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Recent Jewish immigrants' communication in Postville, Iowa: A case study

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RECENT JEWISH IMMIGRANTS'
COMMUNICATION IN POSTVILLE, IOWA:
A CASE STUDY

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts

Anna I. Levina
University of Northern Iowa
August 2003

ABSTRACT

For this paper the author researched Iowa's immigration history and modern day Postville, a small town that represents a tossed salad of cultural, religious, and linguistic diversities. The author analyzed the current effect of immigration as well as the process of integration and assimilation into the small town through the eyes of its immigrants. The major emphasis is placed on Postville located in northeast Iowa. For 150 years Postville was an all-white, all-Christian farming community of 1,000 souls, most of European ancestry. Today the population of Postville has doubled and of the 2,000 people who reside in Postville almost one quarter are Jewish, and Hispanics, Russians, and other ethnicities make up another 300 people. Within the last decade this small town has undergone considerable social and cultural changes.

With this research project the author explored how communication between different cultures in small Iowa town has affected the life of the immigrants; the researcher wanted to learn the pros and cons that people see in being an immigrant, what struggles they face living in another culture, and how they maintain their home traditions, culture, and native language.

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This Study by: Anna I Levina
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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
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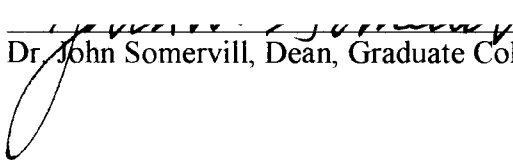
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Modern Postville, a small Iowa town, represents a tossed salad of cultural, religious and linguistic diversities. Iowa's immigration history began in the 1800s when a large number of Europeans settled in the state. This fact explains the European ancestry of most Iowans with the exception of Native Americans. Several thousand immigrants came to Iowa near the very end of the twentieth century. Modern-day Iowa now encompasses many different cultural communities. There are Bosnian, Dutch, Norwegian, Jewish, Russian, Hispanic, German, Danish, Swedish communities and many others. Several thousand have immigrated to Iowa in the 1990s. "Initially most seemed to concentrate in meatpacking towns, for example, Latinos in Marshalltown, Bosnians in Waterloo, Laotians in Storm Lake, or the Russians in Postville" (Grey, 2001 p. 3).

Past immigration experience shows that traditionally the newcomers who arrived in a different place would either stay within the point of the community that speaks their home language and shares the same cultural traditions or form their own community. On the one hand, these existing communities that practice the same language and culture help the newcomers to survive and feel more comfortable immediately after their arrival: "Continued association with the culture of origin, far from encouraging an attitude unfavorable to acculturation, may well encourage a willingness to cross cultural boundaries, first at marginal levels and then gradually in more fundamental aspects" (Borrie, 1959, p. 138).

On the other hand, this “community-belonging” separates them from the local residents and, up to a point, it prevents the immigrants from quick assimilation. Max Weber (1952) calls the slow assimilation a “separatist complex.”

Minorities tend to assimilate slowly because of their separatist complex. The most important constituents of this are (1) ritualistic segregation of the group, including a ban on marriages with other groups, rejection of mixed offspring, and restrictions on eating with outsiders; (2) loyalty to their original language which continues to be used, especially through special schools; and (3) a double standard of morality. (p. 38)

However, assimilation itself is a two-way process. It requires a minimum of language competence and cultural assimilation from the newly arrived person, but it also requires some definite flexibility on the part of local citizens and their acceptance of some change.

The major emphasis of this research is placed on a small city, Postville, located in northeast Iowa. It's only natural that when coming to a new place of living, the immigrants bring their cultural backgrounds with them. Depending on the ethnicity and countries they were born in, the values, beliefs, behavior, life-style and communication ability of the newcomers can present a real challenge for the local people, although many similar things about the immigrants' traditions may still remain in common with the native Iowans. By researching the communication that occurs between the Jewish immigrants and the local people in Postville, and interviewing people from both groups, the author explored how communication between different cultures has affected the life of an immigrant. I wanted to determine the pros and cons people see in being an immigrant, what struggles they face living in another culture, and how they maintain their home traditions, culture, and native language. I also wanted to determine the impact of

immigration and new cultures on the residents of Postville. W. D. Borrie (1959) outlines two forms of social assistance that can help the newly arrived immigrants meet the locals:

Community assistance for the immigrant family, to be effective, must arrive spontaneously from the community itself, for example, throughout local church organizations, clubs, societies, sporting associations, etc. The second is that voluntary effort to assist the immigrant requires education of the non-immigrant community itself to a sympathetic understanding of the social and cultural significance to the immigrants of the habits and customs, etc., which they and their families have brought with them. (p. 124)

In Postville, diversity teams were created to help both the newly arrived immigrants and long-time residents bridge cultural gaps and foster communication. These teams organized cultural events and opened the lines of communication. Likewise the “Taste of Postville,” an annual ethnic food festival, was started to acquaint residents and new immigrants with the food of the 20 plus cultures that now reside in Postville.

So now Postville, IA can be called an example of a “tossed salad” metaphor. Postville, 2003, is far different from Postville, 1983. In the next section a brief history of Postville is provided.

Postville’s Brief History

In this paper I look at Postville, Iowa, with a population of more than 2,000 people, nearly 300 of whom are Jewish. My primary interest is in how the Jewish religious way of life affects the local people. I also want to investigate the possible changes immigration brought to the town as well as the communication between Jewish people and local Postville residents.

Postville is located in northeast Iowa. For 150 years Postville was an all-white, all-Christian farming community of 1,000 residents, mostly of German and Norwegian ancestry. Stephanie Simon (Los Angeles Times, 2002) described the “used-to be”

Postville as an “everyone-knows, live-and-die-here kind of town run by farmers of German and Norwegian stock.”

Postville’s “renaissance period” started in 1987 when a Russian-born Jew, Aaron Rubashkin, a butcher from Brooklyn and a member of the ultra-orthodox Lubavitcher sect bought a bankrupt slaughterhouse. He converted it to kosher use and created new jobs in Postville. Three dozen rabbis, trained to kill livestock and inspect kosher meat, came to help and work at the plant. Then came the others: Mexican, Guatemalan, Ukrainian, Nigerian, Bosnian, Czech, Russian, and other immigrants, some of them illegally. These immigrants swarmed to jobs in the kosher slaughterhouse and to the Iowa Turkey Products plant, next door. By 1996 the kosher slaughterhouse employed 350 people. Within a decade, Rubashkin’s plant turned into the largest Lubavich-owned packinghouse in the world, processing 1,300 cattle, 225,000 chickens, 7,000 lambs and 4,000 turkeys a week, attracting hundreds of fervently religious Jews and more than 400 Hispanic and Eastern European workers eager to fill the plant’s jobs. Since the early 1990s Postville’s population has increased by more than 54%, which equates to about 1,000 people.

The new Jewish orthodox residents are distinctive in their appearance. Because of their religious beliefs and strict rules of Torah, the men wear black coats and long beards. The married women always wear wigs and long skirts and the little boys all have long side curls. But apart from unusual appearance (in the eyes of the long-time residents), Jewish people were also unusual in their behavior. Since it is not encouraged by the religion for the Jewish orthodox men to shake hands with people of opposite sex or eat in non-kosher places, long-time Postville residents found themselves in a new

communication situation with the Jewish newcomers. Undeniably it took time to adjust and during that time Postville's physical appearance was considerably changed with the addition of a synagogue, Jewish schools and a kosher "deli" restaurant. "Jacob's Table," the kosher restaurant, is run by a Jewish businesswoman who considers her store to be an international market. Once you enter the market, you can not help but notice a row of brightly colored flags representing the native lands of Postville's residents and an array of wall clocks showing the time in places from Los Angeles to Istanbul.

Significance

The significance of this research is primarily cultural and social. Our multicultural, multilingual society brings people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to live, work, and communicate with each other. The general wellbeing and self-confidence of people of all racial, ethnic, religious and cultural upbringing results in successful communication with each other. United States society embraces millions of people with distinct cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Seiler and Beall (2002) point out that: "Current demographic trends and projections in the United States make it not an option, but a necessity, to interact successfully with people of all racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious heritage" (p. 11).

Most Americans can trace their roots back to immigrants and so; the value of this immigration experience should be given proper attention. It's important to determine the extent of the Jewish culture's impact on Postville, the degree of openness of American people to the newcomers, and the acceptance of some changes that the immigrants might require of the town as well as the components of multicultural communication that take place in this small Iowa town.

Personal Connection

As outlined above, the particular focus is placed on the Jewish presence in Postville and its cultural and communication peculiarities. There are different reasons that *I took into account and concentrated on the Jewish group: First of all, the Jews were the first to arrive in this tiny town and thus the first to bring significant cultural and social changes with them. Another factor that served to be a strong reason for the Jewish emphasis is my own Jewish origin; this factor does not only add to my personal interest to study Jewish intercommunication in Postville, but could possibly serve as a stronger motivation for some of the orthodox Jewish people to agree to meet me. It was important for me to wear a long skirt and a long-sleeved shirt during the interviews to show my respect and adherence to the Jewish religion. The fact that the investigator is acquainted with the Jewish way of dress and has sufficient knowledge of Jewish culture might create some additional openness and predisposition of the Jewish respondents to share their living and communication experiences in Postville. Since I am currently an international student in the United States, some issues in intercultural communication as well as immigrants' assimilation and integration processes into small town Iowa may overlap with my own experience. Thus this background can provide a better understanding of some themes discussed with the Jewish immigrants in Postville.*

Definition of Terms

There are a number of important terms to be defined as they will be used throughout the paper and might be unfamiliar to some readers. Some terms used throughout this study reflect significant issues and also carry specific meanings. First, one must be especially aware that there are distinctions in the terminology used to describe

immigrants' change of place of living. Emigration: The act of leaving a native country to live in another country (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1993, p. 326).

Immigration: Immigration is an entrance of a person (an alien) into a new country for the purpose of establishing permanent residence. Motives for immigration, like those for migration generally, are often economic, although religious or political factors may be very important. High rates of immigration are frequently accompanied by militant, and sometimes violent, calls for immigration restriction or deportation by nationalist groups (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1993).

Such terms as assimilation, adaptation, and acculturation are used throughout the study and refer to people who have changed their place of living. It is important to specify each concept. Assimilation is viewed by Britannica Online (2002) as the process by which minority groups, such as immigrants, slowly absorb the characteristics of the dominant culture. Similarly, the dictionary of sociology (1988) refers to assimilation as the conformity of members of ethnic groups to the culture of the dominant group. Britannica Online (2002) views adaptation as a fundamental life goal for all humans, something that all of us share and do naturally and continually as we face challenges in our environment. Acculturation is another key process that takes place after the change of the place of living. Acculturation is a culture change that results from continuous, firsthand contact between two distinct cultural groups (Britannica Online, 2002)

There are different definitions of minorities; they all intend to establish the prevalent concepts. Here are the most illustrative: "Minorities are particular racial, cultural, religious, or national groups who although living among other groups, do not fully share the culture that they are part of" (Zenner, 1991, p. 34). Fuchs (1979) refers to

minority as “the designation of groups that are segments of an embracing group of society, who differ from the majority (in the sense of the dominant group) by certain characteristics (e.g., racial, linguistic, confessional) which the dominant group holds to be of less value than its own relevant characteristics” (p. 78). All in all, the Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (1993) summarizes that when speaking about minorities, one is astounded by the heterogeneity of population groups that fall under the heading: disabled, quest workers, convicts or ex-convicts, the mentally ill, “colored persons” (i.e., racially discriminated), national, ethnic, regional and religious groups, drug addicts, the homeless, vagrants, gypsies, prostitutes and homosexuals.

This study focuses on the communication between the Jewish immigrants and the long-time residents of Postville. Many of the Jewish people in this town are orthodox: Orthodoxy are the smallest branch of American Jewry. Fewer than a million of America’s nearly 6 million Jews include themselves under its rubric. Orthodoxy was the only form of Judaism until the nineteenth century. All orthodox Jewish people claim that orthodoxy is not a particular religious movement but a way of life. It implies that the person observes many of the strict rules, regulations, and complex structure of the whole religion. Orthodox people can be easily distinguished among others by their looks and what they wear. Men typically wear black shoes and black pants, a white shirt, long beard and a skullcap (Hexham, 1993). Mayer (1979) notices that “So far as available evidence permits us to guess, Orthodoxy was the predominant way of life for the majority of Jews prior to their immigration to the new World” (p. 18). It is also important to outline some distinctive features about Jewish orthodox women, they wear long skirts that must cover their knees, their top clothes are supposed to have long sleeves and should not open any

part below the neck. Married women have to cover their hair with either a big scarf or a wig.

The majority of the Jewish Orthodox citizens of Postville are Hasidic. Thus it is important to define Hasidism: Hasidism is a term that is used by the rabbis to describe those Jews who maintained the highest standard of religious observance and moral action. The first Hasidim, also called the Assideans or Hasideans, were an ancient Jewish sect that developed between 300 B.C. and 175 B.C. Baal-Shem Tov founded this religious movement in Poland in the 18th century (Hexham, 1993). It is important to mention the biggest group of the Hasidic Jews is the Lubavitcher group. The Lubavitches represent more than 200,000 adherents worldwide. The sect originated about 300 years ago in Lubavitch, Russia (Hexham, 1993).

