a direct effect on life satisfaction. Wives with lower education are more satisfied with parental duties (path= $-.30$), perhaps because they may not be employed and have more time to devote to parenting. Their level of satisfaction is usually high. At the same time wives in higher occupations are more satisfied with their employment than those in lower occupations (path= $.49$). Wives who have higher income are more satisfied with parenting than their husbands (path= $.34$). Earnings give them the freedom to utilize their money in the way they want, especially for their children. This gives them a great deal of satisfaction.

On the subjective side, wives who also use Malayalam are highly satisfied (path= $.34$) with their employment. For example, since a lot of Malayalee nurses work in the hospitals, they get a chance to meet and talk in Malayalam.

Figure 7.11b

Wives' Life Satisfaction



They also feel they can better express themselves in Malayalam and this gives them satisfaction.

I also found that wives with traditional attitudes are more dissatisfied with their employment than the non-traditional wives (path= $-.19$). Traditionally the wives had to stay at home and take care of the children. Though some women would like to stay at home, in the U.S. both husbands and wives, have to work to live comfortably. Some of the respondents also indicated that there is so much of stress and strain compared to life back home. This, of course, is one reason for their dissatisfaction.

The other areas that indicate that wives' level of satisfaction are when husbands made decisions for their children (path= $.44$). In Chapter VI I showed that if children's academic decisions are not made jointly, the husbands are most dominant on those occasions. This data supports the finding that husbands are dominant but they are not so authoritarian as in India. The other area was in matters of marital disagreement. Even if there were disagreements in the family, wives were still satisfied with their lives (path= $.41$).

There are several indirect paths, but their extent is not significant enough to show any effect between the independent variables and dependent variables. However, I would like to denote their path coefficients to prove that they are not statistically significant. The paths are as

follows:

1. Older wives, if they came for education or employment and if they arrived first, were more satisfied than their counterparts (path= $-.08$).
2. Wives who held high occupational status in India, if they came first for education and employment, were more satisfied with their lives in this country (path= $-.15$).
3. Wives from rural areas, if they could use Malayalam language (path= $-.13$) at work, were satisfied with their work.
4. Wives from rural areas with low occupation and who have husbands that made most of the decisions for their children's academic development, were more satisfied with their lives (path= $-.04$) than their counterparts.
5. Wives from rural areas, with low income and who have husbands that made decisions for their children, were more satisfied with parenting (path = $.06$).
6. Wives with low education but who are non-traditional in their attitudes, were more satisfied than their counterparts (path= $-.32$).
7. Wives with high education and occupation were more likely to be satisfied (path= $.05$).
8. Wives with high social class and also traditional family attitudes, were more satisfied with their life (path= $.04$).
9. If husbands make decisions for wives with low social

class, the wives were more satisfied with their life (path= $-.07$).

The background factors affect the objective and subjective factors that in turn affects the couples life satisfaction. Since the background factors affect one and in some cases two intervening variables the paths were insignificant indicating that the relationship is not strong. However, no significant differences were seen between the direct and indirect paths either in the husbands' or wives' model when the intervening variables are accounted for.

Overall, wives are more satisfied with the various aspects of life in the U.S. than their husbands. Table 11b reveals that wives who have high socio-economic status, who use Malayalam, who are non-traditional in their attitudes, whose husbands made decisions in the family, even if there are disagreements at times, were more satisfied with their lives in the U.S. than their counterparts.

In summary, for husbands and wives both the objective and subjective factors are important for a satisfactory life in America. Contrary to recent studies on subjective correlates of life satisfaction (Davidson et. al., 1983), in this study both objective and subjective characteristics are seen as significant in understanding life satisfaction.

The Asian Indians (Keralites) in this study answer some of the questions, such as - why did they come to the U.S.,

what skills, resources, values, cultures and life-styles did they bring with them, did the family and community support them, how satisfied are the couples with their life in the new country (America)?

From the data presented in this Chapter, I perceived certain patterns in the adaptation of Keralites to the U.S. The demographic factors, motives and time of immigration, all relating to their pre-immigration characteristics, are important for their success and satisfactory life in the U.S. The immigration literature often refers to the "European model" or "Straight line" theory as voluntary immigration, acculturation, integration, assimilation and eventual absorption into the dominant society (Kitano and Daniels, 1988: 1). Gordon (1964) predicts that all types of assimilation will follow once structural assimilation is achieved. The net result is the disappearance of the ethnic group as a separate entity and the loss of its distinctive values.

The Kerala immigrants, however, show a different pattern. The Keralites have a strong bicultural perspective. The individual in this society usually moves easily in to the American culture, and at the same time has a strong attachment to Kerala culture and Asian Indian ethnic identity. Keralites have achieved a structural level of adaptation to the American culture with their high socio-economic status but are more comfortable within their ethnic

enclaves. For example, their marriages are within their ethnic group. This fits the notion of "pluralistic adaptation" proposed by Greeley. The Kerala community already practices a policy of selective criteria.

The differences between the best fitting satisfaction equations for husbands and wives point out that both spouses are more satisfied with their life when the level of satisfaction approaches equality. However, husbands endorse equality but at the same time would like to be recognized as patriarchy of the family. In contrast wives want equality and a sharing of women's traditional role, but at the same time would like to consider husbands as the authority in the family.

From a sociological perspective, Kerala immigrants in the U.S. signify a situation of interaction between two cultural systems, a traditional and a modern cultural system. Keralites tend to hold fast to their native culture in their host country. At the same time their mode of adaptation is marked by a clear preference for structural integration more than cultural assimilation.

To analyze deeper the couples' life satisfaction, I examined whether the similarities between husbands and wives (in selected areas) would indicate that they are congruent in their level of life satisfaction. This is the focus of the following chapter, Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VIII
CONGRUENCE AND INCONGRUENCE IN LIFE SATISFACTION
OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES

In the previous chapter I used path analyses to describe the relationship between Kerala husbands' and wives' personal characteristics and interactional aspects of life with life satisfaction. I concluded in Chapter VII that wives were more satisfied than husbands in various aspects of life in America. In this chapter, I analyze how satisfaction in life is related to congruence in husbands' and wives' perceptions of objective and subjective factors. I examine whether the similarity between husbands and wives in personal characteristics and selected aspects of life are congruent with their degree of life satisfaction. If husbands and wives perceive themselves to have similar views on certain aspects of life, usually this indicates they are satisfied with their life. If they perceive that they hold dissimilar views, it may indicate they are dissatisfied with their life.

Taylor (1967) found a greater similarity between self-perception and the spouse's perception of self as related to good marital adjustment. Similarly a positive relationship between marital happiness and the male's self-description

has also been reported by Katz et al. (1963). Research in the 1960s also has corroborated findings that there is a positive correlation between marital happiness and high occupational status, income and educational levels for husbands. There is also a positive relationship between husbands' and wives' similarities in socio-economic status, age and religion as related to satisfaction.

My study assesses the relative effect of congruence in the objective and subjective variables on life satisfaction using the path model as in Chapter VII. Path coefficients allow the assessment of the relationship between a group of independent variables on the one hand, and dependent variables or a set of dependent variable on the other. This method facilitates the examination of the impact of several independent variables on the dependent variables. The beta weights indicate the relative strength of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

In order to assess the congruence level of husbands' and wives' status, difference variables¹ were computed for each of the objective and subjective factors. Husbands' and wives' congruence models has the congruence objective and

¹ The congruence variables were created by subtracting the values of the wives from the corresponding values of the husbands.

subjective variables in the place of the original variables. The whole regression was rerun as in Chapter VII replacing the independent variables by the congruence variables, but the original dependent variable - life satisfaction - of husbands and wives were retained. I used the same criteria as in the original path analysis for delineating the important factors: Path coefficients above the value of .05 were omitted only when they were insignificant at the .05 level, and paths were also deleted at each step using the .05 level of significance for the path coefficients. It should be noted that the congruence independent variables are the same for both husbands and wives; only the final dependent variable is different.

CONGRUENCE IN PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

As in the original model, since there was no causal order among the background variables, a simple Pearson's correlation was carried out. There was no significant relationship between background variables. But the findings in Chapter VII showed that the background variables were important for the immigrants' satisfactory life in the U.S. Since husbands and wives came from similar backgrounds, all things being equal, it could be assumed that they were similar in great many respects. This could indicate a high level of satisfaction for the couple. My findings indicate that there are no associations between similarities in

background variables and similarities in reasons for immigration, order of arrival or length of stay in the U.S. because the path coefficients were below .05. Therefore, the first endogenous congruence variable examined was the similarity in occupation in the United States.

