Family Relations and Psychological Well-being among Taiwanese Immigrant Women

Chien-Juh Gu, Western Michigan University
Family life educators, practitioners, scholars, and students are invited to attend this day long conference.

Keynote Speaker: Chien-Juh Gu
Department of Sociology, Western Michigan University

Direct Inquiries to: Shi-Ruei Fang
Phone: 815-753-6332
E-mail: ssfang@niu.edu
Website: www.ilcfr.org

For more information about call for proposals, registration, and lodging visit the ICFR website.
In the 21st century, international migration is a major element in shaping the global society. Various forces both push and pull families and individuals from different parts of the world. Following the migration experience, the children and their families may face an array of complex acculturation challenges. It is imperative that we, as a community of scholars and practitioners, need to advance our knowledge about how dynamic acculturation processes are intertwined with family experiences.

This conference welcomes papers for oral and poster presentations that describe advances in our understanding of immigrant families. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, immigrant families. Scholars, teachers, professionals, and students are encouraged to submit abstracts for consideration. Formats for presentations will include research presentations, round tables, and poster sessions.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Family life educators, practitioners, scholars and students are invited to submit proposals for papers, roundtable discussions, and posters for this conference. On average, presentations will be 30-45 minutes in length. Proposals are to be submitted by mail, e-mail or fax to Shi-Ruei Sherry Fang, School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL 60115. Phone: (815) 753-6332, Fax: (815) 753-1321, E-Mail: ssfang@niu.edu, Website: www.ILCFR.org

Proposals are to be 2-3 pages in length and address the following: Intended audience, goals and learning outcomes, content highlights (e.g., literature review, hypotheses, methods, findings, conclusions and implications for practice and policy); and means by which the presenter will engage the audience. A separate cover sheet must provide the applicant’s contact information, a 150-200 word abstract, preferred mode of presentation and/or room arrangement, and list of audio-visual equipment needed on site or that will be brought for use by the presenter.


Invited Plenary Speaker:

Dr. Chien-Juh Gu, Western Michigan University.
Topic: Family Relations and Psychological Well-being among Taiwanese Immigrant Women
Women's social roles are to be virtuous wives and good mothers. Most Taiwanese immigrants came to the United States for graduate studies between the 1960s and 1980s. Eighty percent of those individuals stated in the United States to settle, begin their careers, and build their families. Most of the immigrants live in white suburban areas in the United States. Over half of all the Taiwanese immigrants live in California.

The 2010 Annual ICFR Conference of the Illinois Council on Family Relations (ICFR) was held at the Holmes Student Center of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois on March 26, 2010. The theme of the conference was Immigrant Families which consisted of a plenary session, research presentations, and poster sessions.

The morning began with the plenary session by Dr. Chien-Juh Gu from the department of Sociology at Western Michigan University who spoke about family relations and psychological well-being among Taiwanese Immigrant Women.

The motivation for her study came from immigrant women being under researched and having more family distress than professional distress. There is also a gap in literature regarding the correlation between mental health and immigration studies. In addition, little information is known about the social context of immigrant women's emotional lives.

There are two major Taiwanese groups; Benshengren which are pre 1949 and Waishengren which are post 1949. Gender in Taiwanese tradition is emphasized with men being superior and women subordinate. Women's social roles are to be virtuous wives and good mothers. Most Taiwanese immigrants came to the United States for graduate studies between the 1960s and 1980s. Eighty percent of those individuals stated in the United States to settle, begin their careers, and build their families. Most of the immigrants live in white suburban areas in the United States. Over half of all the Taiwanese immigrants live in California.

(Continued on page 2)
Most of Dr. Gu's participants resided in the north and west suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. The study consisted of 54 in-depth interviews in English, Mandarin, and Taiwanese that took 1-4 hours to complete. Also, 21 life history interviews, 3-12 hours, with the immigrant women were also conducted. The participants were also observed in the Chicago area. The sample selection consisted of 27 men and 48 women aged 49-63. Forty-one of the participants held a college degree or higher and the majority of them were United States trained professionals. Forty of the participants worked full time.

The results of the study concluded that the men and women Taiwanese immigrants encountered different psychological issues. Men were distressed about work-relations, racial discrimination, and glass ceiling. Thus, women were distressed by family relations. The two indicators of distress for the women were decision making power and gender division of domestic labor. On the contrary, women did have power of family finances and children’s education.

The Taiwanese mother-in-laws demanded traditional roles within the family. Most of the faults of the family were also seen as the mother's faults and many of the women felt they were never good enough for the mother-in-law. This behavior caused psychological distress in the women and they became angry because of the criticism from their mother-in-laws they were experiencing. The men acted submissive around their mothers when they mother-in-laws visited, the women were to turn over the power and also become submissive accepting demands.