Jewish religion embraces many distinctive aspects and rules regarding the every day life of a Jewish person. One of the most important things is the practice of kosher food. In Judaism, this term is used in rabbinic literature to mean what is ritually correct, but most widely applied to food that is prepared in accordance with dietary laws based on Old Testament passages. Kosher meat is the flesh of animals that both chew the cud and have cloven hoofs (as the cow and sheep); the animal must have been slaughtered with a skillful stroke by a specially trained Jew; the meat must be carefully inspected, and, unless cooked by broiling, it must be salted and soaked to remove all traces of blood. The cooking and eating of milk products with, or immediately after, meats or meat products is unkosher; even the use of the same kitchen and table utensils and towels is forbidden (Hexham, 1993). These terms and definitions should help provide a clearer perspective for the reader.

Research Objectives

Having visited Postville for the first time and given a first glance to the town's diversity, it was the town's intercultural communication and cultural practices that mostly captivated me. And so, through the exploration of intercultural communication between the Jewish immigrants and local Iowans, I posed two main questions as current research objectives:

How has the immigration experience affected your communication with others?

How has the immigration experience affected your cultural practices?

Summary

The goal of this research is to discover how the immigration experience in Postville has affected communication practices of long term citizens as well as the recently arrived Jewish people. Another objective is to explore whether the immigration experience in Postville has produced any effect on the cultural practices of long time Postville residents and the newly arrived Jewish inhabitants.

In summary, this chapter has served as an introduction to my research. It has outlined the focus placed on the Jewish population of Postville, the reasons the Jews came to Postville, the changes they have introduced, Postville's economy and its overall new look. The primary cultural and social significance of this study is outlined and discussed. The chapter also contains the reasons that I chose to study Postville's communication situation and to focus primarily on the intercultural communication of the Jewish inhabitants and long-time Postvillians. All the definitions that occur when exploring the research questions are included to provide the research frame and directions.

In Chapter II, I examine literature important to this study. In Chapter III the methodology and research procedures utilized in this research will be discussed. In Chapter IV the researcher will present the collected data. Finally, Chapter V will discuss conclusions that I have derived from the study and I will also offer directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to better understand the important role of the immigration experience and how it affects the communication and cultural practices of Postville's residents, it is essential to review related literature about immigration to the United States. Much of the existing research about immigration covers all aspects of this process, including: reasons for immigration, settlement, integration, employment, and cultural practices.

For purposes of this literature review it is essential to explore the current body of knowledge. This review is divided into five categories: (a) research dealing with immigration to the U.S., (b) Jewish immigration, culture, and settlement in the U.S., (c) intercultural communication and immigration, (d) communication theories that informed this study, (e) research on Postville's "clash of cultures" (Bloom, 2000).

Immigration to the U.S.

America was indebted to immigration for her settlement and prosperity. That part of America which had encouraged them most had advanced most rapidly in population, agriculture and the arts. (James Madison, Speech at Federal Convention, August 13, 1787)

Virtually every family in America can trace its ancestry back to immigrants, be it the first, third, or seventh generation. The reasons that cause people to emigrate from their home country to America vary widely from political and economic reasons to family ties and cultural stimuli. The process of immigrating to another country can be both an exhilarating and stressful experience. It can be exhilarating in the sense that a distant country can present new socio-economic opportunities and improved quality of life. It can be stressful in the sense that the emigrant leaves behind many of the things

that she/he had known among them: relatives, job, friends, cuisine, housing, political system, and a way of life.

From the outset, immigration of earlier centuries was known to be a “voluntary movement of people between well-developed countries” (Fairchild, 1925, p. 30). In fact, up until the end of the first outbreak of World War I, immigration was a planned and intended movement for immigrants. With the twentieth century, however, changes began to occur. Borrie (1959) notes that “Some of the enthusiasm for emigration as a solution for European pressure waned in face of the threat of population decline, at least in the north and west. Totalitarian regimes also looked unkindly upon voluntary emigration although they did not hesitate to expel unwanted populations” (p. 36). Analyzing the recent immigration situation, Piore (1979) stated that:

In the last decades of the century, the character of United States immigration underwent significant change; not only did the flow originate increasingly outside of northwestern Europe, but a larger proportion of it was temporary. In effect with the advent of transatlantic steamships, many Europeans went to the United States –or to South America –as migrant workers rather than as settlers. On the eve of World War I, returns amounted to about one-third of arrivals; the major exception to this among the “new” immigrants was the Jews, whose relocation was attributable to political persecution as much as to economic distress. (p. 17)

Different reasons led different groups of people to immigrate to the United States. The main reasons for Germans, for example, were primarily economic. Since the 17th century wars and retardation of the economy provoked the middle class to demand reform and or immigration to a land with better opportunity. Coppa and Curran (1976) discuss the mass exodus from Germany that continued till the end of the 19th century. By the eve of the American Revolution, there were over one hundred thousand German immigrants and their descendents living in the thirteen colonies. Thus the Germans were to constitute the first group that challenged the predominantly English nature of the

American colonies. From the colonial revolution to 1917, more than 6 million Germans found their way to America. By that time millions of Germans represented the largest immigrant group in America, next only to the English in numbers. “Most of these Germans had ventured to the United States in the search of a better life, expecting that the new world would perforce have to be better than the old” (Coppa & Curran, 1976, p. 53).

For the Irish, another large group of immigrants in America, the grounds for emigration were political, economic and religious. Thomas Curran (1976) says that “Ireland was always an impoverished country, especially during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. It knew the meaning of poverty, hunger and famine” (p. 95). Indeed Irishmen had to exist in severe living conditions during the three centuries. The Irish blamed the English for their poor economic conditions because English law prevented the Irish from any industrialization in their home country and it also prohibited Catholicism. Besides the overall control by the English, Ireland had gone through a potato blight in 1741 and a great famine in 1845-47. These disasters forced the Irish to emigrate. Curran (1976) in the article “From “Paddy” to the Presidency: the Irish in America” points out two major factors that brought the major portion of emigrants to the U.S.:

Some Irish had already settled in the U.S. and they wrote home glowing reports of their own progress and tremendous opportunities available in the States...and too, more and more American ships were going to England delivering cotton among other things and more English ships traveled back to America. This increased trade provided the vehicles which carried the 19th century Irish from Ireland to America. (p. 97)

For the Jews, the period from 1800 to the present was an era of intense secularization and modernization of life. It was the time when many Jewish communities suffered expulsion and ultimately large-scale genocide. Since the First World War Jewish people have gone through violent persecution. The prevailing pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic

regimes not only imposed legal restrictions on the Jews but also forced those people of Jewish descent, who luckily happened to have survived the Nazi Holocaust and gas chambers, to emigrate. Coppa and Curran (1976) suggest that Jewish immigration to the United States was generally a “result of the interplay of the forces of attraction and expulsion. Jewish emigration was part of the general European movement to this country, but it also displayed distinctive origins, characteristics and results” (p. 147-148). The United States was the only place available that was far from Europe and its reactionary regimes. “During the 20th century, the large numbers of Jews from Europe emigrated and formed the vast majority of Jews in America, and, for about three decades, in Palestine. They helped enlarge much smaller communities and founded new ones” (Lestschinsky, 1944, p. 54). So today The United States has experienced:

A large volume of immigration of diverse peoples. The United States is a country of relatively recent large-scale settlement and, correspondingly, the number of immigrants arriving over the past 100 years has been high relative to other industrialized nations. Immigration flows into the United States during the twentieth century have averaged around 500,000 arrivals annually, with very wide fluctuations from one year and decade to the next. (Piore, 1979, p. 7)

Jewish Immigration, Culture and Settlement in the U.S.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2001) the Jewish population in the U.S. is 6,000,000 people, but the reasons and times that brought the Jews to America vary. There are three waves of Jewish immigration to this country. The first wave started when the first 23 Jews landed on Manhattan Island in 1654. Those 23 were Ashkenazim Jews (originating in Central and Eastern Europe) who had been expelled from Brazil after the reconquest of that area by the Portuguese and they were thus refugees fleeing religious persecution. The population of the Jewish immigrants by 1700 was some 250 people and at the time of the Revolution, there were 2000 Jews in the United States. By the middle of

the century, synagogues existed in five cities of America. The major colonial Jewish settlements were in New York, Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah. From 1830-1880, there was the second wave of immigration. Those were the Ashkenazim German and Central European Jews. Because of massive political repression and economic depression in Germany in the mid 19th century, German Jews were forced to emigrate. The German Jews moved along the Erie Canal, the Ohio and the Mississippi River where they founded settlements in Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. The third wave was the largest, with more than 2,000,000 people. Those were the East European Jews mostly from Russia who entered the U.S. between 1880 and 1925. The reasons were again political repressions of the Jews and violent governmental anti-Semitic attacks. From 1933 to the end of World War II about 150,000 Jews arrived in the U.S. Their reasons were obvious.

Speaking about the settlement of the Jewish population in the United States, Kallen (1924) calls Jewish settlement a “colony.” “In early 20th century America could encounter Swedish and Norwegian rural areas, German cities, and Irish, and Polish, and Jewish colonies. Group settlement was a basic mode of settlement for immigrants in the United States” (p. 78). It should be also noted that Jewish immigration was largely a family affair with a high proportion of women and children. Morton Rosenstock (1976) points out the location of the Jewish population in percentage. “Geographically, the Jews are highly concentrated, with 60% in the Middle Atlantic States alone. Ten population centers hold 80%: New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Miami, Washington, Baltimore, Cleveland and Detroit, 15% live in urban centers” (p. 157).

Charles Stember (1966) indicates that the largest occupational group today is that of manager-proprietor, with many self-employed, he also pinpoints that the number of professionals has increased dramatically. Rosenstock (1976) also suggests that “economically the Jews symbolize America’s affluent society. Their upward economic mobility has been greater than of any other immigrant group, and their income level is now comparable to that of the oldest established American groups, such as Episcopalians and Presbyterians” (p. 157). Light and Rosenstein (1995) talking about immigrants’ self-employment notice that “whatever the general rate of self-employment in the non-farmer labor force, Jews were reliably above it” (p. 182).

Regarding the Jewish contribution to the U.S. society, authors outline three major areas of their achievement, that is: social justice and civic progress, business and industry, and culture. Rosenstock (1976) pinpoints a number of fields with Jewish affiliation. “The majority of Jewish immigrants in the urban centers were wage earners, at least at first. A substantial number, however were peddlers, small businessmen, skilled craftsmen (printers, carpenters, and painters), clerks, and a few were professionals”(p. 153). In law, education and the social sciences there are many Jewish contributors. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Louis Brandeis, Felix Frankfurter, Benjamin Cardozo, Arthur Goldberg, Abe Fortas and others were prominent judges. Many Jewish people now occupy presidential posts in American universities. There are also many Jews who contribute to American literature, music, and art. For example, one finds Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Irwin Shaw, Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, J.D. Salinger, and Leon Uris in literature, and “Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren” of advice brought column fame. George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Ernest Bloch, Vladimir Horowitz, Eugene

Ormandy, Leonid Bernstein, and Barbara Streisand represent the field of music. There are obviously many other Jewish people in numerous fields. Jewish patrons of the arts have had a major and lasting impact upon such institutions as the Metropolitan Opera, the Guggenheim Museum, the Hirshorn Collection, and the Lincoln Center. Many Jews have also been active in medicine, physics, economy, politics, publishing, motion picture, even sports. Indeed, the Jewish community has added considerably to the richness of America and has presented an undiminished outpouring of talented contributors to the culture.

It is only natural that those Jewish immigrants brought their traditions and religious backgrounds with them. It is important to mention that the religious life of Jews is based on the Torah (generally called the Old Testament) or the five books of Moses. The Torah contains no fewer than 613 commandments that prescribe every aspect of every day life, from routine dietary to sexual behavior. One of the most significant Jewish observations is the Sabbath, or the Holy Saturday. That is the last day of the week observed as a day of rest for 25 hours commencing with sundown on Friday. In the biblical account of creation the seventh day is set as a Sabbath to mark God's rest after his work. The Jewish people have special rules for that day and the rules for the Sabbath are given in careful detail. For example, the orthodox Jews would never turn on electric lights, or carry an object from a private to a public area, or vice versa, drive a car, or cook dinner, nor should they even think of business from the period from Friday's sunset to Saturday's sunset. The Sabbath is the time when they do their best to stay true to their beliefs and concentrate on their spiritual lives. The Sabbath is intended to be a day of rest and joy. The orthodox Jews do not work on the Sabbath, they wear special clothes, enjoy delicious meals, and attend synagogue. The festive atmosphere is with them during that

day. The meals are carefully cooked on Friday morning before the beginning of the Sabbath.

One of the Jewish holidays, Hanukkah, has similar practices to the Christian holiday of Christmas and throughout many large American cities Hanukkah festivals provide a bright, warm holiday spirit. Another example that proves America's openness to the Jewish culture is prevalence of such Jewish customs as eating bagels, rye bread, and matzah. In the 1960s there was even a billboard in Brooklyn that said "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's rye bread" (source unknown).