Figure 8.1

Spousal Congruence on Length of Stay

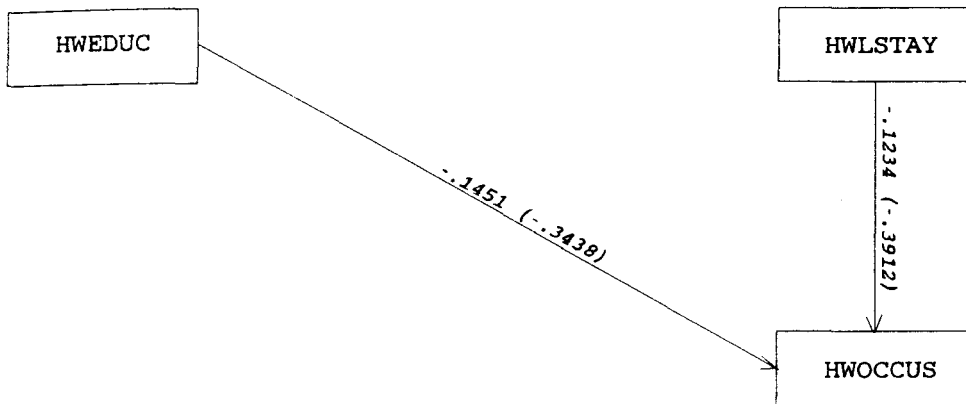


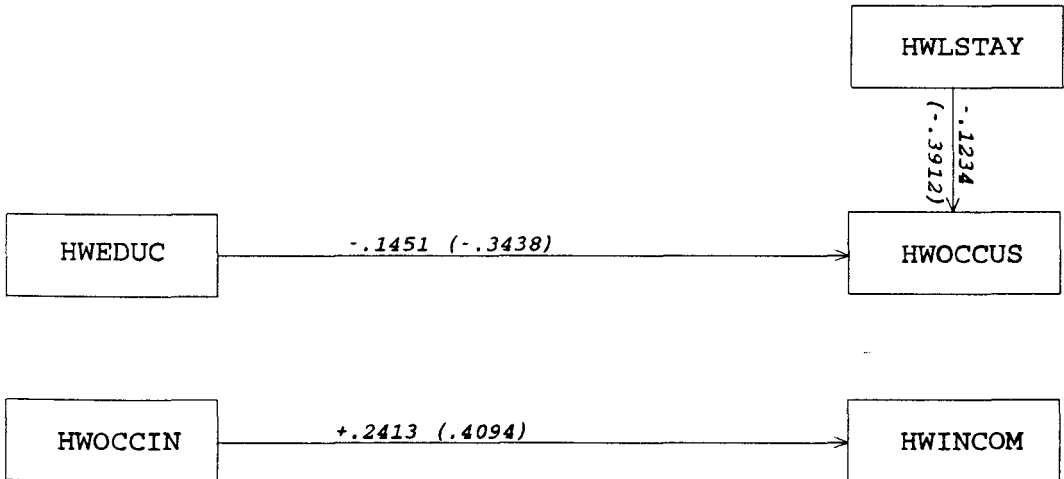
Figure 1 shows that husbands and wives who had similar education had different levels of occupation in the U.S. (path= $-.34$). In Chapter VI I found husbands were more likely to be professionals than wives. Even though husbands and wives have similar levels of education, husbands tend to have higher status jobs. This probably reflects the persistence of the traditional family model in which the husband has a higher status job than the wife. Higher

status allows an acceptable combination with low status wives but the opposite is not considered acceptable.

Figure 1 also shows that husbands and wives who have stayed for the same length of time in the U.S. were more dissimilar in their occupational status than husbands and wives who have stayed for different lengths of time (path= -.39). This difference in high occupational status for husbands, even if they have stayed for same length of time is again due to the fact that husbands have higher status than wives. Another explanation could be that it is more difficult for women to find comparable jobs as those of men.

Figure 8.2

Spousal Congruence on Income



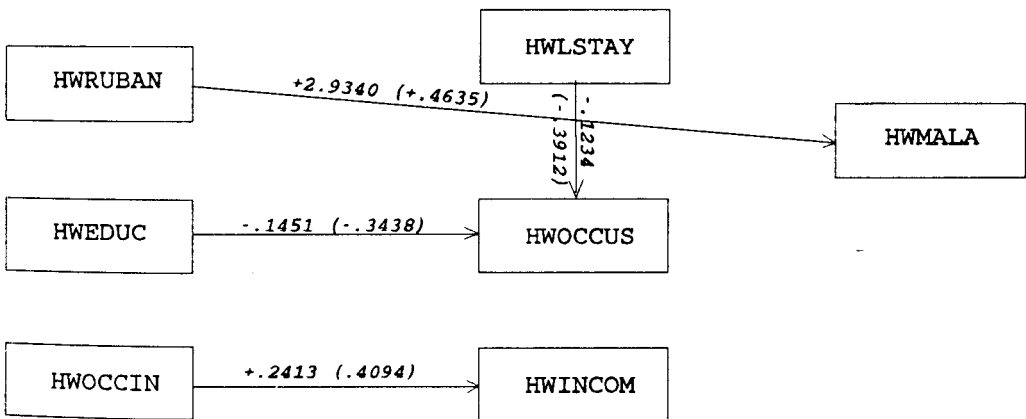
Another congruence factor in the lives of Kerala husbands and wives is income. Figure 2 shows that husbands

and wives who held similar occupational statuses in India also had similar income in the U.S. (path= .40). The majority of husbands and wives who were professionals or semi-professionals, e.g., physicians and nurses in India could have obtained a similar occupation in the U.S. Consequently both spouses were making incomes that could be regarded as equitable. This again supports the fact that couples with similar socio-economic status make similar incomes in the U.S.

SPOUSAL CONGRUENCE ON INTERACTIONAL ASPECTS

Figure 8.3

Spousal Congruence on the Use of Malayalam Language



In the second part of the model, the subjective aspects

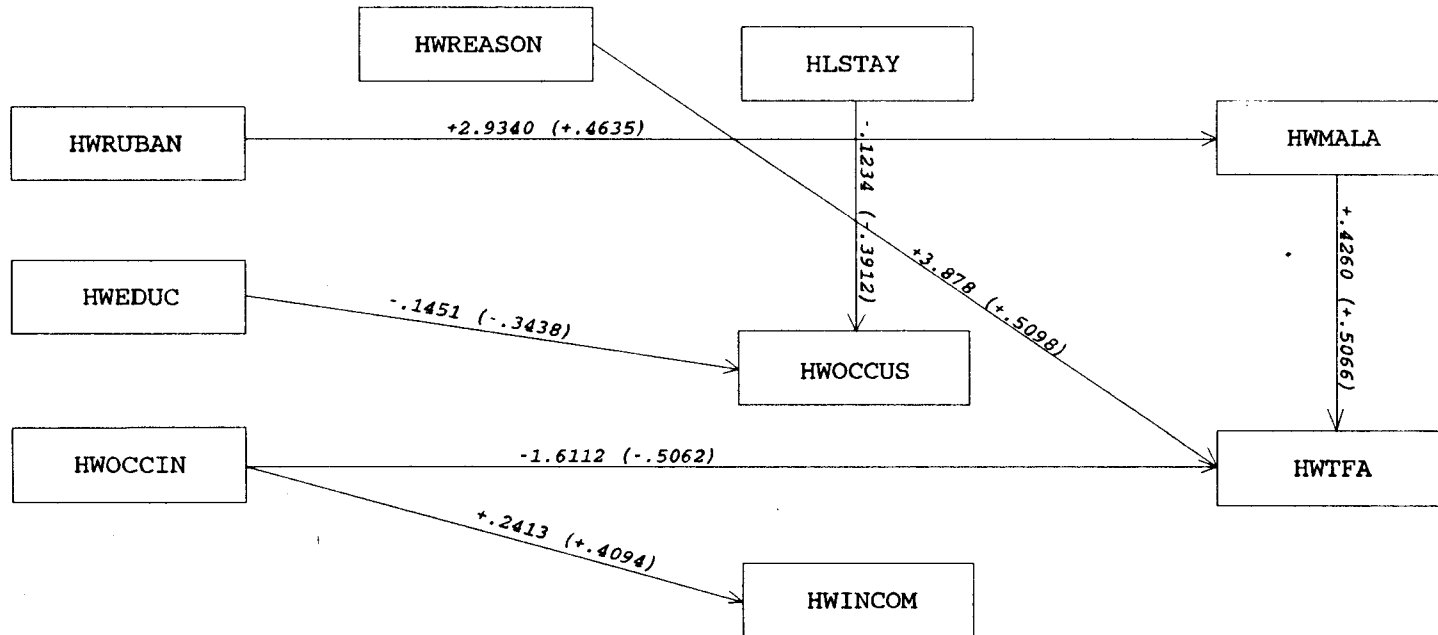
of life play an important role. Figure 3 reveals that among the subjective variables, husbands and wives from similar backgrounds are also similar in the extent to which they use Malayalam (path= .46). Husbands and wives who grew up in rural areas both tend to use Malayalam more than those who grew up in a city. But if the husband grew up in a village and wife in a city or vice versa, the extent to which they both use Malayalam is divergent. In the original model it was seen also that those wives who came from villages use Malayalam more than those from cities. This data suggests that Kerala wives or husbands who came from rural areas use Malayalam more than those that come from Metropolitan areas.

The extent of the use of Malayalam also indicates whether couples are equally traditional or modern in their value system. Figure 4 shows that husbands and wives who are similar in their use of Malayalam are more congruent in their traditional attitudes (path= .50) than those who are dissimilar. Husbands and wives who use Malayalam also espouse the Malayalee culture which emphasizes traditional family values and attitudes. These couples sometimes find it difficult to assimilate into modern cultures like the U.S.

The other direct effect shown in Figure 4 is that those husbands and wives who had similar reasons for immigrating were also more similar in their attitudes than if one partner came for education and the other for job (path=

Figure 8.4

Spousal Congruence on Traditional Family Attitudes



.50). In Chapter VII it was seen that husbands and wives who were sponsored had traditional family attitudes. It can be argued that if both partners were sponsored, they usually are similar in their traditional attitudes and values.

The third direct effect is the fact that husbands and wives who had similar occupational status in India are different in their traditional attitudes (path= -.50). The explanation could be that husbands and wives with similar occupations in India may have changed differently after immigration to America or they are less tied to Indian culture. No valid explanation can be derived from this analysis.

The indirect effect is that if both spouses came from the same region it affects traditional family attitudes through the use of Malayalam. Husbands and wives from the same region are more congruent in their use of Malayalam which in turn makes them congruent in their traditional family attitudes than their counterparts (path= .19). This again may indicate that rural life is associated with traditional family attitudes. This finding, when compared to the original wives' model, is again consistent.

Husbands' and wives' congruence in decision-making and children's academic development and marital disagreement is not associated with any of the preceding objective and subjective factors. Therefore, I examined next the congruence of husbands and wives to life satisfaction.

CONGRUENCE OF LIFE SATISFACTION

As in the original model, husbands' life satisfaction was measured by marital, parental and work satisfaction. In the husbands' congruence model those who were satisfied with parental responsibilities were also satisfied with work. Whereas in the wives' congruence model marital satisfaction is associated with parental satisfaction. Therefore, when husbands and wives are satisfied in these areas, it is assumed that they are satisfied with their life in the U.S.

In the final husbands' congruence model, congruence in four variables, age, social class, decision-making patterns and marital disagreement, did not reveal any association with other variables or with life satisfaction. Whereas in wives' congruence model, congruence in five variables, social class, order of immigration, decision-making patterns, children's academic development, and marital disagreement, did not indicate any association in the model. These paths were not significant at the .05 level.