It is also stressful for the Taiwanese women when their husbands invited friends and relatives to stay for long visits because they had to take care of the guests. One of the participants stated, “In my own home I just want to relax and be free.” Some of the women participants also complained “my in-laws are too un-American” just before they complained about their children being too Americanized. The women were dissatisfied with the strong emphasis from the mother-in-laws regarding the Taiwanese culture but still wanted to instill the culture in their children and would get angry when their children did not exhibit the Taiwanese culture.

Overall, the women experience the family as a traditional arena that constrains their empowerment and contentment. In addition, there are transnational struggles in the home that result from identities from two cultures.

There are three main factors that impact implications for future research. First, it is important to understand immigrants’ dual culture. Second, it is important to examine differences within an immigrant group. Lastly, finding insider assistance is crucial for research in addition to examining their life stories more carefully.

The Illinois Council on Family Relations is the Illinois state affiliate of the National Council on Family Relations. If you are a member of NCFR, you automatically are a member of IL-NCFR if you live in Illinois. We also welcome members who are affiliate members. Please see the past page of this newsletter if you are not a member of NCFR and you would like to join IL-NCFR.

IL-NCFR hosts an annual conference in the Spring each year. Our 2010 IL-NCFR conference on Immigrant Families was held on the Northern Illinois University campus on March 26. Thanks to conference chair Shi-Ruei Sherry Fang, and to all the presenters and participants. This issue of the newsletter provides summaries of the presentations.

The executive board of IL-NCFR met on June 12 to begin planning the 2011 conference, which will be held at the I-Hotel near the campus of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign on April 8. Please save the date! In the fall, we will post updates on our website regarding the conference. We especially welcome the attendance of students. If you are interested in serving on the executive committee in the future, please contact me at lsmart@niu.edu. Students as well as professionals are needed to serve three-year terms. We meet in person once a year in Normal, because of its central location, and we have two telephone meetings (one in September and one in March or April a week before the conference). For students and new professionals, serving on the executive committee is a great way to develop professional skills and build your resume, while serving families and your profession.
Xiaolin Xie, Northern Illinois University  
**Topic:** Older adults: Grandparents– Continuation of cultural practices

There are 5.7 million children living with grandparents living in the United States. Chinese grandparents come to the United States to live with their adult children to help care for their grandchildren especially when the grandchildren are under 5. The sample of the study consisted of 29 Chinese grandparents ages 55-77 from Chicago, Illinois. They have been caring for grandchildren under 5 years old for at least 6 months. The instrumentation was personal, semi-structured interviews for 30-90 minutes in the grandparents’ homes, Chinese churches, or Asian community centers. The methodology was a qualitative study. The interviews were spoken in Mandarin and Cantonese. The grandparents were asked about their perceptions of grand parenting in the United States and how they would describe their role as a grandparent. Most of the grandparents were in the United States by themselves while their adult children were at work during the daytime.

There were three themes discovered in the data. First, intergenerational connectedness and continuity of a cultural practice affected the family support network. Asian grandparents enjoy the opportunity to be involved in their grandchildren’s lives. Second, the grandparents’ role responsibilities were to teach their grandchildren language and math. They were also responsible to clean and cook in the household as well as deal with family crises. Third, grandparents experience initial changes in their support system. They experience lack of mobility, language, skills, isolation, and loneliness. They typically have different parenting skills than their adult children.

The Asian grandparents found their source of support from peer groups, community centers, activities and participation with other Asian grandparents, and visits to their home countries. When American social services intervene with Asian American families who are having crises, they need to be aware of Chinese immigrants’ cultural practices. Social services should provide ways for Asian seniors to socialize with peers and provide English classes to the grandparents.

Sharon Lewis, Mikki Meadows, Eastern Illinois University  
**Topic:** I’m not dead yet! Sexuality and the older adult

This presentation spoke about the different types of aging and how it affected older adults’ sexuality. There are several types of aging. For example, chronological aging is the birth date. Biological aging is the anatomy, physiology, appearance, and lifestyle. Cosmetic aging is change in outward appearance. Social aging is how society judges people. Psychological aging is how we see ourselves. Economic aging is change in employment, medical costs, and assisted living facilities.