Orthodox Jews stick to certain restrictions that all Jewish Orthodox strongly observe; for example, a man and a woman who are not married are not allowed to physically touch each other, thus men can not, for example shake hands with women and women are not allowed to shake hands with men. Also Orthodox Jews do not eat the same cuisine as Non-Jewish Americans; they must follow strict rules of a kosher diet, reducing their chances to socialize with non-Jews.

Intercultural Communication and Immigration

Intercultural communication is generally conceptualized as communication between different national cultures. Rogers and Hart (2002) defined intercultural communication as "the study of heterophilous interpersonal communication between individuals of different cultures" (p. 2). Samovar, Porter and Stefani (1998) outlined the importance of intercultural communication:

Differences in language, food, dress, attitude toward time, work habits, social behavior, and the like can cause many of our contacts to be frustrating or even unsuccessful. These issues account for only some of the problems associated with intercultural communication. Most misunderstandings go beyond superficial differences. We know that the deep structure of a culture is often what determines how a person responds to events and other people. (p. 15-16)

Generally, when developing their intercultural communication theories or conducting intercultural communication research, most communication scholars concentrate on some of the following areas of intercultural communication: theories focusing on effective communication outcomes, theories focusing on identity and intergroup communication, theories focusing on communication networks, theories focusing on acculturation or adjustment, theories focusing on accommodation and adaptation, and many others.

Looking at the effective outcomes of communication, intercultural communication competence is one of the biggest concerns of authors in this area of research. Concepts like cross-cultural adjustment, cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural understanding, overseas success, personal adjustment and growth, and cross cultural effectiveness are closely related and dealt with when describing intercultural communication competence.

One of the areas that communication scholars look at while working on identity and intergroup communication is examining the influence of identity on communication and vice versa. Abrams, O'Conner, and Giles's (2002) theory of Identity and Intergroup Communication is an example of a theory that discusses the influence of identity on communication behaviors, the influence of communication on identity, and the theory also provides analysis of both objective and subjective aspects of identity. The authors of this theory stress that:

Communication does not refer just to language. Instead, actions, rules, behaviors, discrimination, and labels are all communicative. Above all, we encourage those who are interested in the relationship between communication and identity to not only include "objective" notions of identity in their own research and theorizing

but also consider the “subjective” aspect of identity it is that identity and communication are mutually reinforcing. (p. 237)

Barnett and Lee (2002) analyze the issues in intercultural communication research networks. The authors conceptualize the major problems in conducting intercultural communication research, and discuss the issues of globalization and intercultural communication research. “Over time, with information exchange among people from different cultural groups, one potential consequence of globalization is cultural homogenization, the convergence of the indigenous cultures of the world into a universal culture” (p. 285). Barnett and Lee conclude that interpersonal and mediated channels of communication often need to be studied together.

In research devoted to communication accommodation and adaptation, the authors primarily work with the concept of intercultural adaptation. It should be noted that this is the area of intercultural communication that for the most part is closely connected with immigrant’s aspects of communication and other issues of adaptation and acculturation in the new environment.

Communication scholar Young Kim (2002) examines both short-term and long-term adaptation. Kim looks at intercultural adaptation as a “problem” and as a “growth” process. She isolates the major indicators and predictors of intercultural adaptation. Authors like Berry and Sam (1997) and Berry, Kim, and Boski (1988), provide complementary reviews of acculturation from psychological perspectives.

The theory of “Psychological acculturation of immigrants” Berry et al. (1988) divides the people who are acculturating into five types: immigrants, refugees, native peoples, ethnic groups and sojourners. Berry et al. (1988) in their theory of “Psychological acculturation of immigrants” discusses the variation in the processes of

adaptation and acculturation that occur due to the differences in cultural and psychological backgrounds between the two groups. The theory proposes varying ways by which individuals can acculturate. The authors suggest four options: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. Berry et al. (1988) suggest that people assimilating must confront two basic issues: “The maintenance and development of one’s ethnic distinctiveness in society, deciding whether its own cultural identity and customs are of value and should be retained, the desirability of interethnic contact, deciding whether the relations with larger society are of value and should be sought” (p. 65). The integration option implies “some maintenance of the cultural integrity of the group, as well as the movement by the group to become an integral part of a larger societal framework” (p. 66).

The process of acculturation may bring certain changes to the immigrants, according to Berry et al. (1988) those changes could be the following: physical changes- new places to live, new types of housing etc., biological changes-new nutritional status, new diseases and viruses, cultural changes—original political, economic, linguistic, religious and social institutions become altered, or new ones take place, psychological changes -changes in mental health that may occur during the attempt to adapt to the new community.

Theories that Informed the Study

In this section I will look at the theories developed by communication scholars that help one to understand the processes of communication and adjustment of immigrants in their new homes. I chose the theory of coordinated management of meaning developed by Pearce and Cronen (1980) because it views communication as a

process closely tied with the notion of culture. It was very important for me when analyzing the data to make use of some of the statements that Pearce and Cronen proposed in this theory. Pearce and Cronen (1980) view the social world as phenomena that depend on specific situations and contexts. Thus, the meaning that is created and understood in different situations can vary. I find it important to take into consideration that in Postville both respondent groups may share different understandings of the current situation and attitudes depending on the situational context that they find the most important. Pearce and Cronen (1980) discuss the idea of having multiple truths (epistemology) due to ascribing varying meanings to specific situations and contexts. I find it necessary to mention this theory as part of my literature review for this study, because it shaped many of the directions that I took when doing the interviews, it also provided better understanding about how the data could be analyzed.

Another part of the theory review is connected with the theory of cross-cultural adaptation developed by Young Kim (1988). I consciously studied this theory prior to the process of data collection, to make sure I understood and could operate with the notions of the core processes that are closely connected with the stage of cross-cultural adaptation. This theory gave this study an important insight into what it takes to adapt in a new cultural environment. Both prior to and after the data collection, I employed basic statements and suggestions developed by Kim. Thus I made sure I had a better understanding of the adaptation process of the studied immigrants as well could better explain the set of factors and communication-based behaviors that the researched subjects could have possibly encountered.

Cross-cultural adaptation (a term developed by Young Kim) is particularly relevant to immigrants and refugees, but the need for cross-cultural understanding extends further. In modern multiethnic and multilingual societies, newcomers need to learn to communicate with those people who are already long time residents of a particular place. Those already there need, for their part, to learn to communicate with the newcomers. In a world that has become a global village, even those living in their traditional homelands need to develop some cross-cultural understanding in order to be able to cope with the larger world confronting them in a variety of ways. Millions of people change their countries and citizenships every year. Young Kim (2002) notes that those people who are switching cultures may be described as “experiencing a degree of existential alertness” (p. 5). Indeed, the transformation from one home culture to another is not always smooth and easy for the newly arrived people. For many years a number of communication scholars have developed the concept of adaptation in their theories of intercultural communication. (Ellingsworth, 1988; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Kim, 1988, 2002; Kim & Gudykunst, 1987). These authors stress the necessity of the immigrants or other groups of people (i.e., refugees, sojourners) to adapt themselves to the norms of the host culture. For some of the newly arrived the process of adaptation goes smoothly, for others it requires great effort. Kim (2002) explains that “the degree to which people undergo such cross-cultural challenges varies widely, depending on their situations involving international migration and their motives for relocating in another culture. Different reasons for crossing cultures accompany different degrees of commitment that individuals feel toward their new environments” (p. 5).

Interactions among people from different cultures have been expanding rapidly; immigrants and refugees resettle in search of a new life, side by-side with contemporary sojourners finding employment overseas as artists, writers, accountants, teachers, construction workers and many more. Such a trend calls for higher capacities for dealing with cultural differences. This tendency is clearly reflected in the commonly used term "culture shock," which Martin et al. (1998) define as "relatively short-term feeling of disorientation and discomfort due to the lack of familiar cues in the environment which implies a sort of terror" (p. 339). A cross-cultural encounter, however, can also be seen as a powerful opportunity for transforming and or expanding one's perspective.

Communication scholar Janet Bennett (1997) notes that culture shock and adaptation are just like any other adult transition experiences that share common characteristics and provoke the same kinds of responses. Bennett (1997) also talks about cultural adaptation that depends in part on the individual, and that each individual has a preferred way of dealing with new situations. The works of different scholars increased my understanding and analysis of the different processes of adaptation that both the new and long time residents of Postville may have undergone.

Communication Adaptation

The theory of cross-cultural adaptation played an important role in my understanding of the phenomenon of immigrants' adaptation. Young Yun Kim in her theory of "Cross-Cultural adaptation: an integrative theory" (2002) points out that "The complex nature of the phenomenon (adaptation) manifests itself in the variety of existing conceptions research approaches, making it difficult for individual investigators to gain a clear picture of the body of knowledge accumulated over the decades" (p. 11). In her

theory, Kim portrays “cross-cultural adaptation as a collaborative effort in which a stranger and the receiving environment are engaged in a joint effort” (Kim, 2002, p. 49). The core concept that underlies any process connected with the adaptation or culture acquisition is communication. “The continuous new learning that takes place in the individual occurs in and through communication. Communication is the central pillar of all human learning. Once acquired, communicative abilities serve as an instrumental, interpretive, and expressive means of coming to terms with our environment” (Kim, 2002, p. 47). The author of the theory views communication competence, or social competence as the basic ability to reach any level of integration and adaptation. “Through communication competence, individuals are able to integrate themselves with the reality and the reality with themselves” (Kim, 2002, p. 48).

Kim has developed 10 axioms and 21 theorems (derived from the axioms) about relationships between the units of the cross-cultural adaptation theory. The key idea of the first three theorems is to posit relationships (positive, negative) between host communication activities, ethnic communication activities, and intercultural transformations. For example, one of the theorems states that “The greater the development of host communication competence, the greater the participation in host interpersonal communication” (Kim, 1988 p. 77). The next three theorems relate host receptivity to host communication competence, host communication activities, and ethnic communication activities. Kim (1988) notes that the greater the development of host communication, the greater the psychological health, the intercultural identity; the better the participation in host interpersonal communication, the better the functional fitness, the better the intercultural identity. One of the last theorems deals with strangers’

preparedness for change as related to communication competence, strangers' adaptive personalities, host communication activities and ethnic communication activities. Kim (1988) states that the greater the adaptive potential in predisposition, the better the participation in host interpersonal communication, the better the participation in host mass communication, the greater the participation in ethnic mass communication, the lesser the subsequent long-term participation in host mass communication. These theorems have directed my vision of the research questions and data collection. The study explores how the immigration experience has affected Postville's long-time residents' communication with people of different cultures. This study also looks at the Jewish residents' communication with the representatives of different culture. Kim's first five axioms (out of 10) are broad principles of cross-cultural adaptation: A1--Acculturation and deculturation are part of the cross-cultural adaptation process; A2--The stress-adaptation growth dynamic underlies the adaptation process; A3--Intercultural transformations are a function of the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic; A4--The severity of the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic decreases as strangers go through intercultural transformations; A5--Functional fitness and psychological health result from intercultural transformations. The final five deal with intercultural transformations and host communication competence: A6--intercultural transformation; A7--host communication activities; A8--ethnic communication activities; A9--environmental conditions; A10--strangers' predispositions. The last five dimensions are especially relevant for this study since the research participants indicated direct reference to the last five degrees discussed in Kim's model of cross-cultural adaptation.

Kim also proposed a structure model of cross-cultural adaptation to explain the mechanism of differential degrees of adaptation among different people. The structure model consists of six dimensions: (a) host communication competence; (b) host interpersonal or mass communication; (c) ethnic interpersonal or mass communication; (d) host environment; (e) predisposition such as preparedness for new environment, difference of ethnicity and personality; and (f) intercultural transformation as the outcome of cross-cultural communication process. Each dimension affects and is affected by, the other dimensions in the process of cultural adaptation. These dimensions can accelerate or impede an individual's cultural adaptation.

Kim's views of cultural adaptation in the field of intercultural communication suggest that it is the sole responsibility of people who are visiting or living in foreign cultures-"sojourners" as they are referred to in the literature to adapt themselves to the cultural norms of their host cultures. Young Kim portrays cross-cultural adaptation as a collaborative effort, in which both the newcomer and the new environment that he or she is surrounded with are engaged in a joint, two-way effort.

Coordinated Management of Meaning

I found it very significant that the notion of "culture" in the theory of Coordinated Management of Meaning is viewed as part of the communication process. "Basic cultural assumptions and mores determine the forms and functions of communication, and the forms and functions of communication determine the development of cultural institutions" (Pearce & Cronen, 1980, p. 25). The authors of the theory of coordinated management of meaning talk about the new idea of communication that took place in the 21st century. "In this century, a new idea of communication has been developed that

identifies it as a culturally morphogenesis process” (Pearce & Cronen, 1980, p. 28). The authors of the theory disclose three basic assumptions:

1. Humans live in communication. “Communication is, and has been, far more central to whatever it means to be a human being than had ever been supposed” (Pearce & Cronen, 1980, p. 76).

2. Humans co-create social reality. Social reality refers to a person’s beliefs about how meaning and action within his/her interpersonal encounters.