HUSBANDS' LIFE SATISFACTION

The three important aspects that explain satisfaction in husbands are: first, if husbands and wives agree on their order of arrival to America, then husbands are more dissatisfied with their marital life than wives; second, when husbands and wives make similar decisions regarding their children's academic development, husbands are

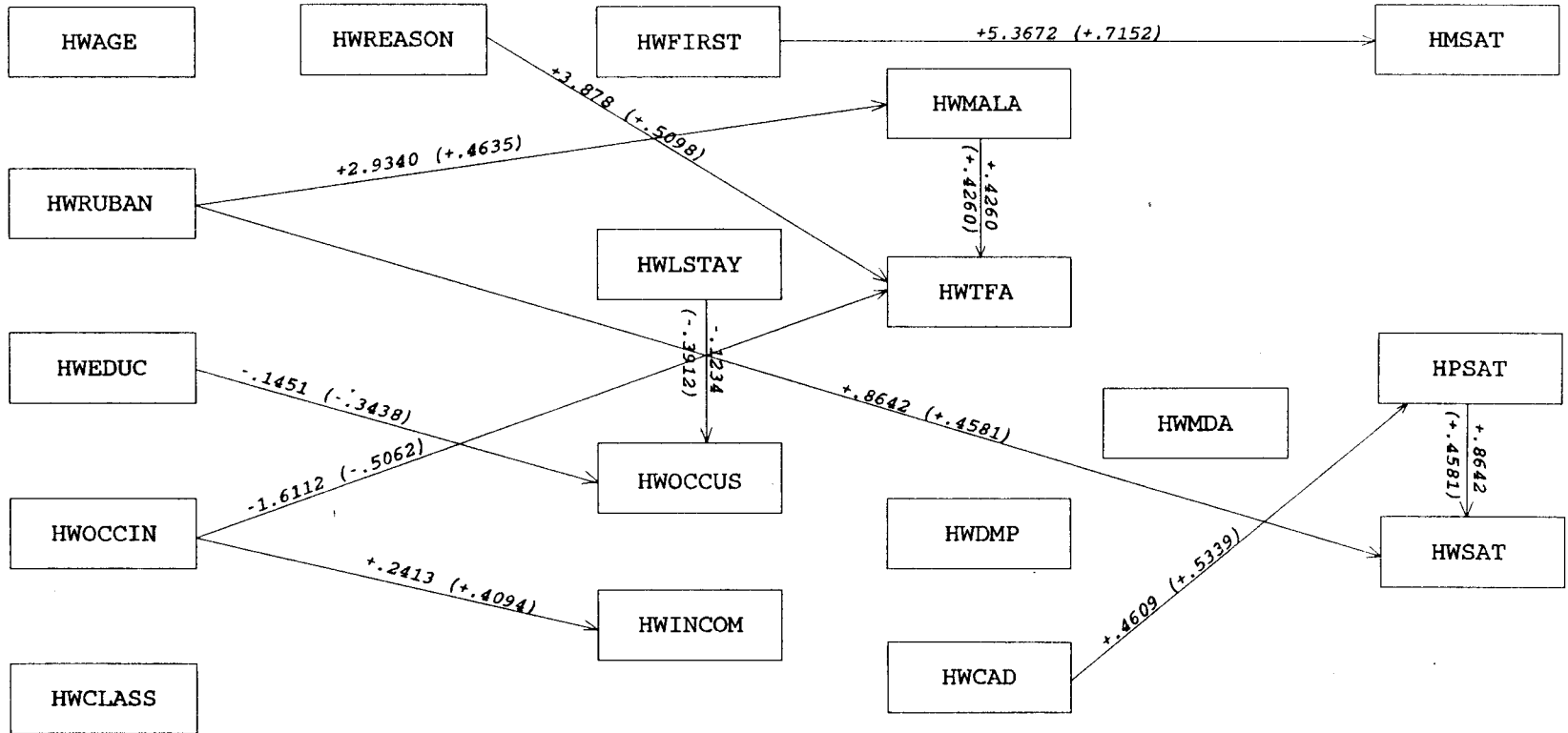
dissatisfied in parenting; and third, when husbands and wives come from similar regions, husbands are dissatisfied with their jobs.

The paths in Figure 5 show that if husbands and wives disagree on who came first, then the extent of marital satisfaction is higher for husbands (path= .71). Chapter VII indicates that if husbands came first they were satisfied with their life in the U.S. The dissatisfaction among husbands who agreed with their wives on the order of arrival may be a reflection of the husbands who followed their wives. Migration studies have shown that males dominate in international migration. If husbands arrived first to the U.S., they usually were more in control of the situation than if the reverse were true. In cases where wives came first, they held a dominant position in the family because husbands arrived as dependents officially. The wives achieved this position because they were more socialized into the American life by the time husbands arrived. They also socialized them when they arrived. This process made the husbands feel they have a lower self-esteem.

This finding is similar to the finding in the husbands' original model in Chapter VII. Husbands who arrived first felt they had accomplished something, but if they followed their wives, they did not feel the same way. This attitude confirms again the authoritarian and patriarchal nature of

Figure 8.5

Spousal Congruence on Husbands' Life Satisfaction



the Kerala husbands. A significant aspect of this finding is that in 50 percent of the cases (Chapter V) wives came first. Thus many husbands were dissatisfied in this respect. The data also indicates that for Kerala immigrants, females are dominant in the migration pattern. From the husbands' point of view, this female migration leads to greater independence in women. And the wives feel that this migration has offered them a more satisfactory life and improved their status.

The second area in which husbands found a great deal of dissatisfaction is in parenting. There is no direct association between any independent variables and children's academic development. But, when husbands and wives disagree on children's academic development, husbands are satisfied with parenting responsibilities (path= .53). Chapter VII shows that given the patriarchal structure of Malayalee society, husbands are satisfied when they can make decisions for their children.

The third direct effect is the situation that when the couples come from different regions, husbands are more satisfied with parenting (path= .45). Husbands are not used to parenting in India because wives and relatives take on those responsibilities. If the couples came from the same region, probably both know the pattern back home and the husband may feel it is the wife's responsibly to take care of children.

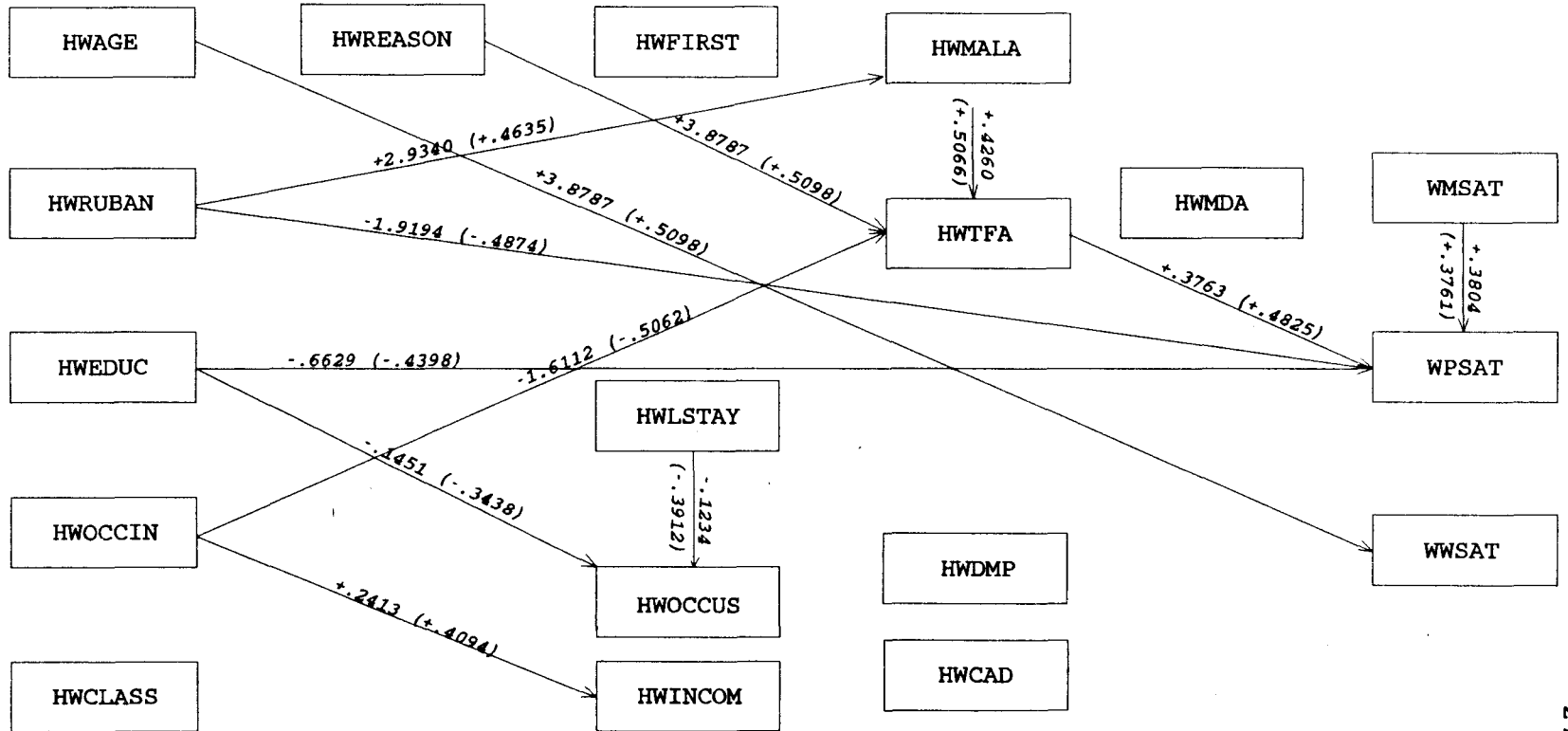
A comparison with the original model shows similarities between the two models supporting the fact that the order of arrival, involvement in children's academic development and rural-urban place of residence are important determinants for the husbands' satisfactory life in the U.S.. However, congruence in these factors is related to dissatisfaction for husbands. The explanation could be that husbands no longer play a dominant patriarchal role in American society.