Several myths affect sexuality and the aging process for older adults. First, sexuality is for the young. Second, older people are not able to enjoy sexual activity. Third, older people are physically unattractive and sexually undesirable. Lastly, the idea of older people are shameful and/or comical engaging in sexual activity. When men age, their sexual responses also decrease. They can experience some of the following sexual decreases: (a) urgency of sex drive decreases, (b) may take longer to gain an erection, (c) ejaculation may require more stimulation, (d) ejaculation is less forceful, and (e) intercourse may often terminate without ejaculation. Women can experience the following: (a) vagina lubricates more slowly, (b) labia does not become as engorged during sexual arousal, (c) intensity of orgasm may lessen, (d) and sexual interest may increase. Issues of import consist of pain or health during sexual activity, partner availability, gay and lesbian relationships, and society’s response to the aging individual.

Elise Bryson, World Relief Agency  
**Topic:** Serving immigrant families

Elise Bryson, an employee at the World Relief of DuPage county explained the several different services that World Relief makes accessible to immigrants who come to the United States. World Relief DuPage Immigrant Legal Services provides low cost legal aid to immigrants in the DuPage County area. Staffed with qualified counselors, immigrants are consulted and assisted in properly filling out immigration forms. Each staff member is bilingual and able to assist both Spanish and English speaking immigrants. Some of the cases that the counselors work with are fiancé visas, employment authorization, renewing and replacing green cards and much more. These services are all free of charge.

Elise also explained some very interesting statistics about immigration in the United States.
- Within the United States there are 40 million foreign born residents.
- 60% of immigrants are too scared to leave because of the dangers they will face at the border.
- Green cards need to be renewed every 10 years.
Professor Rhodalyn Gallo-Crail, Mr. Karney Dunha, Mr. Zaw Htut

Topic: Our stories: Refugee experiences

Mr. Zaw Htut

Mr. Zaw Htut, a former refugee from Berma told his story of leaving his country and coming to the United States of America. He explained the political and economic hardships faced in the country and how he came to the United States to further his education. Mr. Htut shared his triumphs as well as his inner battles adjusting to the United States of America.

Mr. Karney Dunha

The next speaker on the panel was Mr. Karney Dunha. Karney was born and educated in Liberia. He began with a brief background of the brutal civil conflicts that lasted over 14 years within his country. Throughout the country, there were 16 different tribes with only 2 tribes that were civil with one another. Karney’s tribe in which he belonged was not welcome and they were forced to leave. The dictatorship of this country made life next to impossible. Karney was arrested several times, once for not having a form of identification on him. He was put in jail and released at 5:00 pm, in which curfew laws had said that any citizen that was out past 5:00 p.m. be looked to as a rebel and they risked being shot. His story took a dramatic turn. While in jail, Karney imagined what life would be if he could only get out and make it to the refugee camp. There was a soldier that Karney would never forget. This militant server walked Karney behind the rebel line, assuring there would be no shots fired at him, Karney was on the right path. He finally arrived at the refugee camp in which he explained “we lived at the mercy of the relief workers”. Years later, he came to the United States as an immigrant through a lottery drawing, although he had uncertainties, he took his chances and went. When arriving to the United States Karney explained that he had feelings of “inferiority” and shared with the group his initial feelings of fear. Karney said, “You see how complex this society is, and you think, I just cant make it here.” Karney did make it here and now as a family and wife, he does give credit to the advantage of knowing the English language before coming here but also said that “groups need to work with immigrants more and them establish themselves in the new country.”

Professor Rhodalyn Gallo-Crail

Professor Crail was not much like the other two panelists, in fact she was not a refugee. She worked with refugees in the Philippines for many years. She gave on a first hand account, the valuable experience she partakes in with working with these refugees. With a population of 25,000 refugees at peak the camp is staffed with 7,000 trained and skilled workers. Within this refugee camp, it is very structured opposed to some in which tents are the form of housing. Within this camp, there are structured homes distributed to each family. These billets, or buildings in which the refugees are housed are equipped with a kitchen, family room and a sleeping area. There are 10 billets per building and one bathroom per building. Rhodalyn explained some of the activities the camp offered such as inter-generational programs between the parents and child and celebrations of the different cultures in the freedom plaza. She also shared her first hand experiences on getting to know these refugees and actually sitting down to share a meal with them. Although as a worker at a refugee camp can be hard work, she assures there are many rewards.
Brad Procek, Northern Illinois University  
**Topic:** Middle Eastern immigrant families– Cross cultural analysis of adolescents: A comparison of American and Palestinian youth

The intent of this video is to explore a different culture and examine the effects of racism and close-mindedness. Brad lived in America his entire life. However, he recently had the opportunity to travel abroad in the Middle East. As he travelled, a new world opened up to him. Mr. Procek lived in Israel and Palestine for 10 months and again for a month this past summer. In his travels, he had discovered the importance of cultural exploration. He saw an importance in this because America is growing increasingly diverse. His eyes were also opened to new cultures and to the still existent racial tensions that are present in our world. Racism is still prevalent all around the world.