3. Information transactions depend on personal and interpersonal meaning.

In this theory the authors refer to how individuals establish rules for creating and interpreting meaning and how those rules are joined into communication in which meaning is constantly being coordinated. “Specifically, the term management of meaning requires the description of persons; the term coordinated management is explained in terms of interpersonal rules for meaning and action; and the phrase coordinated management of meaning affords an opportunity to describe various forms of communication” (Pearce & Cronen, 1980, p. 123). Pearce and Cronen believe that when interpreting experience we rely on a hierarchy of six consequent levels: Content, Speech Act, Episode, Relationship, Self-Concept and Cultural Patterns.

According to the theory of coordinated management of meaning each person recognizes and makes use of the cultural patterns of our society and within those patterns we realize who we are, thus possessing a self-concept. When interacting with others we do so in the context of a relationship and each contact that occurs is viewed as a particular episode. Our communication consists primarily of speech acts and the content of our speech. The researcher finds it significant to take into account these six levels

when interpreting the data collected from the research subjects of the current research project. Because this theory is dependent on people's experiences and beliefs, the values play a role in each situation and how it plays out. According to CMM, it is the people who chose which context is the most important and so they act accordingly (ontology). For example, in Postville the long-time residents, most of whom have been brought up in the Christian tradition, interpreted it to be extremely challenging and even offensive not to shake hands with their new Jewish residents when they first arrived. However the Jews have a different interpretation of this situation because it is rooted in the Jewish religious tradition and laws. Thus it is significant to take into account the levels of importance (episodes, relationships, self-concept, and culture) when interpreting the situation that Pearce and Cronen pointed out in their theory.

Research on Postville's "Clash of Cultures" (Bloom's Book)

Stephen Bloom (2000) is the author of a book that focuses on the "clash" (as he calls it in the subtitle of his book) of two traditions: Jewish and Christian. Before he started investigating the situation in Postville, Bloom moved with his family to Iowa City to teach journalism at the University of Iowa. Because the author is Jewish by origin he went to Postville "to learn from Hasidim, to share with them a sense of identity and belonging" (Bloom, 2000, p. 291). Bloom later (2000) admitted, that: "After seven years in Iowa, we are still strangers, but we will always be strangers" (p. 335). Mr. Bloom explains one of the reasons that made him and his family feel as strangers in Iowa: "But it wasn't just the lack of Jews in Iowa; it was that there were so few ethnics, hardly any Italians, blacks, Hispanics, anyone who was not so blanched white. Many of the locals didn't quite know what to make of us" (Bloom, 2000, p. 15).

The subtitle of Bloom's book, "A clash of cultures in heartland America", makes it clear that he believed the problems that arose in Postville were primarily cultural rather than economic. Bloom calls this clash "a cultural war" (Bloom, 2000, p. 56). He spent a number of years investigating the extraordinary community that is now Postville, and concentrated his attention on two groups of the community: newly arrived Jewish people and long-time Postvillians. Bloom points out that friendliness and hospitality are core values in small-town Iowa, but the orthodox Jews are too insular to allow friendliness and openness to the rest of the community. The author claims that the religious laws of the Jews combined with cultural mores made it virtually impossible to have social interaction with Jews and retain friendliness. "You couldn't become friends with them; it was all or nothing. They required total submission to their schema of right and wrong, Jew vs. Christian-or you were the enemy" (Bloom, 2000, p. 291).

Throughout the book the author spent time with each side providing insights into the lives and problems of each group and trying to resolve the dilemma inside of him: "I knew in my heart that the conflict between the Postville locals and the Hasidic Jews continued to be a metaphor for my own transplanted life in Iowa. I wanted to belong, I just did not know to which group" (Bloom, 2000, p. 214).

Bloom provided descriptions of Postville's new history that started in the late 1980s. It all began when the Hygrade meat processing plant just outside Postville went bankrupt threatening the town with decline. It was then that the butcher from Brooklyn, Aaron Rubashkin, bought the enterprise and turned it into a kosher processing plant. The enterprise was a huge international success, with its kosher meat being exported even to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. By the late 1980s "Postville had more rabbis per capita than any

other city in the United States, perhaps the world” (Bloom, 2000, p. 22). Mr. Bloom reports that the Jewish presence in town was met with annoyance on the part of some long time residents in Postville. This fact led some people to place on the ballot a proposal to annex the land where the slaughterhouse is located. Those people believed that by annexing the land the city would be able to exert more control over the slaughterhouse. Bloom proposed that even with the annexation “there was no way the Jews would leave” (Bloom, 2000, p. xii).

Bloom tried to determine the reasons the Jewish people and the long-time residents of the community were not integrating, the reasons that made it a “clash of cultures in heartland America.” The author spent time with both communities; drinking coffee with the regulars at Ginger’s café, spending a Shabbat weekend with the Jewish residents, Lazar and Bielke Kamzoil, chatting with a local amateur historian, schmoozing with slaughterhouse manager Sholom Rubashkin. Through exploring the experiences of his interviewees, Bloom makes it clear to the reader that his sympathies lie with the local people against the Lubavitchers. “Even though I could get into my car and drive home to Iowa City, I shared their sense of outrage directed at the Hasidim” (Bloom, 2000 p. 292). “What the Postville Hasidim ultimately offered me was a glimpse at the dark side of my own faith, a look at Jewish extremists whose behavior not only made the Postville locals wince, but made me wince, too” (Bloom, 2000, p. 291).

Summary

In this chapter, I explored relevant literature concerned with immigration to the United States. I covered the research dealing with the different reasons that brought different immigrant groups to the United States, and I looked at three major immigrant

groups: the Germans, the Irish and the Jewish. The first two groups are considered to be the largest immigrant groups in America. Due to the special Jewish immigrants' focus of this study, I also included the Jewish group in this section. For the Germans, it was the poor economy of the home country that led to emigration, for the Irish, it was a combination of political, economic and religious reasons that motivated people to leave Ireland, and for the Jews there were mainly political reasons that made the people leave their home countries and come to America.

Another section of the literature review chapter dealt with Jewish settlement and culture in the United States. The three basic waves of Jewish immigration have been outlined along with the patterns of Jewish settlement and major fields of occupation. The most important aspects of Jewish culture and religious life have been discussed.

The immigration experience is closely connected with intercultural communication, thus the most important areas of intercultural communication research have been outlined in the third section of this chapter. Such concepts as intercultural adaptation and acculturation play an important role in the immigrant's experience and conditions in the new environment, some of the psychological perspectives of immigrants' acculturation are also presented.

The final area in the literature review discusses the only existing (as of the year 2002) research dealing with the Jewish experience in Postville, Iowa. In this section I briefly described the reasons that brought Bloom to Postville, the major focus of the book, his reasons for what he calls the "clash of cultures" in Postville, his conclusions and personal sympathies.

The literature has provided a better explanation of the immigration experience and has guided my thinking and understanding of the intercultural communication situation in Postville, Iowa. The next chapter will detail the procedural methods I employed in my investigation to uncover the intercultural communication between the long-time residents of Postville, IA and the Jewish population. Then Chapter IV will present the results of those interviews and an analysis of some themes occurring throughout the interviews. Chapter V will draw the conclusions of the investigation and implications for future communication research in this area.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Procedures

Selecting a Research Place

My initial idea for this project was to research two Iowa towns that have recently experienced the influx of immigration. The towns considered were Cedar Falls and Postville. However, each town represented its own unique way of encompassing the immigrants' contribution to the town and communicating with the local people. Due to time constraints it was impossible to explore each town's communication situation and adequately reflect on each culture or generalize cultural and communicational experience in both towns. Taking into account the time constraint the researcher decided to concentrate on Postville, Iowa. The reasons for such a choice were that the Jewish immigration in Postville has created considerable and very obvious change inside the town; it has radically modified the town's look and its intercommunication. I also heard that the prior research done by Stephen Bloom (2000), "Postville. A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America" about the Jewish presence in Postville was not at all times accurate in its descriptions. Also the fact that I am of Jewish identity could contribute to easier access of some secular Jewish groups in Postville.

Before data collection begins, the University of Northern Iowa requires that each research project be submitted to the Human Subjects' Review Committee for approval. The aim of this committee is to ensure the protection of all participants involved in the research study. This project obtained approval status. (See Appendix A for informed consent form.)

Participants

Ultimately, six current citizens of Postville were chosen to take part in the study. I wanted to have an equal number of the participants representing each side. Due to the fact that I observed definite repetition of themes being discussed throughout the interview, I interviewed only three people representing each group. Having conducted six interviews the researcher was able to identify specific themes and issues that emerged during the interviews. All the interviewees were Postville citizens. Three of the respondents were recently arrived Jewish people and the other three were long-time local citizens of Postville. Their ages ranged from 23-60. See Appendix D for more details. Before each interview the participant examined and signed the consent form, each respondent agreed to have their interview recorded on tape. In order to assure anonymity, each individual was given a code name. None of the interviewee's identities was revealed throughout the research, as guaranteed in the informed consent letter form. A brief description of each participant can be found in Appendix D of this paper.

Outlining the Design

For this particular project, the researcher chose to narrow the research area and to include only Jewish immigrants living in Postville as well as local inhabitants of the town. I chose to limit the research process to only the Jewish residents of Postville because of my primary interest to study the components of the Jewish experience in Postville and Jewish-Postvillian intercommunication. Another reason is that the scope of a Master Degree thesis paper suggests a certain volume of research taking into account the availability of research time and probable scientific background.

Employing Norman Denzin's (1978) snowball sampling technique, I did not start the process of data collection with a pre-set number of questions; I allowed the research to dictate how many interviews would be necessary. The researcher's acquaintance with Postville's situation started from a discussion panel that was held at the University of Northern Iowa in Fall 2001. The mission of the panel was to show a documentary video about Postville and to outline the recent immigration changes in Postville. The host of the panel, Dr. Mark Grey, invited prior Postvillians and Jewish residents of Postville to share their experiences and opinions with the audience. After the panel, I approached one of the panel participants and asked if he would be interested in talking with me about his experience. This man became my first gatekeeper and later gave consent for an interview and also provided other names of Jewish and local people in Postville whom he thought would possibly agree to be interviewed and could possibly offer more information for the researcher. My first gatekeeper assured me that I could use his name when contacting other Postvillians. My first gatekeeper was also able to introduce me to several prospective candidates for the interview and provide secure access to the research location. In order to try to get a complete research picture and be able to cover several perspectives of different local people living in Postville, the researcher emailed Postville's local library, police station, visitor's center and post office with a brief message indicating the research goals and a request for a possible voluntary agreement for an interview. Such an approach worked well and definitely helped to provide viewpoints of the respondents with different age groups and occupations. Denzin (1978) explained that a snowball sampling technique is "like that of a good reporter who tracks down leads from one person to the other" (p. 185). To paraphrase Denzin, the process of

an interview is in a way self-regulating that is it directs the researcher to other valuable areas of study. It is also self-monitoring and this means that the process of interviewing will indicate the time when it is reasonable to stop investigating. During the interview process there came a point when the information being gathered started to become repetitious and the researcher had a definite feeling of redundancy in the interviews. Definite samples of repetition and predictability of the information collected served as a strong motivation to stop interviews. After the sixth interview the researcher stopped the procedure of face-to face interviews with new people because of the emerging repetitious pattern. For example, I felt that my participants, in a sense were echoing each other when talking about the reasons their communication with each other was somewhat uncomfortable at the beginning. Another example is that I felt that the participants repeated themselves regarding their ideas of Postville's future and the community's intercultural situation in future.

When selecting potential interview candidates, I tried to balance Jewish and local participants. All in all I had three Jewish residents and three long-time Postvillian residents. I also tried to avoid similarity in age groups; every effort was made to obtain a sample with a wide occupation range and length of time living in Postville. Every effort was also made to include as many different cultural perspectives as possible. See Appendix D for more details.

Interview Location

Each respondent was allowed to select the location for his or her interview. By means of allowing the respondent to choose the place, I hoped to minimize any discomfort or apprehension the individual might be experiencing. It also helped to build

rapport between me and the recipient. In addition I brought small inexpensive wooden gifts from Russia to thank the respondents for the time and effort they devoted. Also, anonymity and privacy was insured. I reminded the interviewee that he or she could discontinue the interview at any point of time. The four interviews occurred at each interviewee's work places in Postville and the two interviews took place in the respondents' homes.

The Interview

An interview is a social interaction between two people, which can be done face-to-face in order to gather data. Interviews can serve many purposes, but during a research interview, the interviewer never loses track of the research objectives. Jones (1985, p. 62) describes a research interview as "a social interaction between two people in which the interviewer initiates and varyingly controls the exchange with the respondent for the purpose of obtaining quantifiable and comparable information relevant to an emerging or stated hypothesis." Hickson, (1999) describes that the interview "allows interviewees to tell their stories as they see them; the text is their story" (p. 186). There are several types of research interviews, including scheduled and unscheduled. Scheduled interviews are highly structured to obtain standardization. All pieces of the interview, including the opening, the purpose statement, the questions, and the closing, are prepared in advance and delivered to all interviewees in a consistent manner. Unscheduled interviews do not follow a script with specific instructions. The interviewer has the freedom to adjust the questions to fit the interviewee and the environment.