WIVES' LIFE SATISFACTION

Figure 6 represents the congruence model and wives' level of satisfaction. When husbands and wives were similar in their age, the wives were less dissatisfied with their work (path= $-.57$) than wives whose age differed from that of their husbands. Younger wives were ready to take up challenging jobs in America. They were more liberal in their outlook and derived a great deal of satisfaction in their new employments. In the U.S. employment has high priority. When both partners are of similar age they are able to keep pace with the changing world of work and adjust to the new situations. If husbands were significantly older than wives, husbands would be more eager to take up new challenging jobs to move ahead better than older wives. For example, a younger person may be more enthusiastic and willing to learn the various computer programs than an older person. This in turn leads to satisfaction in the job.

Figure 8.6

Spousal Congruence on Wives' Life Satisfaction



When husbands and wives are from the same region, wives are more satisfied with parenting than those wives whose husbands come from other regions (path= $-.48$). This can be expected because couples from the same region may have similar parenting issues to talk about. Wives with similar education as their husbands are also more satisfied with parenting than couples with different levels of education (path= $-.43$). My qualitative data indicate that Asian Indian children are doing well in school on the whole, at least husbands and wives are satisfied in this achievement.

Another direct path is the situation in which husbands and wives are congruent in their perceptions of traditional family attitudes. In such a situation wives are less satisfied with parenting (path= $.48$). This is a reflection of what was found in Chapter VII. Such couples are more concerned about their children's future and would prefer them to adhere to their Indian traditional attitudes and values. These couples point to their own experiences as proof. In short, when husbands and wives are similar in their age and came from similar regions, wives are more satisfied with their life in the U.S. But if they held traditional attitudes they were dissatisfied with life in the U.S.

In addition to the direct effect, there are three indirect effects on parental satisfaction through similar family attitudes. Husbands and wives who come from similar

regions, use Malayalam to the same extent, and who have similar traditional family attitudes are less satisfied with parenting (path= .09). Couples who came for similar reasons tend to espouse traditional attitudes more than those who came for different reasons. These traditional couples are less satisfied with parenting (path= .19). But husbands and wives who had different occupations in India and who held similar traditional views were satisfied with parenting (- .19). These three indirect paths reveal the intervening influence of traditional family attitudes on life satisfaction. When husbands and wives perceived themselves to be similar wives were satisfied with their life. The above analysis supports the fact that parental satisfaction is of prime importance to wives. There are isolated cases where husbands and wives from similar backgrounds were dissatisfied with their life. But compared to the overall pattern, these cases are insignificant.

I will next examine whether husbands' and wives' congruence in both personal characteristics and interactional aspects of life is correlated with congruence in their level of life satisfaction. In the final model congruence in life satisfaction is the dependent variable. Congruence in objective and subjective variables are also congruent on life satisfaction. Therefore, all the congruent independent variables are regressed against the congruent dependent variable - life satisfaction, so that

they would be consistent.

FINAL MODEL

In the final model the husbands' and wives' satisfaction is assessed by the congruent satisfaction variables. After the new congruent satisfaction variables were once more computed,² I repeated the path analysis using the independent congruent variables and dependent congruent variables.

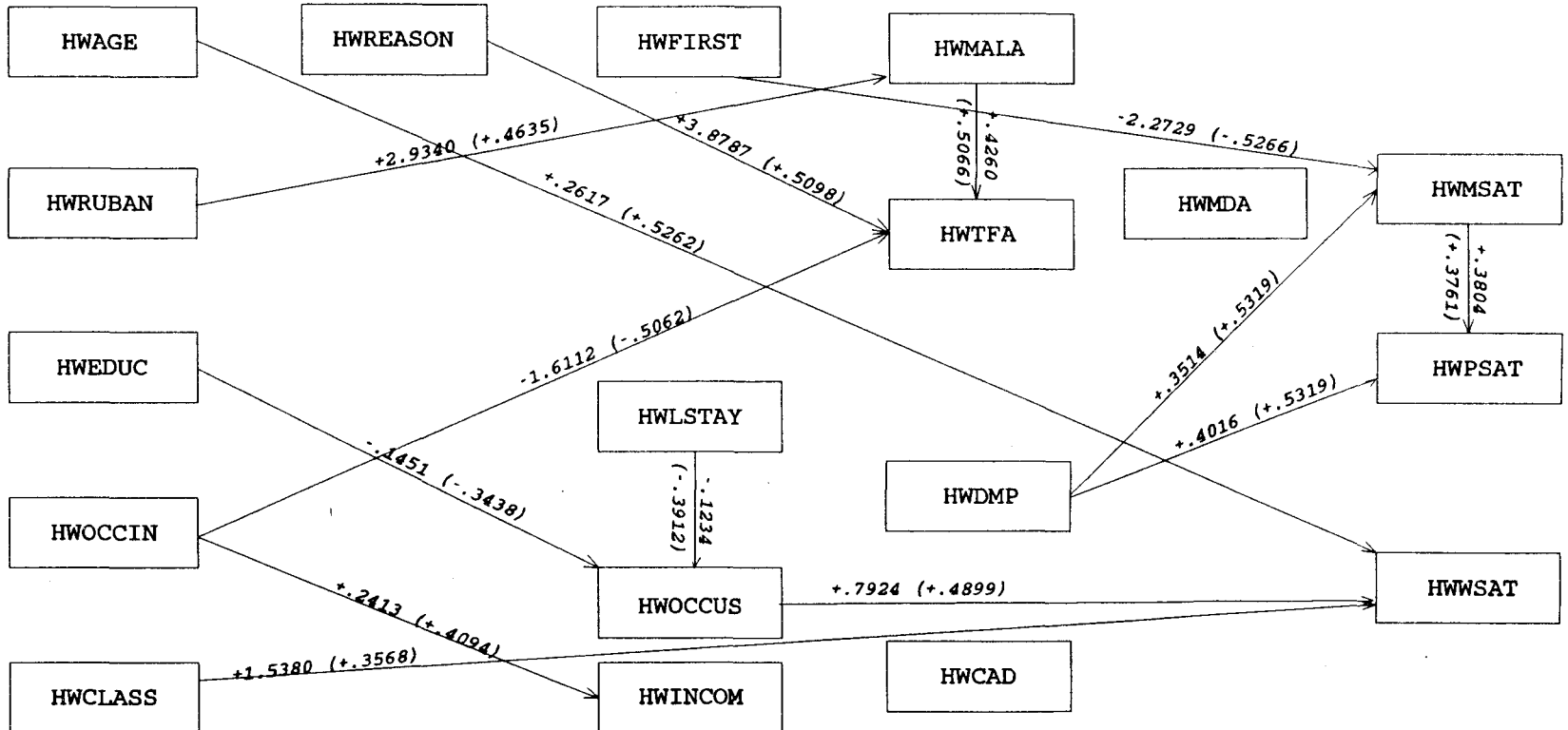
Table 7 shows that the two variables, social class and decision making pattern, which had no association in the husbands' and wives' congruence model and social class which had no association in the original husbands' model, was significant in the final model. However, children's academic development that was significant in both the original and congruence model and marital disagreement, which was significant in the husbands' model, was not significant in the final model. Other than these changes, the path coefficients basically remained the same in the final model except for the two additional factors, social class and decision-making patterns.

Husbands and wives from similar social class backgrounds were similar in their satisfaction with their

² These congruent satisfaction variables were created by subtracting the satisfaction values of wives from the corresponding satisfaction values of husbands. Again only absolute scores were used for analysis as in the original and congruence models.

Figure 8.7

A Path Model of Spousal Congruence on Life Satisfaction



work (path= .35). Husbands and wives from similar social class were satisfied with their life as long as they had employment which allows them to live comfortably.

The other aspect that reflects the satisfaction of couples is the age of the couple. If they were close in age, they were similar in their levels of work satisfaction (path= .52). This can be expected because people with similar age usually have similar interests than those with different age. And when individuals had emigrated to another country, their hopes were high to succeed.

The indirect effect of education on work satisfaction is through occupation. Husbands and wives with similar education were different in their occupation (path= -.16); and also different in their degree of satisfaction. Occupation acts as intervening variable to enhance their job satisfaction. For example, there were husbands with similar education as their wives, and yet some husbands are employed in companies where their salaries were higher than those of wives with similar education. In these cases, husbands and wives are also different in the extent of their work satisfaction.

Husbands' and wives' satisfaction was also affected by congruence in decision-making pattern and the order of arrival. Husbands and wives who were congruent in decision-making pattern were more similar in their satisfaction with marital life (path= .66) and parenting (path= .53). This

also supports my hypothesis that if husbands and wives perceive greater congruence in their decision-making pattern, their level of satisfaction is more similar.

The last effect on marital satisfaction is the occurrence in which husbands and wives agree on their order of arrival. When husbands and wives are dissimilar on their order of arrival, they are equally satisfied in their conjugal life (path= $-.52$). Order of arrival is a one time event. Still as seen in Chapter VI, if wives arrived first it puts them in a better bargaining position which give them a great deal of satisfaction and independence.

CONCLUSION

Data presented in this chapter reveal some significant characteristics of the Kerala population in the United States. When husbands and wives came from similar regions, were congruent on their order of arrival and involvement in children's academic development, husbands were less satisfied with their life in the U.S. Again, when husbands and wives were congruent in their age, came from similar regions and held similar levels of education wives were more satisfied than their counterparts. Among the variables examined in the final model, age, education, occupation, social class, the order of arrival, and decision making patterns showed a statistically significant relationship to life satisfaction.

Among the interactional factors, decision-making patterns have changed for husbands and wives. The wives have become egalitarian to some extent and in some cases' they played a dominant role. This gave greater satisfaction for the wives and dissatisfaction for the husbands, but it is not explicitly revealed in this analysis. The change does indicate, however, that husbands have started weighing seriously their wives' opinion. Probably they do not yet want to admit overtly this change in the decision-making pattern. The data also revealed that in a great many subjective factors husbands and wives were similar in many respects which indicate that they are moving in the same direction. In other words, they are more concentrated in the center than at the extremes.

In the final chapter, I will summarize my research findings and show how selective acculturation-assimilation, exchange and equity theories fit my study. I will also suggest some recommendations for future study of the Asian Indians in the United States.