Chuck Spurlock, Oakland University, Rochester, MN  
**Topic:** Chaldean familism: How a vibrant culture negotiates Mainstream Culture

Studies on the second-generation, or children of immigrants, tend to neglect parental culture as a shaper of identity. When culture is considered, information is collected through questionnaires without focus on specific cultural institutions or social organization of the migrant group. This paper analyzes Chaldean familism to better understand the influence of parents and their social institutions on their children. The work fills an important void, as Chaldean family practices operate similarly to other migrant groups from the Middle East, and South and Central Asia. Consequently, this information provides insight into second-generation issues such as marriage, dating, schooling, and employment for multiple groups. To follow these issues, he collected life history interviews from 27 migrants and 23 second generation informants. His data follows economic, social and cultural adaption of migrants and the second-generation. The findings point towards conservation of culture despite being at odds with mainstream society. Rather than being limited by their culture though, Chaldeans are quite successful and appear to follow an assimilative path. But cultural retention makes multiple demands that the generations must balance against the expectations of public institutions. For example, school administrators have questioned the parents and children’s commitment to schooling and the general public claims the group is somewhat clannish when in public places. This presentation explores these accusations and challenges the primary understandings these are based on.

Deb Gentry, Heartland Community College  
**Topic:** Cross cultural connections: Using literature circles to teach about immigrant families

Literature circles are a small group teaching-learning strategy. This strategy prompts learners to engage in reading beyond the textbook selected for a given course. It involves both self-directed and peer-mediated learning. To some degree, this approach mimics how book clubs operate in communities today. Members read the same book over a given time period and then come together to discuss the content of the book and their reactions to it. In an assortment of different subject matter areas (special education, nutrition, public policy, child development, aging, etc.), This teaching strategy has proven to be both appealing and effective.

Yan Wang, Northern Illinois University  
**Topic:** Cultural differences in parent-child relationships: Implications for development of different self/world views and different coping orientations

Primary control is defined as changing the world to fit the self. Secondary control is defined as changing the self to fit the world. We review that East Asian parent-child relationships lead to views of a malleable self and an entity world, which is the foundation for secondary control (changing the self to fit the world). By contrast, the European-American practices lead to beliefs in an entity self and a malleable world, which is the foundation for primary control (changing the world to fit the self).
Jane Rose Njue, Northern Illinois University & Dorothy Rombo, University of Wisconsin-Stout

**Topic:** Successful or expedient parenting: Choices in parenting African immigrant adolescents in the U.S.

The purpose of their study was to examine the experience of African immigrants parenting adolescent children in the U.S. In the review of related literature, the role of the parents is seen as nurturing, teaching, and acting as the guardian for their children. In their findings, they first found that there is parent child synchrony where the children get tasks that are developmentally appropriate for their age. Second, the children are expected to do chores when most of the time there are no available incentives because it is a part of the children’s role they play in the family. Lastly, children experience cultural differences where they need to act as Americans at school and then act as Africans at home.

In their sample they used 6 males and 9 females, which broke down into 6 single mothers and 10 spouses, or 2 widowed, 4 divorced, and 10 married. The mean age was 46 with a mean annual income of $42,000. The method of their study was a convenient snowball sample.

Reasons for emigration is to obtain a “Green Card”, being refugees, and escaping asylums. The number of African emigrants coming into America grew from 35,550 in 1966 to about 1.4 million in 2007. Of all of the U.S’s immigrants, 3.7% are African. They come from Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. In addition, there are two cultural approaches. The first one is collectivism where there is the need of interdependence of the individual, and the second one is individualism or personal achievement.

Wendy Kraft, Northern Illinois University

**Topic:** Culture Clash: Exploring the Asian American

There are 13.5 Asian Americans in the United States. Asian Americans have established a rich history in America and having been a constant increasing population. Unfortunately, little has been done to research and help Asian Americans. Acknowledging cultural differences will better help family professionals as well as the Asian American population adjust to the American culture while still being able to practice their Asian culture as well. Wendy spoke about Chiao Shun which is the Asian parenting style of training. Western cultures emphasize to do what you want, say what you want, and share anything. Thus, eastern cultures focus on what tradition wants, it is wise to be quiet, and only the foolish reveal matters of the heart. Western cultures also emphasize on “self” autonomy and identity. Asian children in the United States have access to resources which gives them more independence and allows them to acculturate faster. This sometimes causes a conflict in the Asian American family.
John Wagner, Northern Illinois University
Topic: Cultural and ethnic identity formation for international adoptees

This poster presentation was made of a literature review along with a proposed social networking project to address how families may increase cultural opportunities, exposure, and connect with fellow adoptive families, adoptees, and cultural contacts and allies.