The interviews completed for this research were unscheduled so that I had the freedom to change the order and wording of the questions based upon the responses of

the interviewee. Also, these types of interviews enabled the participants to tell their stories as they saw them. Taylor and Bogdan (1984, p. 77) call the process of in-depth qualitative interviewing as the “repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words.”

Flexibility for the researcher is one of the main strengths of the in-depth interview. The researcher can ask probing questions to gain information that the interviewee did not initially answer. Other research methods may only obtain one answer and do not allow the opportunity to acquire follow-up data. This flexibility will help the researcher to obtain details about Postville’s intercultural communication and both groups in this process (the long-time residents and the Jewish newcomers) will be given the opportunity to frame their viewpoints.

Another strength of the interview as a research tool is the rich data that is elicited from the interviewees. The original implication of the participants’ answers is preserved, and the interviewees are able to explain why they feel a certain way instead of just indicating how they feel. The participants can describe phenomena in their own words, tell stories, and provide examples when answering questions. This type of data will be helpful as the researcher attempts to gain information about the present day situation in Postville from primary sources (that is, those people who currently reside in Postville).

It is the face-to face interview that allows the researcher to have the undivided attention of the interviewee better than when using other research techniques, such as a telephone interview or a survey. The researcher is not limited with the number of questions that can be asked and, consequently, a significant amount of data can be

gained. As Hickson states (1999), one of the advantages of the in-depth interview is that it allows the researcher to "go off in different directions, taking the time to see that all approaches, theories or ideas have been explored" (p. 190).

One of the weaknesses of interviewing is that interviewer must be reflective and provide a fair view. The interview must remain objective throughout the process so that the data is not contaminated. This weakness will not affect this particular study because the researcher does not have anything to gain by not being objective, the main focus is placed on the particular experience of each participant of Postville's metaphorical "tossed salad" and every part of the experience shared with the researcher is equally important.

In order to prepare for the interviews, I worked on a list of questions that I wanted each respondent to address (see Appendix C). The questions were compiled based on my own experience as an international student in the USA, readings about immigration and intercultural communication, and finally, the advice of the thesis committee members. Since this is a qualitative nonscheduled form of the interview, I tried to have a natural development of the interview, thus the specific questions asked depended on each interview situation. The respondents were allowed to control the flow of information and the degree of details and comments that they could share. During the interviews I tried to follow Denzin's (1978) recommendation: "the interviewer works with a fixed list of questions or problems to be covered but alters that list for each respondent" (p. 186).

Each interview took approximately one hour. Before each interview the participant was asked to read and sign the informed consent sheet (see Appendix B). I also asked each respondent for permission to tape the interview. An audio tape recorder was used during the interviews to record the information provided by the respondents so

that the data could be accurately transcribed. Once the permission was given I placed a tape recorder in a place that would be as unnoticeable as possible so that it would not intimidate or otherwise bother the participant. After the interview was completed, I thanked my interviewee and turned off the recording device.

Transcription

After each interview I carefully transcribed each tape. Sometimes it was very difficult to transcribe precisely each word since some of the respondents would mumble some words or just say half of the word, depending on the way of talking. Nevertheless, every effort was made to transcribe each word and in the same manner that the words were spoken aloud. To view a sample of interview transcript, see Appendix C for a complete interview with one of the Jewish participants.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, one of the types of categorizing strategy used in qualitative method analysis, has been chosen to serve as the framework to identify the findings and evaluate results of the study. Thematic analysis “involves sorting data into broader themes and issues” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 79). After interpreting the data, I organized the findings and figured out the continuous and most important themes. In order to determine the specific differences between the results suggested by Bloom’s (2000) findings and my own results, I employed a contextualizing step of the analysis. Contextualizing allows one to try to understand the data in specific context, such as an interview transcript, or a completed survey, or any other material containing text. Contextualizing can involve the use of different data collection to identify relationships among different elements of the

text. This method of analysis of the text allows the researcher to look for the relationships that connect statements and events into a coherent whole (Maxwell, 1996).

The data collected for this research project included audiotaped interviews which were transcribed and analyzed. Throughout the interview, I could note general topic directions that emerged. After conducting each interview I began to analyze both the continuous as well as the new topics that I made note of throughout the process of data collection. I continued to note possible themes as all the interviews went on; however those were only sketches of the themes' analysis. It was only after listening to the interview tapes and making use of my personal notes that I made during the interviews that I began to work on constant comparative.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed a new tool of analysis that is called constant comparative method. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) explain that the constant comparative strategy demands that the

Researcher to simultaneously code and analyze data in order to develop concepts. By continually comparing specific incidents in the data, the researcher refines these concepts, identifies their proprieties, explores their relationships to one another and integrates them into a coherent theory. (p. 126)

I employed this strategy when comparing the responses to each research question. The responses of all six interviewees were compared question by question several times to see if definite themes were emerging. The conclusions were developed only after two major steps: first, the continual themes and recurring elements were identified having read and reread the interview transcripts many times, and second, all of the six interviews were compared to each other and based upon the comparisons, I was able to draw the final assumptions of the conducted research.

Summary

In this chapter I have included a description of my research methodology, discussed how my approach to the research is immersed in the qualitative tradition, provided an overview of how informants were selected for this study, and discussed attributes of qualitative interviewing as a method of data collection.

In Chapter IV, I discuss the findings of the study by analyzing and providing sample from conversations between the participants and the research investigator. I will also explicate the themes that emerged during the interviews

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This qualitative study sought to explore the intercultural communication that occurs between long time residents of Postville and the newer Jewish residents. Six residents of Postville were interviewed. During the interview each participant highlighted his or her own unique experience in Postville. This chapter will identify some of the emergent themes. This exploration will include themes that emerged in individual interviews as well as the themes that occurred across the entire research process. By paying close attention to the ideas that the interviewees expressed, I was able to outline the major themes of the interviews. By precise reading and rereading the answers of all six respondents to each question, I was able to distinguish and confirm all the emerged themes. It should be noted that my own personal experience of being an international person in the USA helped to confirm the outlined themes as well as to acquire a better understanding of the intercultural communication aspects and other issues being discussed.

This chapter contains interview excerpts to create a foundation of knowledge and to validate ideas. Each participant was given a code name to ensure anonymity. It should be noted that these interview excerpts do not represent the entire interviews of either long-time Postville residents' the Jewish residents' group in Postville. The presented data suggest there are unique communication situations and intercultural experiences in Postville, Iowa.

For the sake of clarity, this chapter is divided into five categories and themes that emerged from the interviews. The following themes, in summary, represent the result of

my analysis and answers of the research questions originally posed at the beginning of the study:

1. How has the immigration experience affected your communication with others?
2. How has the immigration experience affected your cultural practices?

Research questions are answered through the analysis and discovery of the themes that I will describe here:

Theme 1: “Living Background in Postville,” details the information of the participant’s living experience in Postville. Some of its new residents had expected it to be a matter of time to establish the intercultural communication with their neighbors and be welcomed in the town, for others Postville has been a home town for more than two decades and they perceive all the immigration changes going on in Postville with a consideration of their 20 year standpoint of living in Postville.

Theme 2: “Degree of Acceptance of the Town’s New Look,” discusses the experiences and personal attitudes to the recent changes in Postville. Here I found that some of the respondents sensed some tension between the long time residents and the new residents of Postville. Of course, the presence of any interaction between the Jews and long-time Iowans or lack of it has affected the way the six residents perceive the current situation in Postville.

Theme 3: “Postville’s Communication,” explains the intercultural communication situation between the old-time Postvillians and Jewish residents. The degree of language acquisition of some of Postville’s Jewish residents, the openness of both cultures to each other, and their desire to share their cultural traditions and customs. In this theme the

respondents explored whether intercultural communication between the two groups was a bridge for expanding the knowledge about different cultures, religions and traditions.

Theme 4: “Community’s Future,” explores whether long-time Iowans along with newly arrived Jewish people see any indications of Postville’s community future. At this point members of both groups are likely to provide a subjective evaluation of the current intercultural communication and interaction in Postville, the possibility of Postville’s expanding or decreasing as a community and any other personal ideas of what the town could be like in 25 years.

Theme 5: “Interviewees’ response to previous research,” discusses the differences in the results of the research conducted prior to the current study. Some of the researcher’s findings in this study are different from the findings revealed by Stephen Bloom (2000) in his book “Postville. A Clash of Cultures in the Heartland America.” Thus the researcher suggests that there are issues that need to be looked at again. To ensure anonymity I did not use real names of all of the participants.

Living Background in Postville

When I asked the respondents’ how long they had been living in Postville, it turned out that the number of years that they had been living in Postville varied greatly. For some the town’s new immigration situation is familiar since school times, for others the recent changes are not at all part of their school period.

Kate: I grew up in Postville. I went to school here in Postville we saw a lot of immigrants go to school with me, so I actually grew up with this huge flow of people.

Sonia: I have been in Postville since 1979 but before I lived outside of Postville in Elkader, but I lived in this area all my life. So this immigration situation at the beginning was somewhat unusual to me.

Larry: I came to Postville in May of 1998. I brought my family here (Postville) in 1997. I commuted for one year while I was relocating my business.

Sam: I have been working in Postville since 1990, but I have been living in Postville since 1996. Originally I am from South Africa, I was living in New York, then we moved to St. Paul, Minnesota and stayed there for a few years and then finally moved down to Postville.

I asked those respondents who had moved to Postville from other cities and countries, if they had any first impressions about the town. As it turned out, according to their replies, the newly arrived Jewish population was met by friendliness in Postville on the part of long-time local residents.

I: What was it like to arrive in Postville at the beginning?

Sam: The fact that Postville was Christian, so to speak, did not bother me at all; I have grown up in rather cosmopolitan communities before. Nothing about Postville bothered me, what struck me about Postville was actually the vast difference in the way of life in Postville and New York.

I: Did you feel welcomed in this town?

Sam: Yes, I did feel welcomed in this town. The people are very friendly over here. So I felt really welcomed.

Ben: I am originally from Poland, I lived in Israel and New York, so when I came here, it was a change in the setting you, know. People around were really friendly, tried to give help if needed, I was really surprised to see that.

I asked the same question of the long-time residents, wondering what it like was for them to see their new Jewish neighbors. Their answers were contrary to stereotypic media images that the long-time living locals might be totally or somewhat against the arrival of the new Jewish residents.

Sonya: I didn't feel that much one way or the other, I didn't know much about them. You heard other people talk somewhat precarious about Jews, you know they remember old tales of them not be good to deal with, kind of difficult. And maybe they are going to destroy your town. All the things people have seen before. But I don't know if I felt much one way or the other. But then as I got more involved with them, then I can create my own opinion. Because then you

can get to know the people. And that is a good way; you don't pre-judge them in any way.

Kate: You become really interested in it. For me it was just an interest, because I did not know anything about Jewish communities before. It is such a small town; you don't know anything that goes on until you actually see it. You read it in the books and everything, but you need to experience it, I think the experience is totally different. When the Jews came, for me it was not a shock, it was just curiosity pretty much.

Bella: It was strange at the beginning to see the Jewish people on your streets. But it did not really make you feel against it, as Bloom actually says. It was the opening of a new chapter, and why be against it? I admit it was unusual at the beginning, but it made sense you know. I tried to welcome those people and I know many of them now.

The replies from both Jewish residents in Postville and non Jewish residents in Postville indicate that there were no signs of hostility or inhospitality on either side. Some of the newly arrived Jewish residents were welcomed in Postville more than they had expected, for some of the local people, the Jewish presence aroused curiosity and interest in other cultures and increased the desire to become more open to traditions other than their own.

Degree of Acceptance of the Town's New Look

It is obvious that the arrival of the new cultures brings diversity and challenge to the community's long-time residents. The changes that long-time Iowans had to face are both physical and psychological. Physical in the sense that the Jews brought new things to the architectural look of the town (they built a synagogue, Jewish schools, kosher restaurant), psychological in the sense that the Jews are distinctive in their communication behavior. The new Jewish orthodox residents were distinguishing in their appearance as men would wear black coats and long beards, their wives would always wear wigs and long skirts and their little boys all have long side curls. But apart

from unusual appearance in the eyes of the long-time Postville residents, Jewish people were unusual in their behavior. As it was mentioned earlier in the Literature Review chapter, when describing Jewish orthodox men, it is not encouraged by the religion to shake hands with people of opposite sex or eat in non-kosher places, in other words, the local people themselves were a barrier in communication with the Jewish newcomers. Theme 3 will discuss in greater detail the communication situation in Postville. At this part of investigation I was interested in the way both groups looked at the new modifications that took place in Postville with the arrival of the Jewish population.

I asked my respondents to comment on the recent changes in Postville and their personal approach to the situation. Every interlocutor acknowledged the fact that there are people who disapprove of the current changes and new immigration situation in Postville. Nevertheless, those people who have talked about their perceptions regarding the recent modifications did not tell me that they were unhappy with it, or that they generally disapproved of it. According to my interviewees there are not too many people who disapprove of the new residents of Postville. Those people, as described by the participants, are either feeling uncomfortable just because there are newcomers in the town, or those people who are seniors and do not want, or probably can not tolerate any changes. The respondents I had interviews with, for most part referred to some particular aspects of a particular group of immigrants that they thought could possibly serve as an obstacle to fully approve of the situation. One of the other possible constraints for total acceptance of the recent situation could be the restricted communication behavior of the Jewish orthodox group; this aspect will be detailed in Theme 3 of this study.