CHAPTER IX

REVIEW, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Asian American communities are fragmented by cultural differences, each maintaining their unique cultural outlook and system of control. At the same time, Asian Americans have been part of the total American picture for their story tells us a great deal about their native land and people as a whole. The recent development of Asian American studies reflect that efforts are being made to understand non-Western peoples as they themselves perceive their culture and societies.

Sociologists associate the immigrant experience with such pathological conditions as culture shock, language barrier, low status, economic difficulties, psychological problems and social disorganization. However, none of these conditions seem to be associated with the Keralites (Asian Indians) who immigrated to this country.

Today, the Asian Indians are the fastest growing population in the U.S. They make up almost 7 million people in the U.S. (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990). These recent arrivals will contribute a significant new dimension to the

history of Asian Americans in the next century. The literature on Asian Indians is not voluminous. Keralites have not been the focus of attention of researchers. Therefore, the objective of this study was to explore this new population with emphasis on their patterns of acculturation and their levels of life satisfaction in the United States.

REVIEW

I have used Asian Indians (Keralites) as a case study for studying immigration, their extent of acculturation into the American society and their experience in the United States. The influx of Kerala immigrants to the United States occurred at a time when the American society could absorb immigrant skills and professional experiences. Indeed, other requirements were prescribed in the Immigration Act of 1965 and resulted in the immigration of upper-middle and middle-class professionals and scholars who came to America to gain intellectual growth, employment and better economic prospects.

The Keralites are a distinct ethnic group not only in this country but in their own country. Even though they comprise only two percent of the population of India, they represent about 85 to 90 percent of the Asian Indian immigrants to the United States (Andrews, 1983). Because of the immigration laws Keralites who immigrated generally held

a high socio-economic status in their native land.

The major pull factor is America as a land of opportunity to the immigrants. At the same time pressure from relatives and friends in America also motivated migrants to follow them. These personal networks also helped prospective migrants with employment, finances and accommodations.

At the same time the critical push factors which precipitated substantial migration from Kerala are large numbers of unemployed professionals, competition for scarce resources and low levels of economic and social development in India. These push-pull factors shaped both the pattern of migration, the characteristics of Kerala migration flow, and above all, the experiences of Kerala migrants. The structure of opportunity within American society made it possible for Keralites to attain a middle class status within a very short time compared to the earlier immigrants.

Previous studies on immigrants have employed either the assimilationist or the pluralist perspective. The former claims that ethnic groups are assimilated into the dominant society over time (Gordon, 1964), while the latter emphasizes that ethnicity remains a strong force in society (Greeley, 1974). Gordon's acculturation-assimilation distinction between cultural acculturation and structural assimilation has been employed to understand adaptation of various ethnic groups. According to Gordon (1964),

cultural acculturation is a process by which two groups of individuals with different cultural backgrounds bring about change in their original cultural patterns. Structural assimilation takes place when the immigrants or their descendants have made "entrance into cliques, clubs and institutions of host society, on a primary group level."

Among Keralites, however, the "testing ground" of migration gives the overwhelming impression of a "selective acculturation-assimilation" pattern in which Keralites have assimilated structurally but not culturally. As a result of their high socio-economic status, there is less pressure from outside society to Americanize. The class position of the Keralites helps them to maintain a balance between their group cohesiveness and high achievement in the American society. I expected the Keralites to assimilate easily into the American mainstream based on the socio-economic status they occupy in the American society. However, their adaptation is very selective, as I have shown. This adaptation could fit the "pluralistic" pattern. The reverse is generally true for the European and other Asian immigrants. They usually adapt quickly the ways of the American mainstream (culturally), but structural assimilation takes longer because of their low socio-economic status.

Today more than ever it is important to recognize that there is no single American way of life into which

immigrants arriving in the U.S. eventually assimilate. The United States is an ethnically stratified, culturally pluralistic country which exhibits diverse life styles. The process of immigration would seem to consist essentially of the formation of a new communities and the creation of a new ethnic identities which are both Asian Indian and American, i.e., an Asian Indian-American ethnicity. With the selective assimilation patterns, it is not possible to assess whether immigrants will be satisfied with their life. Thus the paramount goal of my study was to record how and also what factors were associated with satisfaction for the Keralites with their life in the United States.

I have investigated perceptions of change of both Kerala husbands and wives and their degree of congruence on how it impinges on their life satisfaction. I used exchange and equity theories to explain their level of satisfaction. Social exchange theory argues that marriage partners wish to increase their own reward. Partners would consider the relationship most satisfying when rewards outweigh costs. On the other hand, equity theory proposes that if spouses share equally in family matters, their level of satisfaction is greater. Given the fact that both husbands and wives tend to possess high socio-economic status, raises the question who might be willing to make the move to exchange resources so that the rewards would outweigh the costs. In the power struggle within the family, would the husband

share equally in the division of labor given his high socio-economic status? It was difficult to predict which theory would apply to the Keralites.

Based on the selective assimilation and exchange and equity theory, I drew a model to examine whether the personal characteristics or interactional aspects of life were more important in determining life satisfaction of the Kerala husbands and wives in America. The personal characteristics were: age, rural/urban place of residence, education, occupation in India, social class, reasons for immigration, order of arrival, length of stay, occupation and income in the U.S. Besides these objective factors, the interactional factors (sixty independent variables) were factor analyzed and reduced to five orthogonal factors which were designated as use of Malayalam, traditional family attitudes, male dominant decision-making patterns, involvement in children's academic development, and marital disagreement.

I also performed a factor analysis for the dependent variable and extracted three orthogonal factors: marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction, and work satisfaction. These factors were not independent of each other but were inter-related to one another. When the spouses were satisfied in any of these or all three of these factors, they were considered to be satisfied with life in the United States. Satisfaction is one dimension tended to be

associated with satisfaction in the others.

The data for this study came from structured interviews with fifty couples and participant observation of the Kerala community in various social, religious and cultural activities in Greater Chicago area. Thus I used both quantitative and qualitative methods to study the Kerala community.

I hypothesized that if wives perceived they had high socio-economic status, non-traditional attitudes and egalitarian decision-making patterns, they would be more satisfied with their life in America. I hypothesized that if husbands perceived they had high socio-economic status, traditional attitudes and dominant decision-making patterns they would be satisfied with their life in America. A second hypothesis was that the more similar husbands and wives were in their perceptions of socio-economic status, traditional family attitudes and decision-making patterns, the greater the extent of congruence in their life satisfaction. I tested these hypotheses using descriptive statistics, t-tests, correlations and multiple regression. The quantitative data was supplemented with qualitative data wherever appropriate.

A demographic profile of the sample revealed that the couples were from an upper-middle class group (approximately three fourths of the men and women had graduated from college) on average were 36 and 39 years old, had an average

of 2 children, had been married an average of 8.5 years, and had stayed in United States for an average period of 12 years.

Kerala couples displayed a remarkable uniformity in their age, place of residence, education, occupation and income. They were predominantly young, highly educated and well-trained professionals or skilled workers with high incomes and from urban areas. Keralites differed notably from the earlier immigrants in the U.S. who were young illiterate, male, farmers from rural areas (Hess, 1974).

The main objective of my study was to show that there would be significant changes in the perceptions of life pattern of Kerala couples and community as a result of immigration and influence of American culture. This study revealed their acculturation to be selective as evidenced by persistent conservative attitudes towards marriage and family life in general.

Marital and family attitudes and behavior of Kerala couples are subject to a complex interplay of contradictory forces in the American society. As members of their own cultural ethnic group, the Kerala immigrants share a common set of values, attitudes, behaviors and linguistic traits that differ significantly from other ethnic communities in the U.S. The Kerala immigrants' commitment to Kerala values is expressed in viewing marriage as a life-long alliance, in traditional role expectations of wives, in the maintenance

of native language as the medium of communication with family and friends and in the socialization of their children. These interactional factors seemed to play an important role in the life of couples.

On the one hand, values and norms in the U.S. Kerala society reinforce traditional attitudes for husbands and wives. They are derived from cultural assumptions about masculinity and femininity from the Asian Indian culture and process of socialization. Despite their high socio-economic status, some Keralites still cling to their traditional orientations, especially the wives. The past socialization may be a major factor as the socialization-ideology (Stafford, Backman, Dibona, 1977) hypothesis contends. Strong attachment to their home country reinforces the traditional family ideology regardless of how long they had lived in U.S. But when living in the American society and especially when the wives work outside the home, husbands and wives face a dilemma regarding adherence to traditional patterns of behavior.

Unexpectedly, both husbands and wives tend to reflect traditional values. It should be pointed out, however, that couples do not want to change their traditional aspects of their lives i.e., arranged marriages and taboo of dating and courting. The wives seem to be undergoing a role expansion process which allows them to develop as individuals without abandoning traditional functions and obligations. Such

consensual perceptions hold implications for re-examining the sex roles of both spouses. As long as husbands and wives continue to acknowledge the fact that there is agreement and they are similar in their views, the changes in Kerala couples' role structures are found to be generally slow.

Kerala women are deeply committed to family and home, but they also revealed a potential for high achievement, exhibiting high aspirations for themselves and their children. Clearly the adaptation process is selective and self-determined. Buchignani and Indra (1985: 157) are of the opinion that "South Asian women seem to want the best of both worlds." Their socialization has equipped them to handle the new pressures, both within the family and in the larger American society. Compromises have to be made between the old norms and values and those that are acquired or dictated by the new social structure.

However, contrary to expectation, I found that the Kerala couples perceive themselves as egalitarian in decision-making patterns. Better socio-economic conditions in the U.S. give the Kerala wives more freedom in achieving high aspirations in marriage than in India. Therefore, changes towards joint decision-making between the spouses occur as a consequence of wives' employment. For example, husbands share in household work which would have been unthinkable in India. At the same time the basic framework

of the Kerala couples, especially the patterns of relationship between husbands and wives, have not changed. Although the relationship between life satisfaction and patterns of decision-making between husbands and wives varied with decision-areas, wives generally described their marriages as happy. Life satisfaction of wives decreased when the power structure of the couple was autocratic. This situation was perceived by wives as a marginal one in a society where the egalitarian ideology was becoming dominant for the couple.