Whitney Lau, Northern Illinois University
Topic: Challenges and opportunities for Asian immigrant entrepreneurs in the U.S. food service industry

Based on the review of current literature, there are both challenges and opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs in U.S. foodservice industry. Some of the challenges mentioned in the literature include strains of settlement, assimilation, differences in ethnic background, discrimination, state policies, and maturity of immigrants. At the same time, Aldrich and Waldinger described opportunities immigrant entrepreneurs had, such as market conditions, access to opportunity, their group characteristics, adaptation ability, etc. The purpose of this project is to explore the challenges and opportunities that immigrant restaurant owners in the North Suburb of Illinois encounter. The finding of the study is to assist in developing a survey questionnaire of immigrant entrepreneurship in US foodservice industry.

Michelle Roberts & Lisa Taylor, Eastern Illinois University
Topic: Post adoption contact in foster care adoptions– Are adoptive parents ahead of agency practices in promoting openness in adoptions?

This study examined the level of openness in foster care adoptions, assessed the satisfaction with birth parent contact, and determined agency involvement in facilitating openness in foster care adoptions. Three hundred adoptive parents were administered a 20-item survey that covered the level of openness in their adoption, their satisfaction with the level of contact with the birth parent (s), and knowledge in their adoption and the services that the agency did or did not offer. The findings indicated that the majority of adoptions in the current study were viewed as “open”, but the actual frequency of contact was low. Adoptive parents reported that they had a moderate amount of information regarding the birth family and were satisfied with that amount of information. Agencies, on the whole, did not provide many services that encouraged or facilitated openness. Participants also indicated on their own that they had used social networking websites like Facebook and Flickr to facilitate and maintain contact with birth families.
IL-NCFR Executive Board

President: Laura Smart

President Elect and Membership Chair: Jill Bowers

Recorder: Jason Nicol
Picture not available

Treasurer: Helen Westlake
Picture not available

Legislative Committee Chair: Position open

Recruitment and Retention: Jen Finn

Newsletter Editors: Jen Finn
Ray Marchlewicz
Sarah Verley
IL-NCFR Representatives

Lilian Alvarez

Linda Dersheid

Bernadette Collins

Gary Lauman

Mikki Meadows

Bill Anderson

Lucy Campanis

Colleen Gibbons

Kelly Grossheusch

Picture not available

Picture not available

Picture not available

Picture not available
Membership in the National Council on Family Relations automatically entitles you to membership in the Illinois Council on Family Relations. A portion of each NCFR member’s dues is rebated to the state in which that member resides. For information about NCFR contact:

National Council on Family Relations
3989 Central Avenue, N.E., Suite 550
Minneapolis, MN  55421
Phone:763.781.9331
As a member, you will have the opportunity to:

• meet with other organizations and individuals in the state that share similar interests with regards to marriage and family life,
• learn of others’ work, exchange ideas and discuss matters of mutual concern,
• stimulate and encourage study and research in the field of family relations,
• evaluate and articulate positions on family related issues and move toward responsible social action,
• further wholesome family relationships through these and such other means as are deemed to be appropriate,
• facilitate the exchange of research and ideas,
• promote family life education, and
• help keep others aware of legislation concerning families.

**All members of the Illinois Council on Family Relations receive two newsletters each year that inform you about things that are happening in the state organization, information about the annual state conference, policies that impact families, and general information about the family field.**

If you are interested in joining the ICFR, or would like more information about this state wide organization, please contact Jill Bowers (bowers5@illinois.edu), Membership Chair.

ICFR website: il.ncfr.org

---

**Types of Membership:**

Regular ICFR: $10.00
Student: $5.00
Family: $15.00
Organization: $20.00
Benefactor: $25.00

---

Here’s How To Enroll...

Complete the form below and send it along with your check to:

Jill Bowers, MS, CFLE, CFCS
903 Williamsburg Drive
Charleston, IL 61920
email: bowers5@illinois.edu

Name: ________________________________
Profession: ________________________________
School, Agency, or Organization: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
_____________________________________
City ________________ ZIP __________
Phone: ________________
E-Mail: ________________

Check those on which you would be willing to serve:

Committee Member:____
Executive Board Member:____
Newsletter Staff:____
Other:____