Kate: Those who are older are against it, they have never met those dressing different and they have different holidays and different beliefs, so of course, they

are against it. A lot of old people do not accept any change very well, they are not very open-minded. For my age group and younger since you are growing up with them it is not so much of a change at all, it is a natural development

Sonya: Not everybody, a lot of people who are positive leaders in town approve of the new things in Postville. The positive ones are usually ones in the age group 50 and under. And then of course kids who go to school with them won't bring it around so the next generation won't bring a lot of it with them. So yeah, over 50, they have lived in the town longer, they know what it was like and they don't want the town to change.

Bella: There are some younger ones too that feel they are losing their identity, I think that is what they feel. They want this town to stay the same; they want to know who their neighbors are. They don't like strangers, they want to feel comfortable. I still don't feel uncomfortable in town, like it's unsafe or anything.

Sonya: This immigration that came in has not scared me but has scared other people. There can be some Hispanics on the corners in the evenings, or they whistle beside you if you ride a bike or walk. And that is kind of upsetting to some of the local ladies. I have kind of small things on my computer that we will print off and put them on posts or give them to people saying "please do not shout" or "please do not call me names", whatever so that we could educate them to let them know that they should not do that.

Kate: I very much approve of the Jewish presence. The Jews have considerably helped our town, they brought employment. All other the small towns in Iowa will be imposed upon with immigration sometime anyway.

Sam: It is very hard for somebody to accept this radical change in his or her hometown. I know that from experience. I go back to Johannesburg, South Africa very often, and the country that I grew up in does not exist any more.(...)We are talking about just the quality of life and now there are a lot of crimes in Johannesburg, people are afraid, there are fences around the houses: and that is not the way I grew up. And it is very hard for me to accept that. So I can imagine how difficult it is for the town's people in Postville who grew up in a very-very homogeneous environment, to suddenly be exposed to such diversity and to be expected to just accept it without any reluctance.

So I do not think there is anything wrong with that. I would say the vast majority of people of Postville has accepted it, has appraised it. And because there is a few people running around who find it difficult to adjust to the new way of life, which is by the way not only in Postville but throughout the United States, does not reflect on the vast majority of Postville.

Kate: The teachers and professors always tried to get us together and talk, so that we learn more about them. Going to school helps you to meet new people and

become more accepting. There are not too many people here that are totally against it.

Larry: I think it is a good time. Most people are open-minded and decent. The majority of the town is accepting and I think that the majority of town is enjoying it.

Bella: Some may have left for other reasons too, some may have died and etc., and of course, there are some that are thinking of moving out they say, “Well it destroyed the value of value of our home, no point to come here”. So that is an issue that people are very concerned about in town because they do not think they can attract any other person into Postville that is not ethnic of some kind.

Sonya: Some elderly people did not and will not accept the change, and a lot of them moved. A lot of people who lived their lives and had very good jobs in Postville had moved to other town that is eight miles away. It is not too far and they do not realize that there are Hispanics there too. They all have built their houses in a new section, so to some point they are probably secluded from other Mexicans live but they are not going to escape it. It’s going to be there, not if now within 5-10 years.

Undeniably, it took time to adjust and during that time Postville’s physical appearance was considerably changed with a synagogue, Jewish schools and a kosher restaurant. Jacob’s Table, a kosher restaurant. So now old-time Postville locals run into rabbis walking down the streets speaking Hebrew and heading to the kosher restaurant where anyone can get a kosher blueberry bagel, a loaf of Russian bread, or Mexican pastries.

The appearance of ethnic food festivals, like Taste of Postville, the annual ethnic food festival that represents ethnic foods and traditions of more than the twenty cultures now residing in this town, or other cultural celebrations have considerably enriched the life of the community adding knowledge and insights into other residing cultures. These events, as it was highlighted by the participants, serve as strong motivation to enjoy the new look and way of living in Postville.

Sonya: During the Taste of Postville, I had to learn to work with and mix with other cultures. I could say it was one of the better things that I have gotten to

do in my life, because you couldn't I couldn't speak Spanish, but yet we fixed food together. You know gesture, make motions and you know, you get your communication done.

Sam: Taste of Postville is also a wonderful area of interaction between the communities. It is an event to help the interaction and intercommunication. We have Jewish artists who come and perform at the "Taste of Postville", we also have "Jacobs Market" that is the kosher restaurant and the festival takes place right outside the Jacob's market, so that's really convenient. "Taste of Postville" is a wonderful thing for Postville.

Sonya: During their holidays they (the Jews) invite you over and sometimes it depends on what the ceremony is. Sometimes you do not even know what's going on. On Purim, that's when they dress up in costumes, that when you can see them celebrating and I would say that it is kind of fun. And that's kind of their portrait too, I think, maybe. So it is kind of various depending on what the holiday is.

One of my interests was to determine how the immigration situation in Postville has affected the cultural practices of both groups. I have asked my respondents to share their comments about the possibility to learn more about the newly arrived cultures and tradition, apart from Taste of Postville. Without doubt, a lot is being done by the local authorities to stimulate the two-way communication, acquaint different cultures with each other. Another example is the newly launched project to start a local multi-lingual radio-station that would broadcast in four languages: English, Russian, Spanish, and Hebrew and acquaint the cultures with each other via radio broadcast.

Sam: I think that people are interested in Jewish culture to the extent that they are interested in other cultures other than their own. You should also take into account that according to Jewish tradition we are not supposed to be encouraging converts. So because of that there is no real movement among the Jews to encourage active interest or participation in the Jewish religion. We are not trying to sell our culture; it is kind of unique, because everybody in America is trying to sell their culture. They want to sell the uniqueness, the significance of their own culture. Orthodox Jews do not do that.

Kate: For me it was just an interest, because I did not know anything about Jewish communities before. It is such a small town; you don't know anything that

goes on until you actually see it. You read it in the books and everything, but you need to experience it, I think the experience is totally different.

Sam: On the other hand, we have, on occasion, invited rabbies to come to Postville and to give a talk about the Jewish religion for the population of Postville, because more knowledge encourages tolerance.

Sam: On the other hand, nothing prevents us from inviting the people to our celebrations and our fests, for example, my son is going to be Bar Mitzvah next month, and we are inviting quite a large number of our non Jewish friends to the Bar Mitzvah. Happily so!

I: Do the long-time people also invite your family for their big events?

Sam: We receive invitations from the gentile population, yes they do. Of course the fact that we do not go to pray to the same houses is a certain barrier, you understand.

Kate: It is very interesting to me. Learning about different cultures is always a good thing to learn about. And I ask a lot of questions and they are very open-minded, they just go ahead and tell me what I ask about.

Another interesting fact is that some old-time residents borrow or even practice some elements from the Jewish culture.

Bella: I am now very used to shopping in the kosher grocery or eating in the Jacob's market. I really enjoy it. The Jewish presence has provoked my interest for the Old Testament or the Torah.

Kate: It was just curiosity pretty much, why they have holidays on different days, why and what they wear, eat and so forth. So I have learned a lot more now and I have experienced it.

Ben: Non-Jewish people have asked me a couple of times to explain the laws of our tradition and the reasons we do so and so. They are actually very observant about us, what is interesting, is that they do turn to us for explanation of our tradition.

There are even cases of Christian people of Postville converting to Judaism.

Larry: There is a family that is interested in it and there are also some people that are converts, yeah. By and large Jews do not go ask for conversion, they are not looking for convertism. Yeah this happens; I think you always have it in Jewish community that somebody that sort of feels they found their spiritual home.

Even though the Jewish community in Postville adheres to its tradition and is restricted in its behavior, all of my Jewish participants found it crucial to explain the differences between the Orthodox Jewish communities and other communities.

Larry: It's not a feeder school to work here, there is not intention for the Jewish school to encourage people to move here and stay here. It's not like the Amish community where you live in your parents' house and they take your house, you know, generation after generation. It is totally not like that.

Sam: You should also take into account that according to Jewish tradition we are not supposed to be encouraging converts. So because of that there is no real movement among the Jews to encourage active interest of participation in the Jewish religion.

Ben: They very seldom come to service in synagogue. We do not really make a point of inviting people who are not Jewish to pray with us. And when they do want to and that happens we do welcome them. Our doors are open.

While there are probably many other things that either help or hinder one from accepting the town's new cultural life and physical look, the identified aspects seem to have the greatest influence on the local Jewish and non Jewish citizens of Postville. Since this multicultural community in Postville is relatively young, there might appear other factors and other members of community that would either strongly approve or disapprove of the modifications.

Postville's Communication

Even the very outgoing types of people may experience certain difficulties communicating with people from different cultures. The reasons that may influence this situation vary. It could be that the interlocutor does not speak the language fluently enough to participate in the conversation; the interlocutor may be an unsociable type, some religious rules may strongly restrict his or her communication possibilities and finally the person may have no time to communicate. In this research theme different

communication patterns between the Jewish residents and non Jewish residents will be discussed.

Four aspects regarding the intercommunication of Postville's long-time and new Jewish locals emerged from the research data. The first concern is the language acquisition of some of the Jewish immigrants:

Larry: There is another group (of the arrived Jewish immigrants) that does not speak English. It is not that they do not want to be sociable, but they are probably intimidated, they probably feel uncomfortable speaking English.

Kate: At first they could not speak the language and were kind of segregated kids. The teachers and professors always tried to get us together and talk.

Sam: There is a lot more into communication than some people would have it. But what you have to realize that a lot of the Jewish people do not speak English. So that is a barrier. Also a lot of Jewish people come from big cities, like New York or Tel Aviv and the culture over there is very different than that what you find in a small town. So these are some of the impediments to easy communication.

Another reason that adds specialty to Postville's communication is the fact that by religious laws the Jewish orthodox people are in certain ways restricted from communication. That factor involves both verbal and nonverbal behavior. First is the fact that Jewish Orthodoxy does not allow shaking hands of people of the opposite sex. Also Jewish Orthodoxy has a particular restriction on subjects that the Jews are allowed to talk about. In spite of these restrictions, communication takes place, both groups communicate with each other finding ways to respect and follow the restrictions that one group has to adhere to.

Sonya: And they come here to live and learning to live here meant that you say "hi" to your neighbor and you wave to a stranger, you go in somewhere you do not worry about shaking hands and all these traditions. They are more comfortable if they wave, they do not shake hands. There are some Jewish men who would not talk to an unknown woman. I think, because they do not know who the woman is, or they are uncomfortable maybe or maybe they newer in

town, you know, so this time they won't talk to you if you are a woman, but in the most they nod and they say "hi" or "good day." I have met many of them and we talk a lot, you know.

I: Are the Jewish people showing interest for intercommunication?

Sonya: Oh, yes, they are sociable. Except for they just can not go to your house and have coffee or tea, but you can go over to their house and you, can eat it there. You know by following their religion, the strict laws that are laid out, they just can't do some things.

Bella: I communicate with them (The Jews) on a daily basis. They are very friendly. I respect their rules, we do not shake hands, you know, but we have very nice communication. They are very caring and very nice people. I have no problems talking to them.

As it revealed throughout the interviews neighbor relations in small towns is a special factor that stands for a solid communication base. The Jewish residents of Postville and their neighbors of different cultures and religions seem to have established a good communication environment.

Larry: I do not think you are going to find a Jewish person going to a bar, but still, I know, people that live across the street, they are from Guatemala, El Salvador, they were my neighbors. So their son used to play with my son, so when they bought a house I went over there to congratulate them, because they went from a renter to a home-owner! They now live across the street from us and before they lived next to us.

Sam: There are many opportunities for interaction between the Jewish community and the surrounding communities. Number one, I would say, is that we are neighbors. I am very friendly with both of my neighbors. They are wonderful people and I hope that the feeling is mutual. I hear it from a lot of people in Postville, "Oh, yeah, my neighbor is so and so." We get along really well with each other; their kids come over to my house and they play with my granddaughter. That happens quite often, I would say that it is a good opportunity for interaction.

Kate: We had some public meetings when the local church leaders met the Jewish rabbis and they had discussions open to public. People could ask questions, I know that lots of senior residents of Postville show up at that meetings and ask a lot of questions. Actually my Mom also once went there and she was very interested in it.

Ben: In my street my children and other children play with each other. We have an Israeli boy, we have an El Salvador boy and we have a long time Postvillian family so they all play together.

Sonya: It depends on the holiday, because sometimes during Sukkoth they would put out their homes covered with pine branches, they might invite you in these houses; of course the local Jewish store would be closed.

Bella: Sometimes they invite you over to their house depending on what the ceremony is. Sometimes you do not even know what's going on.

It should be noticed that in other situations the communication between the Jewish immigrants and native Postvillians is very limited due to lack of time to socialize.

Sonya: The second thing that people need to realize is that they work many-many hours during the day and then, next thing is religion. Because their dedication to religion is that preaching, learning, praying and all that is time off. If they work and they come home they go to churches-synagogues, there is not at all a lot of time left for socializing.

There is still another Jewish group, as well as any other ethnic group, that is more introverted by nature and thus any intercommunication with people of that group could be very minimal.