The most significant contribution of this study is my finding that wives do not perceive themselves as living according to the conventional Keralite model in which husbands were deemed superior. The wives perceive their husbands in a way that assume egalitarian relationships, i.e., the wives perceive themselves to be equal to their husbands. These findings support an egalitarian model of marital relationship similar to that of the middle class American couples. Wives were found to be as assertive as husbands in decision-making patterns. This study show that there is a definite movement towards sharing power between husbands and wives. The data of this study also suggest that wife's occupation is mainly responsible for this joint decision-making pattern.

Another area where both husbands and wives wanted equal input is in helping children make decisions. Kerala

families are very tightly knit and due to tradition and customs, Kerala parents exert a greater influence and have a greater impact on the choices and chances of their children than American parents. The area of decision-making on children's academic development appears to be a promising area for further investigation.

Within the American society, some sociopsychological as well as socio-structural changes are taking place that allow Kerala women a greater access to status and income. Therefore, some significant changes may be gradually introduced in the exchange process of many present and future marital dyads in this Kerala group. The more women have gained access to socio-economic resources and the more this access was on a par with that of men, the greater was the probability that the crucial exchanges between spouses would entail other than socio-economic resources (Safilios-Rothschild, 1976: 361).

There was a remarkable degree of consensus between husbands and wives about each other's roles revealing that they were congruent in many respects. However, congruence in some factors such as, rural-urban place of residence, order of arrival, and involvement in children's academic development are related to dissatisfaction for husbands. There are some indications that men and women assess their marriage in different ways. Although most studies indicate that men are generally more satisfied with their marriages

than women, in this study Kerala women tend to be more satisfied with their lives than men. It is true they are traditional in their orientation when it comes to attitudes and values, but their traditionalism does not hold them back from having a satisfactory life in the U.S. This is probably because wives follow Indian values within their families and orientation to American values in their occupational lives.

The results show that there were significant relationships between life satisfaction and perceptions of husbands and wives about personal characteristics and various aspects of life. It must be specified that the nature of the exchange of resources between spouses and each spouse's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the relative benefits and costs derived depend upon the spouses' perception of the on-going exchange. An important aspect of exchange is that the existing sex stratification system and the unequal status of husbands and wives in Kerala (Asian Indian) society, results in unequal exchange in marriages. When husbands are dominant (rather than joint) in decision making in most areas of life they are satisfied with their life. This supports an exchange model. The exchange model is the best explanation of the relationships for husbands, but the equity model is best for wives.

Why do the two models fit the data in this particular pattern? One possibility is that traditional sex role

stereotypes and contemporary role expectations affect husbands and wives differently. These couples have been exposed to cultural changes in role expectations, i.e., men had to be more nurturing and women had to be more competitive. Husbands were more satisfied with their life when they were doing their share - not more or less - and when their wives were doing more than their share of family work, working outside, and had not yet quite given up the idealized model of the traditional wife.

On the other hand, wives desire equity in their life. Wives needed their husbands to help with family decisions, and other family tasks. Since she contributed to his traditional provider role, why would he not grant her equity within the traditional family role? At the same time some husbands had rejected traditional models and were moving more towards an egalitarian pattern. Wives whose husbands' decisions approached their own were more satisfied than wives of dominant husbands. Hence equity model best fitted wives' satisfaction.

From a sociologically perspective, Kerala immigrants in the United States signify an interaction between two cultural systems, the traditional and a modern cultural system. The adaptation patterns of the Keralites indicate that they continue to espouse their norms of marital stability, traditionalism and native language. Kerala couples in America maintain familial, cultural and

sentimental linkages with India. They adhere to their traditional culture so that at times it would seem they are more Indian in their cultural orientation and practices than resident Indians in India. In the cultural domain Keralites tend to preserve their identity while in the economic domain they are quick to integrate. The structure of the Kerala family in America oscillates generally between preservation of traditional culture and adapting to modernity.

CONCLUSIONS

The important conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that no sizable population came with such pre-existing high socio-economic status as the Asian Indians. What makes this group different is based on the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965. While a large number of earlier immigrants were poor, uneducated and agricultural workers these recent immigrants are educated, professional and skilled workers, belonging to middle and upper social class. A pre-condition for integration into the American professional life.

Another conclusion is that the earlier immigrants who came in large numbers were unable to function in the larger society because of their low socio-economic status. But now, with the Asian immigrants high socio-economic status they have assimilated structurally but there is a lack of geographical or an organizational community in cultural

assimilation. This has led to the formulation of a new model of social integration. The "selective acculturation-assimilation" model which falls in between the assimilation and cultural pluralistic model. Desires to merge verses desire to retain cultural distinctiveness make the study of recent immigrants a new and vital area in the study of immigration to the U.S.

Unlike most studies, this study helps to explain changes perceived and evaluated by an educated group of immigrants. Theoretically the data suggests leads that could be tied into existing explanatory frameworks concerning immigration from India. Few communities in the contemporary world have been unaffected by global migration. Women particularly are increasingly involved directly in these processes. They now make up 45 percent of international migration (Simon and Brett, 1986). This study revealed a high prevalence of initial migrants among women from Kerala. This is a significant contribution to literature on female migration from India, especially women's migration from Asia. Asian studies have also shown that more women emigrate from Asian countries than elsewhere, e.g., Filipinos and Chinese. Additionally, the data supports the fact that the network of relatives and friends in the U.S. was crucial for this stream of chain migration from Kerala.

An important finding of this study is the key role of

education, occupation and income as intervening variables in examining the life satisfaction of couples. The study shows that life satisfaction is directly related to socio-economic status. The conclusion of the analysis is that Kerala husbands and wives came from high social class and consequently most of them had also succeeded in maintaining their status quo in America. This aspect stresses the transformation that has taken place to this culturally different group of immigrants from their earlier ancestors.

Because the Keralites hold high socio-economic status and are proficient in English, there is not as much pressure for acculturation as with other immigrants. I have shown that the middle class life style¹ is not seen as dependent upon assimilating into the mainstream life (Dasgupta, 1989: 4). Since the Kerala immigrants have high socio-economic status and marketable skills, they can successfully resist the pressure of Americanization usually demanded of immigrants who have fewer marketable skills and are placed in the lower rungs of the social ladder. The non-Keralite immigrants' entry into the middle or professional classes is dependent on their Americanization. Improved economic status, on the other hand, makes the immigrants deal with the American society mainly as consumers. They can buy the goods and services needed to maintain their desired life

¹ Here I refer to individuals with high socio-economic status.

styles and insulate their ethnic lifestyles within their homes. These people tend to measure their well-being and progress by material standards.

However, the socio-economic status of the Keralites makes them seek occupational advancement not only for themselves but also for their children. This indicates that they can make use of their resources (education, occupation and income) for a better life style. From my interviews I also learned that the Keralites are trying to enter other arenas such as the political and business world. Hence their utilization of resources is different from that of the lower class. The improved economic status of the Kerala immigrants also makes the ethnicity of the Indian immigrants a cultural phenomenon. The Keralites' ethnicity takes the form of their cultural identity. Their ethnic values and life styles become a source of pride and group identification and give them the sense of belonging to a group. These experiences are particularly important to the Kerala immigrants in a society in which one has to continuously impress and prove to others what one is, since their identities are not ascribed, especially in an alien society whose cultural practices are radically different from their own.

Thus, social class may act as an intervening variable between assimilation and level of satisfaction for Keralites. Though social class may prove to be a powerful

explanatory variable as it relates to assimilation of Kerala immigrants, it may be difficult to generalize to other immigrant groups who are from lower social class.

The hypotheses in this study showed a significant relationship between objective and subjective factors and satisfaction in life. It was clear that when the husbands' perceptions were matched with those of the wives, there were both differences and similarities in areas of traditional family attitudes, decision-making patterns and marital disagreement and degrees of satisfaction. However, the overall results support the fact that Keralites are satisfied with their life in the U.S. and that wives are more satisfied than husbands. There is some differences between husbands and wives in their attitudes and behaviors, but the areas where they are statistically significant is in decision-making patterns.

It seems that the couples are in a transitional stage i.e., their children are in their adolescence so they are only beginning to make major changes in the family. Five years from now would be the time when major changes would occur in the Kerala community. And when these changes occur, the couples perceptions towards life and American society will also change. At this point, the Kerala community may play an important role in holding the family together. However, I speculate that the attitudes and values (cultural acculturation) of the Kerala family and

community will have to undergo major changes if they expect the second generation to live a satisfactory life in the United States.

Studies of marriage in America have found that husbands on average had more marital satisfaction than wives (Rhyne, 1981), but this study shows that satisfaction in marriage was greater for wives. The conclusions from my study support the hypotheses that wives' with high socio-economic status, traditional family attitudes and egalitarian decision-making patterns are more satisfied with their life in the United States than their husbands. Considering the over-all evidence presented for husbands, it appears that life satisfaction is also positively correlated with objective and subjective aspects of life for husbands.

In contrast to the conclusions from original path models and congruence path models, the data reveals strong and even consistent differences in life satisfaction between husbands and wives only in certain areas of life. Thus, the valid conclusion that could be drawn from these models would be that there were consistent, substantial or statistically significant differences in the perceived life satisfaction of husbands and wives in certain interactional aspects of life. Kerala couples are similar in a great many respects supporting the fact that they are both moving in the same direction (positive or negative). This supports the hypothesis that some congruence is needed for a satisfactory

marital relationship. The perceived reality of life and events shapes assessments of satisfaction with interactional aspects of the marriage and to some extent, general quality of life. In turn, satisfaction with these interactional aspects of marriage plays a big role in evaluations of overall life satisfaction.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This study merits particular attention from several points of view. First, it provides significant preliminary evidence regarding the linkage of migration and life satisfaction of Keralites in particular and with reference to other Asian Indian communities in general. It adds new sociological knowledge about a particular group (Keralites) of the Asian Indians, as it adjusts to their life in the United States. Since both members of the marital dyad are studied it is possible to understand in depth the dynamics of the life satisfaction that serve as both a stimulus and a building block for future work in this area. This study of Keralites in Greater Chicago provides insights in a new direction in the study of this Asian Indian ethnic group in particular and to other Asian groups such as the Koreans and Filipinos in the United States. I hope that this study will be a contribution to the increased understanding of the ways in which salient cultural factors affect acculturation-assimilation pattern to the immigrants of the 1980s and

1990s.

Second, the findings also suggest that marital satisfaction is not a separate dimension from parental or work satisfaction. The fact that satisfaction items did not load on only one factor indicate separate dimensions of the life satisfaction of the couples. It lends support to the argument that satisfaction with various roles in marriage is important. At the same time the different areas of satisfaction are linked to one another which clearly shows that they are interconnected. It also contributes to the fact that in order to understand life satisfaction it is essential that specific areas of satisfaction be examined rather than an "over-all" well being.

Third, the data collection method of (both participant observation and interviews) strengthen the interpretation of my dissertation because it reveals theory and practice, or life experience of the immigrants in this country. This study depicts a stable duality (traditional versus modernity) in the couples' outlook on life as they adapt to the cultural demands of the new society.

Finally, this study concentrates only on one religious group, the Christians. Consequently, the function of religion in assimilation of Keralites with its concentration on Christian immigrants from Kerala may provide a cross-religious reference for other immigrant groups in the United States (e.g., the Koreans).

The study also has a number of limitations: first, this investigation provided a data set on the relation between migration and life satisfaction. The uniqueness of the Kerala sample, inclusion of both husbands and wives as respondents (from the same marriages), and methodological features of the research design (path analysis) may not enhance the generalization of the descriptive results to other immigrant groups. Perhaps a caution against overgeneralization is appropriate at this point. I have no reason to expect that the responses to life satisfaction should differ when tested on Keralites in other parts of this country, but given the small sample size, it might. Replications in other settings would certainly be in order.

Second, the dynamic nature of marital-relationship and its interrelationship with gender relations on the interpersonal level cannot be adequately captured given data collected only at one point in time. Data gathered over a period of time would permit assessment of whether the influences found in this study persist over time, or whether they are life-stage specific. The direct multi-level relationships between these variables can be examined quite successfully in this research. But the feedback loops and more complex changing interconnections must await further investigation.

Lastly, some respondents complained or remarked about the length of time required to complete the interviews.

since most husbands and wives work different shifts, it was rather difficult to give three hours of their time for an interview. It is essential to shorten the schedules in designing future interview schedules.

Indeed, this work should be regarded as a first step toward an understanding of the Asian Indian (Kerala) community in the United States. This discussion of limitations point out that the fit is not ideal. It does mean to indicate that to proceed with what empirical evidence is available, researchers must remember that the structural relations being investigated are just a part of an ongoing, constantly changing system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrates that cultural values and original socio-economic status have a major effect on the style of migration, adaptation, and experiences of Keralites quite apart from economic opportunities and other situational forces that are more commonly studied. Changing population profiles in conjunction with family dynamics demand an examination of the family roles currently and in the next decade. These significant demographic trends might have implications for the evolving nature of family life.

This study offers clinicians a view of life satisfaction which might help in their understanding of couples from India. The results from this study might help

people understand how their similarities in perceptions depict congruence in areas of satisfaction in life.

Migrant families become more egalitarian, their family relations become more open, and more emphasis is placed on achievement and independence of children. Women also exert more influence in the family. The first generation usually desires that ethnic solidarity be maintained so that they may retain their identity and pass it on to their children.

More attention should be paid to the relationship between husband-wife gender roles because they seem to be influenced by the traditional values and norms in their perceptions and practice of marital roles which is clearly gender-based. In order to adopt to a changing milieu, a reorientation of the roles and values and a restructuring of the attitudes of men and women are necessary.

Finally, it must be noted that signs of a dramatic shift in the United States Immigration laws is being discussed and will undergo change in the near future (October, 1991). Despite attempts by the U.S. government to stem the flow of immigrants, political, economic and strategic interests limit its ability to do so. The immigration tide is unlikely to decrease in the near future. However, the immigration laws will determine the make up of future populations.

FUTURE RESEARCH

A significant direction for future research could be a replication of this study using Kerala couples in other states in America using more representative samples. It should be noted that the sample size was too small in this study to justify broad generalizations concerning life satisfaction of Keralites throughout the United States. Future research would also be needed to examine the generality of this data across samples and other groups.

The results of this study should be generalized with caution. The dual-earner couples in this study have high education, high occupation and high income. Though this is the trend seen among the recent Asian immigrants to the U.S. immigrants from other parts of the country may not fit this model. Greater confidence in the accuracy of study would be yielded when different researchers would report similar results despite variations in methods and time of study.

The greatest problem, as I see it, among the Keralites is the parent-child relationship. The couples are anxious about their children and related problems of adolescence, such as pre-marital sex, teenage pregnancies, inter-racial marriages, narcotics in their new environment. They are also concerned with the disintegration of traditional Indian values, such as the lack of respect for elders, too much emphasis on individual rights and competition, and not enough on social responsibility. Paradoxically all these

problems are heightened because there is a lack of support from the extended family. Therefore, this area warrants closer observation to test certain hypotheses in the area of parent-child relationships of Kerala immigrants in the U.S.

Methodologically, though the focus in this study is mainly based on multi-variate analysis of demographic and sociological factors in life satisfaction, it is important to remember the need for greater qualitative work as well. In addition to the fact that qualitative studies are an important source of hypothesis for further study, I think that some life phenomena are best understood through detailed, in-depth methods because they give a fuller picture of individual perceptions.

Although this dissertation provides insight in the character and continuation of migration flows, current research on family and marriage generate questions requiring future consideration. Three general issues shape research agenda for the 1990s. These issues are: 1) greater specification of the role of networks in migration; 2) the inclusion of women in models which currently are gender blind and 3) the relationship between the first and the second generation. Finally, I hope that insights into current changes and issues in men's and women's roles in marriage and family will contribute to a feeling of awareness by the Kerala couples in India about the problems faced by their counterparts in America.

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APPENDIX A
Interview Schedule

THE KERALA COUPLES IN METROPOLITAN CHICAGO - 1988-89
HUSBAND/WIFE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A: Background & Immigration Data

Date: _____

Identification No. _____

Time: From _____

To: _____

FAMILY DATA

1. Name (in full) _____
2. Age _____
3. Place of birth _____
4. Where did you grow up? _____ Town/Village/City
5. Religion (denomination) _____
6. Are you a convert? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, what caste or religion were you before?

7. Educational Background
 - a) Highest degree/diploma completed? _____
 - b) Granting institution _____
 - c) School highest degree obtained _____
 - d) Field of specialization _____
 - e) Total number of years of education _____

12. What was your spouse's occupation:

In India?

In the US?

Describe the employer, job position including time and hours.

13. How long were/are you employed?

In India _____ yrs.

In the U.S. _____ yrs.

14a) Did you change jobs in India? In the U.S.?

Yes ___ No ___

Yes ___ No ___

b) If yes, how many previous jobs have you had? Explain

In India _____

In the U.S. _____

15a) Did your spouse change jobs in India? In the U.S.

Yes ___ No ___

Yes ___ No ___

b) If yes, how many previous jobs has he/she had? Explain

In India _____

In the U.S. _____

16a) Was there any time during your marriage when your spouse did not have a job for at least 3 months in the U.S.?

Yes _____

No _____

b) If yes, when and why _____

-
17. Overall, how does your spouse feel about your work? Is he/she
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Strongly in favor | 2) Somewhat in favor |
| 3) Somewhat opposed | 4) Strongly opposed |
| 5) Does not care | 6) N/A=0 |

INCOME DATA

- 18a) What was your salary in India? _____
- b) In the U.S.
- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) \$9,999.00 < | 2) \$10,000.00 - \$14,999.00 |
| 3) \$15,000.00 - \$19,999.00 | 4) \$20,000.00 - \$24,999.00 |
| 5) \$25,000.00 - \$29,999.00 | 6) \$30,000.00 - \$34,999.00 |
| 7) \$35,000.00 - \$39,999.00 | 8) \$40,000.00 > |
| 9) N/A=0 | 10) Refused |

19. Do you have a business or other income besides your salary in the U.S? Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, what _____

20. Do you save part of your (family) income?

Yes _____ No _____

21. Do you and your spouse own the house/apartment you live in together?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, approximate value \$ _____

MARRIAGE AND MIGRATION HISTORY

22. Where did you get married? What year/month?

In India _____ In the US _____

23. Was it an arranged marriage or love marriage? Explain

24. When did you arrive in the U.S.? (year/month) Destination (state)?

25. Who came first?

- a) I _____ b) spouse _____
 b) both together _____ d) separately _____

26a) Why did you choose (as many as applicable) to come to the U.S.?

- 1) study _____ 2) better job _____
 3) marriage _____
 4) sponsored by relatives _____
 5) other _____

b) Explain

27. Has anyone helped you with your immigration and settling down in the U.S.?

a) Yes _____ No _____

b) If yes, state the relationship?

c) What kind of help did you receive?

28. Do you eventually intend to return to India permanently?
- 1) Definitely I will return
 - 2) I Possibly may return
 - 3) I do not know
 - 4) Never thought of the possibility
 - 5) No possibility of returning

29. Marital satisfaction scale.

The top of the ladder (value 10) represents the best possible marital life for you and your spouse, and the bottom (value of 0) represents the worst possible life for you and your spouse. Please indicate the degree of your marital satisfaction on this ladder.

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

a) **[For those who spent part of their married life in India]**

1. The degree on the marital satisfaction ladder two years before immigrating to U.S.?

Self _____ Spouse _____

2. The degree on the marital satisfaction ladder two years after immigration?

Self _____ Spouse _____

3. The degree on the marital satisfaction ladder currently?

Self _____ Spouse _____

b) **[For those who spent all their married life in U.S.]**

1. The degree on the marital satisfaction ladder two months after marriage?

Self _____ Spouse _____

2. The degree on the marital satisfaction ladder two years after marriage?

3. Self _____ Spouse _____
 The degree on the marital satisfaction ladder currently?

Self _____ Spouse _____

30. In what aspects of your life since immigration do you find the greatest sense of fulfillment?

31. How satisfied are you or your spouse with each of these activities of your life in the U.S.? Very satisfied=5, satisfied=4, undecided=3, dissatisfied=2, very dissatisfied=1, N/A=0.