Larry: In the Jewish community there are a number of different types of Jews. They come from different places and different customs. Some of those groups are insular, that is they are not outgoing by nature. They tend to be more, you know introverted, but this group is the smallest percentage of the total group. So I think that those people who'd experience those people who would not be social is not the rule, it is more the exception.

I asked my respondents if there was anything they would like to change or improve about their intercultural communication in Postville. The conversations suggest that there are several things that the Postvillians would like to see changed.

Sonya: I think, and I always said that if there would be a little bit more "meet you half way" type of thing. The Jewish people do not always do that. That is not saying you can't work with them, it's just because it makes it a little bit more difficult. Because of their religion and stuff, you know I think sometimes there is more room for giving than they allow it to be. I'd like to see that changed, but probably this wish will never get fulfilled because that's their culture.

Larry: It is not that they do not want to be sociable, but they (the Jewish people) are probably intimidated, they probably feel uncomfortable speaking English. And people extrapolate that and say “that’s the way everybody is”. I would like to see that changed since that is only true for the minority of Jewish people.

Sam: I think that some long-time residents of Postville are under the erroneous impression that the Jews are not friendly. I would like to see that changed.

Sonya: I personally never had difficulties with them; we were doing more of an infrastructure and city-dealings and maybe more strict business, but I think that sometimes they could communicate a little better and sometimes everything is excellent.

It appears that the intercultural communication between long-time and Jewish residents in Postville happens on a daily basis and each member of the group is directly engaged in communicating with one another. Be it the interaction in the streets of Postville, in business buildings, inside Jacob’s Market or in the houses of their neighbors, both groups reach their communication goals and most of the time the intercultural communication process is mutually desired. Taking into account the suggestions for communication improvement provided by some of the participants of the project, it still remains obvious to the researcher that the interaction between the two groups is conducted in a friendly and mutually respecting environment. However, it should be noted that some representatives of the Jewish immigrants in Postville do not speak English and thus they limit the possibility of intercultural contact.

Community’s Future

Postville’s unique intercultural situation made me wonder what it might look like in another 25 years. At this point of data collection I was determined to learn if the respondents saw any future developments for the intercultural communication that had been happening since early 1990s. I was interested to find out if the participants could see

any cultural physical space in Postville for new immigrants and community's expansion, or maybe, they expected the community to decline, or even die out?

Before I asked that question of Sonya, she had already mentioned in her replies that: "Of course there are some that are thinking of moving out they say, 'Well it destroyed the value of our home, no point to come here.' So that is an issue that people are very concerned about in town, because they do not think they can attract any other person into Postville that is not ethnic of some kind." What Sonya said as the answer to my question proved my expectation of probable future growth of the Jewish community.

Sonya: it possibly could grow, I am sure that the families and people that they (the Jews) bring in will grow.

But only in case the situation with the environment is resolved since:

Sonya: Right now there is a big issue about lagoons; the problem is that now people are deciding if there is too much salt in the local water that eventually is going to destroy everything. One side is saying it's not that much salt and the other side say it is way more than it should be. Well if they decide it is too much salt in here, the plant probably won't be here and if the plant won't be they (the Jews) won't probably be here. In case we survive and things get settled, then it possibly could grow...

Other opinions were also rather optimistic.

Kate: I am sure there will be new immigrants in this town. There will be more cultures, more diversity and more fun. Besides the new generation of lowans will be by that time completely adjusted for the special environment in Postville and it would only fun, you know.

Larry: It is expanding slowly but it's only ten years and it takes a while. For example, they are going to be finishing the construction of another building and this will create more jobs both for the Jewish community and non-Jewish community. Because every time they add one job for a Jewish person, there are probably 3 jobs for non-Jews. I mean just by the skills, because you can not have another rabbi working, without, you know, all the support levels. So there is a multiply effect, so any time you add one Jewish family, maybe 10 other families get jobs. Which is very nice, you know.

Sam: I have no idea. I do not know what will happen tomorrow, so how can you be asking me about future? (Laugh)
 What I can tell you is that I think that Postville has a bright future. Postville is blessed as few other cities in Iowa with a lot of industry and a lot of economic vitality, with tremendous cultural diversity and I think because of all of that Postville has a very bright future.

Sonya: All the small towns in Iowa will be imposed upon with immigration sometime, and so Postville is in the lead. Postville is way above; we are maybe five years above a lot of communities. So in some sense a lot of people won't even admit that.

Community growth and an increase in cultural diversity is an obvious assumption made by the respondents. I believe that these suggestions are partially rooted in a generally positive intercultural communication situation between the Jewish and long-time residents of Postville. The agreement, compromise and common language of the two cultures give hope to the current citizens of Postville for future diversity growth and intercultural contact.

Interviewees' Response to Previous Research

Stephen Bloom spent a number of years investigating Postville. The result of his research was published in the year 2000, in a book "Postville. A clash of cultures in Heartland America." In one of the sections of the Literature Review chapter I have provided a brief summary of Bloom's research, in this part of the study I refer to the differences between Bloom's findings and the results that emerged from the current research project. It should be mentioned that Bloom's book is so commonly known, that it is talked about by the citizens of Postville. One of my respondents used reference to Bloom's book in her introduction to Postville's city guide that she was putting together.

Mr. Bloom compares the interaction between the Jewish inhabitants of Postville and its long-time residents with "masses of oppositely charged air." He further assumes

that “The Jews and many of the Postville locals were like two masses of oppositely charged air colliding in this remote land where twisters come and go without warning” (Bloom, 2000, p. xii). Bloom also claims that “The locals quickly discovered that the Jews would not even look at them. They refused to acknowledge even the presence of anyone not Jewish” (Bloom, 2000, p. 51).

Having interviewed three long-time residents and three Jewish residents of Postville I have collected data that indicates the opposite situation between these two group’s intercommunication. What I learned from the replies of the respondents is that the communication between them and long-time residents happens daily, with mutual friendliness. The research data revealed some concerns regarding the wishes of some of the members of both communities to improve some aspects about their intercommunication. Nevertheless, these desired modifications do not serve as a general obstacle to communicate with each other on a friendly basis.

Sam: I am very friendly with both of my neighbors. They are wonderful people and I hope that the feeling is mutual.

Sam: We are inviting quite a large number of our non Jewish friends to the Bar Mitzvah. Happily so!

Sam: And I did feel welcomed in this town. The people are very friendly over here. So I felt really welcomed

Bella: I communicate with them (The Jews) on a daily basis. They are very friendly. I respect their rules, we do not shake hands, you know, but we have very nice communication. They are very caring and very nice people. I have no problems talking to them.

Sonya: In the most cases they nod and they say “hi” or “good day.” I have met many of them and we talk a lot, you know.

Sonya: Yes they are sociable. Except for they just can not go to your house and have coffee or tea, they can not eat either, but you can go over to their house and you can eat there.

Sonya: I personally never had difficulties with them; we were doing more an infrastructure and city-dealings and maybe more strict business, but I think that sometimes they could communicate a little better and sometimes everything is excellent.

Another aspect that Mr. Bloom raises in his narration is that “The problem for the Postville locals was that, by all accounts, Sholom and the Hasidim had succeeded handily. This vast expanse of fecund land, ignored, or ridiculed by power elites of either coast, had been Sholom’s frontier, and he and his minions had taken it by storm” (Bloom, 2000 p. 82). The author of the book about Postville calls the Jewish people in this town “the power elite.” “How could the locals possibly get along with any newcomers who had become Postville’s new power elite?” (Bloom, 2000, p. 57). I had numerous conversations with a number of Postville citizens prior to my research project. And now, having conducted the interviews with both the new and long-time residents of Postville, I learned that the Jews are not perceived as an elite group in Postville.

Sonya: They are not running the town and the Jewish people really are a small part of the town.

Kate: I think that it is wrong to believe that the Jews in Postville are the owners of the town. They brought very positive changes for Postville and they are not imposing anything on us.

Another opposite opinion to Bloom’s findings derived from the research data is that there is no war between the Christian and Jewish religions. Throughout the interviews I did not come across any aspect that could imply a hostile relationship between the both groups. As mentioned earlier, there are aspects about their communication that both groups would like to see changed. I found nothing in my data to support one of Bloom’s findings that “You could not become casual friends with them; it

was all or nothing. They required total submission to their schema of right and wrong, Jew vs. Christian – or you were the enemy” (Bloom, 2000, p. 291).

I also learned that there are more than just two types of Jews in Postville as proposed by the book “Postville a clash of cultures in the heartland America.” Mr. Bloom did not notice that among Hasidic or reformed Jews there is an unaffiliated Jewish group, there is also a group of conservative Jews, and there are Sephardic Jews. Mr. Bloom called all the Hasidic Jews in Postville Lubavitches, but not all Hasidic Jews in Postville are Lubavitches. Besides the Lubavitcher group there are Jews who belong to the Beltzer, the Gerer and the Vizhnitz branches of Hasidism.

The collected data in this study suggested that there is no actual clash in the intercultural communication between the two traditions.

Summary

In this chapter I discussed the results this communication study. Five themes emerged during the course of research and this chapter attempted to interpret and make sense of them in this chapter. The chapter was divided into the five themes that emerged from the research:

1. Living Background in Postville
2. Degree of Acceptance of the Town’s New Look
3. Postville’s Communication
4. Community’s Future
5. Interviewees’ Response to Previous Research

In Chapter V of this study I will discuss in depth the conclusions of the conducted research and the role that the intercultural communication plays in today’s life. In

addition I will make recommendations for future research in this area of study. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the immigration experience in Postville has brought uniqueness to the communication process between the Jewish and long-time residents of Postville. This research project also revealed certain modifications in the cultural practices of some of long-time Postvillians due to the immigrants' arrival. In order to support these statements, this chapter will begin with the overall conclusion regarding the current situation in Postville, as well as it will provide specific conclusions emerged from the research data. Limitations of the study will then be provided. Finally, I will indicate directions for further research.

General Conclusions

The appearance of the Jewish population in Postville noticeably changed the town's cultural and economic look. Before 1987 it had been a community in decline. Local manufacturing had largely evaporated and the younger people were leaving Postville for bigger cities. The Jews were the first to come and reinvigorate a dying community. They created jobs, which fostered a massive flow of immigrants from all over the world to fill in the job vacancies. People also started buying houses, so the real estate market improved. Because of the population growth a vital need for new restaurants and other public places emerged, and thus created new jobs and helped institute a recovery of the town's economy.

Immigrants from different places of the world arrived knowing that jobs awaited them. So now Postville represents more than 20 ethnicities. It is really unusual to see so many ethnic groups finding their way to such a small town. Those different people "did

not come alone,” they brought their cultures and traditions with them and Postville found space for everything. It’s no longer strange to go out in the street and hear Russian speech, for example, as well as English, Hebrew, and Spanish. These are the predominant languages spoken in Postville. After the Hispanics, the Jewish people are the second largest group of newcomers in Postville, and so Jewish culture and tradition is rather conspicuous in Postville. A local restaurant and grocery serve kosher food. Some of the businesses do not work on Fridays. And during Jewish holidays, there are lots of menorahs (Jewish candlesticks) visible in front of the houses. There is a sign in front of the kosher AgriProcessors, meatpacking plant saying “Reserved parking for rabbis only.”

A massive flow of diverse ethnic groups seemed to have created a really unusual situation for the local people at first , however with time , many of the native Postvillians grew to enjoy the city’s new look and tempo. It should be noted that there are many things about the new situation that they residents would like to see and improved, like for example the long time Postvillians would like to see the Jewish residents more friendly and open for communication, The Jewish residents find it important that their neighbors create their opinion about the Jewish residents based on their personal communication experience with them, opposed to presuming that if a single Jewish resident appeared unfriendly for example, that is what the whole Jewish group is like. Many of the long-time locals seem to enjoy Jewish cuisine and the celebration of Jewish holidays. There are even cases when native Iowans converted to Judaism. Local members of City Council are doing their best to improve and foster the sense of community and “togetherness” by launching all sorts of projects, from annual food festival to a multilingual radio (Radio Postville).

All in all, the process of the multicultural communication is gaining more and more ground in Postville. Children of all religions play together and many long-time Postvillians cope with the town's changes. In fact it's not only a microcosm of America, it's a miniature of the United Nations which represents more than 20 ethnic groups in a relatively small territory. Now, Postville, Iowa can proudly say to the rest of the world "Welcome to the United Nations of Iowa."

Research Questions Answered

In this project sought to answer two questions. First, "How has the immigration experience affected your communication with others?" And second, "How has the immigration experience affected your cultural practices?" Now that the data have been collected and analyzed, these two questions can be answered.

Because the arrival of new cultures and traditions in Postville was not left unnoticed by the local city council and other local organizations, the new immigrant residents and long-time residents of this town had opportunities to meet each other and introduce the ethnic specialties to one another. Borrie (1959) notes that there are two ways to help both the local community and its new residents extend their relationship with one another:

One is that community assistance for the immigrant family, to be effective, must arise spontaneously from the immediate community itself, for example through local church organizations, clubs, societies, sporting associations etc. The second is that voluntary effort to assist the immigrant requires education of the non-immigrant community itself to a sympathetic understanding of the social and cultural significance to the immigrants of the habits and customs, etc., which they and their families have brought with them. (p. 124)

The local events that occur in Postville reach their goal to acquaint the residents of Postville with one another. Indeed, the participants of this project confirmed the fact that these local events serve as a starter for communication.