1. Earning a good income	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
2. Housekeeping	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
3. Child rearing	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
4. Teaching children (6-12 years)	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
5. Listening and discussing spouse's problems	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
6. Sharing sexual intimacy	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
7. Keeping in touch with relatives	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
8. Spending leisure time	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0
9. Other _____	(W)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	(H)	1	2	3	4	5	0

32a) Do you or your spouse regret coming to the U.S.?
 Self _____ Spouse _____

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Absolutely, no | 1) Absolutely, no |
| 2) At times, no | 2) At times, no |
| 3) Don't know | 3) Don't know |
| 4) Often, yes | 4) Often, yes |
| 5) Always, yes | 5) Always, yes |

b) Explain _____

SECTION B: PERCEPTION OF CHANGE IN ATTITUDES

33a) What is your and your spouse's current opinion on marriage and related customs. To what extent do you and your spouse strongly agree=5, agree=4, undecided=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1 with the following items:

b) [For those who spent part of their married life in India]

1. Do you think your current opinion and your spouse's current opinion is different from what it was in India?

Self: Yes _____ No _____ Spouse: Yes _____ No _____

2. If yes, to what extent did you and your spouse while you were in India, strongly approve=5, approve=4, don't know=3, disapprove=2, strongly disapprove=1 with the following items:

c) [For those who spent all their married life in U.S.]

1. Do you think your and your spouse's current opinion is different from the general opinion of married women/men in India?

Self: Yes _____ No _____ Spouse: Yes _____ No _____

2. If yes, to what extent do you and your spouse think married women/men in India strongly approve=5, approve=4, don't know=3, disapprove=2, strongly disapprove=1 with the following items:

	33(a)					33b1 or c1		33b2 or c2				
1. Children's dating or courting	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
whether love or arranged marriages												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
2. Arranged marriages	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

3.	Love marriages	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
	Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Traditional, expensive weddings	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
	Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Dowries	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
	Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Divorces	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
	Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Children marrying non-Indians	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
	Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

34a) What is your or your spouse's current attitude towards different aspects of family life? Do you strongly approve=5, approve=4, don't know=3, disapprove=2, strongly disapprove=1 with the following:

b) [For those who spent part of their married life in India]

1. Do you think you or your spouse's current opinion is different from what it was in India?

Self: Yes _____ No _____ Spouse: Yes _____ No _____

2. If yes, to what extent did you or your spouse while you and your spouse were in India strongly agree=5, agree=4, undecided=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1 concerning the following attitudes:

c) [For those who spent all their married life in U.S.]

1. Do you think your or your spouse's current attitude is different from the general attitude of married women/men in India?

Self: Yes _____ No _____ Spouse: Yes _____ No _____

2. If yes, to what extent do you or your spouse think married women/men strongly agree=5, agree=4, undecided=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1 with the following attitudes:

	34(a)					34b1 or c1		34b2 or c2				
	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
1. Parents, Parents-in-law living with you												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
2. Other relatives, siblings living with you												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
3. Husbands provider and wives nurturer												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use of birth control												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
5. More important for husbands to have jobs than for wives to have jobs												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
6. Wives equality for prestigious jobs												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
7. Asian Indian wives are generally not interested in employment												
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR

35a) To what extent do you and your spouse currently use Malayalam with the following people or situations. Always=5, frequently=4, occasionally=3, rarely=2, never=1, N/A=0.

b) How much more Malayalam do you and your spouse use with the following people or situations than you and your spouse used to in India? Much more=5, somewhat more=4, same=3, somewhat less=2, never=1, N/A=0.

	35(a)						35(b)					
1. Your spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
2. Your children	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
3. Siblings	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
4. Other relatives	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
5. Malayalee friends	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
6. Write personal letters	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
7. Count numbers in Malayalam	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
8. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
Spouse _____	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0

36a) How often do you or your spouse wear the following clothings, ornaments and makeup?
 Always=5, frequently=4, occasionally=3, rarely=2, never=1, N/A=0.

b) How much more do you or your spouse use these items than you used to in India? Much
 more=5, somewhat more=4, same=3, somewhat less=2, never=1, N/A=0

	36(a)							36(b)						
1. Sari	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
2. Salwar Kameez	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
3. Wedding band	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
4. Tali	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
5. Costume jewelry	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
6. Bindi and makeup	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
7. Long hair	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
8. Pants and top	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
9. Skirts and dresses	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		
10. Other items _____	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0		

37a) How often do you or your spouse wear the following clothings outside the home?
 Always=5, frequently=4, occasionally=3, rarely=2, never=1, N/A=0.

b) How much more do you or your spouse wear the following clothings than you used to in
 India? Much more=5, somewhat more=4, same=3, somewhat less=2, never=1, N/A=0.

37(a)

37(b)

1.	Moundu and shirt	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
2.	Jeeba	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
3.	Pants and shirt	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0
4.	Suit	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0

38a) Who generally makes the following decisions concerning matters listed below? Husband always=6, husband mainly=5, joint=4, wife mainly=3, wife always=2, others=1, N/A=0

b) [For those who spent part of their married life in India]

1. Who generally made the following decisions in India? Husband always=6, husband mainly=5, joint=4, wife mainly=3, wife always=2, others=1, N/A=0.

[For those who spent all their married life in US]

2. Who generally makes the following decisions in India? Husband always=6, husband mainly=5, joint=4, wife mainly=3, wife always=2, others=1, N/A=0.

38(a)

38b1 In India

38b2 in the U.S.

1.	Vacation destination Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
2.	What house to purchase Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
3.	Whether wife should have a job	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0

	Others (specify) _____																					
4.	Budgeting on family needs Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
5.	Supporting parents or relatives Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
6.	General shopping Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
7.	What type of school (private/public) for children Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
8.	Career choices of children Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
9.	Visiting in-laws, relatives or/friends Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
10.	Whether the family attend church on Sundays Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0
11.	How many children to have Others (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0

39a) [For those who spent part of their married life in India]

If there have been changes, how satisfied are you and your spouse with them? Have you encountered any difficulties?

1. Self _____

2. Spouse _____

b) [For those who spent all their married life in U.S.]

If your decision making is different from the decision of similar families, how satisfied are you and your spouse with your decisions?

1. Self _____

2. Spouse _____

40a) Who usually does the following family chores? Husband always=6, husband mainly=5, joint=4, wife mainly=3, wife always=2, others=1, N/A=0

b) [For those who spent part of their married life in India]

1. Who generally performed the following family chores in India? Husband always=6, husband mainly=5, joint=4, wife mainly=3, wife always=2, others=1, N/A=0.

[For those who spent all their married life in the U.S.]

2. Who does generally the following chores in families similar to yours in India? Husband always=6, husband mainly=5, joint=4, wife mainly=3, wife always=2, others=1, N/A=0.

	40(a)								40b1 In India								40b2 in the U.S.							
1. Cooking	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								
2. Grocery shopping	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								
3. Taking out garbage	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								
4. Maintance of the house	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								
5. Helping with children's home-work	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								
6. Dealing with school authorities	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								
7. Maintaining contact with family and friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								
8. Financial transactions	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0			
Others (specify) _____																								

41a) [For those who spent part of their married life in India]

Are you and your spouse satisfied with these new family roles? Have you encountered any difficulties?

1. Self _____

2. Spouse _____

b) [For those who spent all their married life in U.S.]

If your and your spouse's family roles are different from those in India, how satisfied are you and your spouse with your family roles?

1. Self _____

2. Spouse _____

42a) To what extent do you have disagreement with your spouse on the following matters?
Always=5, large extent=4, somewhat=3, small extent=2, never=1, N/A=0

b)1. [For those who spent part of their married life in India]

Are there changes in the way disagreements are expressed? Yes ____ No ____

2. If yes, what was the extent of disagreement while in India? Always=5, large extent=4, somewhat=3, small extent=2, never=1, N/A=0.

c)1. [For those who spent all their married life in U.S.]

Are the disagreements now different from that of couples in India? Yes _____ No _____

2. If yes, to what extent do couples in India disagree on the following matters? Always=5, large extent=4, somewhat=3, small extent=2, never=1, N/A=0

	42(a)						42b1 or c1		42b2 or c2					
	1	2	3	4	5	0	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5	0
1. Financial matters														
2. Leisure activities														
3. Jobs to be done by the man in the house														
4. Dealing with in-laws														
5. Bringing up children														
6. Wife's working														
7. Spending more time at home home														
8. Other (specify) _____														

43. If there are disagreements, how do you resolve them?

44. If you have personal problems, with whom do you mainly discuss them?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Spouse | 2. Parent(s) |
| 3. Children | 4. Relatives (specify) |
| 5. Indian friend(s) | 6. American friend(s) |
| 7. Colleague(s) at work | 8. Priest |
| 9. Other (specify) _____ | 10. No one |

b) When you were in India, with whom did you discuss your problem principally?

45. Is there something else your would like to add which was not discussed?

46. What would be the best time to call you should more information be necessary?

Phone # _____ Time: _____

47. Was anyone present during the interview?

Yes _____ No _____

48. If yes, who

APPENDIX B

List of Abbreviations

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Husbands' Independent and Dependent Variables

HAGE	Husbands' Age
HRUBAN	Husbands' Place of Residence (Rural or Urban)
HEDUC	Husbands' Education
HOCCIN	Husbands' Occupation in India
HCLASS	Husbands' Social Class
HREASON	Husbands' Reasons for Immigrating
HFIRST	Husbands' Came First
HLSTAY	Husbands' Length of Stay
HOCCUS	Husbands' Occupation in U.S.
HINCOM	Husbands' Income in U.S.
HMALA	Husbands' Use of Malayalam
HTFA	Husbands' Traditional Family Attitudes
HDMP	Husbands' Decision Making Patterns
HCAD	Husbands' Involvement in Children's Academic Development
HMD	Husbands' Marital Disagreement
HMSAT	Husbands' Marital Satisfaction
HPSAT	Husbands' Parental Satisfaction
HWSAT	Husbands' Work Satisfaction

Note: In the wives' model 'H' is replaced with 'W'. And in the congruence model 'HW' denotes congruence variables.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Ramola B. Joseph has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 28, 1991
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