Bella: I did not meet only Jewish people at Taste of Postville; I met Guatemalans, people from Kazakhstan, Russians and who not. They were very talkative and friendly so now that I know them, I talk a lot to many of them when I see them. My son is friends with some of the Ukrainian and Hispanic guys, they go to see movies together sometimes or car races, stuff like that, you know.

Ben: Because we are inviting anyone in Postville to come to special talks held by the rabbies, I get the chance to meet a lot people, we keep in touch, see each other on different occasions and of course initially those meetings that these people come to serve as a strong background for our communication or even business negotiations.

Sonya: During the Taste of Postville, I had to learn to work with and mix with other cultures. I could say it was one of the better things that I have gotten to do in my life, because you couldn't I couldn't speak Spanish, but yet we fixed food together. You know gesture, make motions and you know, you get your communication done.

All participants of this study talked about their new communication situation in Postville. Long-time residents admitted that at the beginning the Jewish people seemed very unusual in their appearance and restricted communication behaviors. With time each of the three participants found a way to establish and communicate on a friendly and or business basis with the Jewish residents of Postville. The participants talked about some of their concerns regarding their intercommunication with the Jewish people, things that they would like to see changed. Nevertheless, none of the long-time respondents indicated the lack of motivation or need to communicate with the Jewish residents, just the opposite the research data indicates a friendly and desirable approach of the long-time residents to their communication with the Jewish group. The new Jewish residents in Postville acknowledged the fact that it takes time for the long-time citizens to get used to

the new residents and new look of the town's communication situation. The research data collected from the Jewish respondents revealed some of the suggestions for future interaction improvement between the two groups. It also indicated positive communication between the Jewish and non-Jewish residents.

The appearance of new cultural traditions in Postville brought a certain influence on the life styles of long-time Postvillians. The analysis of the research data collected revealed that all of the long-time Postvillians participated in this study had showed interest in the new cultures generally and the Jewish tradition in particular. The research data indicated that some of the native Iowans have developed strong interests and even practice of the Jewish cuisine, the Torah and Judaic studies, celebrations of the Jewish holidays and important dates. The collected data suggests that overall the Jewish immigration presence in Postville is viewed as positive and contributive to the town's life.

Connection with Communication Theories

Each respondent mentioned the presence of a certain communication transformation on his or her part. It could be either the appearance of new nonverbal aspects in the communication between the long-time Postvillians and the Jewish residents of Postville, for example waving instead of hand shaking. Or it could be the conscious decision to eat or drink in the Jewish household instead of Jews accepting an invitation to eat in a non kosher household. This indication brings back us to Young Kim's axioms, specifically the sixth axiom: A6--intercultural transformation. Kim's seventh axiom deals with host communication activities (A7--host communication activities), was referred to by the respondents. The long time residents of Postville indicated that apart

from street greetings they have the chance to communicate with their new Jewish neighbors during special public meetings, hosted by local churches.

Kate: We had some public meetings when the local church leaders met the Jewish rabbis and they had discussions open to public. People could ask questions, I know that lots of senior residents of Postville show up at that meetings and ask a lot of questions. Actually my Mom also once went there and she was very interested in it.

Taste of Postville is a very bright event that both resident groups seem to enjoy with much pleasure. During this ethnic food festival Postville residents have an opportunity not only to meet each other but also participate in different ethnic communication activities. This festival, along with other local events in Postville is another example of Kim's eighth axiom that relates to ethnic communication activities (A--8 ethnic communication activities). With the Jewish presence in Postville, the town's environment has obviously experienced certain modifications. It is not only the appearance of Jewish schools and a synagogue, but also the fact that some local businesses are working Sundays instead of Saturdays or are closed during the Jewish holidays. This factor relates to Kim's axiom about environmental setting (A9--environmental conditions). Young Kim identifies new residents' predisposition to the new environment as another axiom (A--10 stranger's predispositions). When the Jewish residents came to Postville some of residents had never met or talked to a Jewish person, as Kate has noted in her answer:

Kate: For me it was just an interest, because I did not know anything about Jewish communities before. It is such a small town; you don't know anything that goes on until you actually see it. You read it in the books and everything, but you need to experience it, I think the experience is totally different.

For the Jewish residents coming to Postville's environment and people were rather familiar.

Sam: The fact that Postville was Christian, so to speak, did not bother me at all; I have grown up in rather cosmopolitan communities before. Nothing about Postville bothered me, what struck me about Postville was actually the vast difference in the way of life in Postville and New York.

The only thing that most of the Jewish residents were surprised with was a degree of friendliness that they were met with. Of course, not everyone in town expressed the same attitude towards the Jewish residents, and the both sides have mentioned that fact during the interviews, but the overall welcoming environment was a positive background factor for the new Jewish residents.

One of the most important aspects about the theory of coordinated management of meaning is that it views culture as a key element that determines the forms and function of communication. Some of the long time residents of Postville admitted that it did not happen instantly, but with some time, the more they learned about the Jewish tradition, the easier it became to communicate with Jewish residents. Since the Jewish Orthodoxy does not allow shaking hands, both groups wave to each other instead. Because it is impossible in Judaism to eat in non kosher food, the Jewish residents invite their non Jewish neighbors to eat at the Jewish household.

Postville became famous partially due to Bloom's (2000) book. Mr. Bloom's work is viewed by the local citizens primarily as a piece of fictional entertainment; however I approached this project with an emphasis on qualitative based research. Thus my work was designed to produce scientific findings whereas Mr. Bloom's work was designed primarily as he said to compare his own Judaism to that of a small town Iowa citizenry.

Applications

This research deals with a very recent phenomenon. Postville's diverse immigration situation is slightly over 10 years old, and thus it is very interesting to explore the intercultural communication during the time of its evolution.

The subject of Postville has been previously discussed in prior publications; however this qualitative research provides a scientific perspective of the intercultural communication between the long-time residents and the recent Jewish immigrants of Postville.

The knowledge base created by this research study is applicable to a variety of ventures: be it public relations; intercultural studies, urban planning or communication and socialization.

Limitations

Like all research, this study has limitations. The first limitation is sample size. Some might argue that the pool of respondents is simply too small. While six respondents might appear an inadequate number, all six participants solicited varied greatly in their backgrounds, occupations, and age group. Thus, I believe that this particular group of respondents was heterogeneous and the members share many of the different experiences and points of view. Also they echoed each other in terms of comments.

I would have preferred to have spent more time at the research site. With only four days spent in interviewing individuals, I may not have captured some of the general observations regarding outside communication behavior of the Postville's Jewish and long-time residents. Due to constraints and a limited research time, I could not afford to spend more time talking and observing the two groups in Postville. However, I had

observed them informally several times prior to the beginning to this research. I also feel that a survey, apart from field observations could have helped add to my data. A survey could have gathered more information in a more efficient manner. This efficiency could have probably allowed spending more quality time and gaining more knowledge of Postville when interviewing my respondents. Of course, I could have interviewed a larger sample as well.

Studying only two groups (Jewish residents and long-time Postvillians) is a limitation. In order to conduct a larger, more profound and representative study of the entire town, it would be interesting to interview individuals representing other cultures in Postville and see how their responses compare to others. However, because of my own limitations and a lack of in-depth knowledge of each culture in Postville, this was simply not possible.

Suggestions for Future Research

Jewish immigration and communication specifics are a very interesting combination. There is very little written on Jewish immigration and communication. There are few qualitative or quantitative investigations focusing on this specific combination. I would suggest that future communication scholars pay proper value to the immigration and communication field.

Regarding the communication situation in Postville, I would like to propose the following list for future communication research in this town.

1. Replicate this study but include other immigrant communities living in Postville. It is important to find out what communication situation looks like among other than Jewish cultures and religions in Postville.

2. Researchers may pay particular focus on the communication between the newly arrived cultures themselves. Do people from different cultures and traditions that are now residents of Postville find common language with each other? Is there motivation to communicate?

3. Analyze the perspectives of the long-time residents of Postville about their communication with each immigrant group. Is it different from the experience that each immigrant's group has communicating with each other?

4. It could be interesting to look at Postville residents representing the same occupations and age groups. Are their views similar? Do men and women differ?

5. Interview "ex-citizens" of Postville. The reasons that led them to leave Postville could provide a better understanding of the situation.

6. The researcher might also find another small town that has similar immigration situation; it could be interesting to conduct a comparative study of the two towns.

7. Look at what influences the intercultural communication in the small town and critically evaluate what could have been done differently to foster more intercultural communication and understanding between the cultures.

Summary

This chapter started with an overall conclusion of the current look of Postville and its inhabitants. Next, the research questions were answered. Jewish immigrants' presence has affected the process itself and the way that the long-time Iowans are now communicating. Immigrants' cultural presence has brought new interest and certain modifications to practices of long-time residents in Postville. Connections with

communication theories as well research applications were outlined. Then, the limitations of the study were presented. Next I offered direction for future research.

My earlier informal visits to Postville and conversations with the residents led me into this research effort. As a result, this research project revealed that the multi-cultural communication in Postville is mutually desired and practiced by the Jewish residents and the long-time residents of this town. The appearance of the Jewish tradition in Postville has broadened the minds of many of the long-time Postvillians and is even practiced by some of them. Many of the Postvillians are having eventful cultural practices and lively intercultural communication in their town.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Agreement

Dear Participant,

This research project is designed to explore how communication between different cultures has affected the life of an immigrant in Postville, Iowa. Through the exploration of intercultural communication between the Jewish immigrants and local Iowans, the researcher plans to pose questions about how the immigration experience has affected your communication with others as well as your cultural practices and perspectives.

There is no compensation for your involvement, or the involvement of your relatives, or friends. The researcher anticipates minimal discomfort to you as an informant, based on the personal nature of some questions. You may feel confident and assured that whatever you disclose will be kept in the strictest confidence and will not be revealed if you highly disapprove.

The data collected for this project consists of interviews with current Jewish residents of Postville and local Postvillians. The interviews will not take longer than 30-40 minutes; you will also be reminded that your participation is purely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

If you agree to participate, I will tape record the interviews. The tapes will be stored and secured in the researcher's home. The tapes will then be transcribed for research purposes. These transcripts will then be used for my thesis. There is also possibility that this data could be utilized for other research purposes such as convention papers, journal articles, etc.

All information that you reveal will remain strictly confidential. Discretion is assured. With the exception of my thesis committee (Dr. Melissa Beall, Dr. Victoria DeFrancisco, Dr. Gayle Pohl), I will be the only individual to listen to any of the interviews. Names will be altered to assure anonymity. Pseudo-names will be used in place of your actual or given names.

Throughout the interview I may ask you to provide names of other possible participants that you might think would be interested to partake in this project. If you agree to do so I will provide your name as the source of reference when contacting those persons.

The interview will be scheduled in advance and at your convenience. It may be either home environment, or work environment, or social environment. Your objection to the researcher's presence in any of these locations will be respected. Your participation is totally voluntary and you may quit at any time you feel like it.

If you have any further questions please contact Anna Levina, (319-222-6042), Dr. Melissa Beall, Department of Communication Studies (319-273-2992), or the Human Subject's Coordinator, (319-273-2748). The following paragraph confirms that you understand both the nature of the project and your involvement with it.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above. I hereby agree to participation in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this statement. I am 18 years of age or older. I give permission for Anna Levina to use a tape recording device and other transcripts of my interview for her research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.

(Signature of participant) Date

(Printed name of participant) Date

(Signature of investigator) Date

(Signature of instructor/advisor) Date

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Specific Interview Questions

1. How long have you been living in Postville?
2. What changes have the town gone through for the last ten years, if any?
3. What changes have you personally experienced for the last ten years, if any?
4. How often and where do you communicate with the Jewish and or long-time residents of Postville?
5. Is there anything you'd like to change about your communication with the long time residents in Postville?
6. Is there anything you'd like to change about your communication with the Jewish local people in Postville?
7. What future do you see for Postville?

General Interview Questions

1. How has the immigration experience affected your communication with others?
2. How has the immigration experience affected your cultural practices?

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

All interviewees shared their own and unique experience of living and communicating in Postville. However, I think that my interview with Sam seemed to be the most representative and interesting.

I: How long have you been in Postville?

Sam: I have been working in Postville since 1990, but I have been living in Postville since 1996. Originally I am from South Africa, I was living in New York, then we moved to St. Paul, Minnesota and stayed there for a few years and then finally moved down to Postville.

I: What was it like to arrive in Postville at the beginning?

Sam: The fact that Postville was Christian, so to speak, did not bother me at all; I have grown up in rather cosmopolitan communities before. Nothing about Postville that bothered me, what struck me about Postville was actually the vast difference in the way of life in Postville and New York. And I did feel welcomed in this town. The people are very friendly over here. So I felt really welcomed

I: Are Jewish people open for communication with others?

Sam: There is a lot more into communication than some people would have it. But what you have to realize that a lot of the Jewish people do not speak English. So that is a barrier. Also a lot of Jewish people come from big cities, like New York or Tel Aviv and the culture over there is very different than that what you find in a small town. So these are some of the impediments to easy communication. But by large I think that the Jewish people feel welcomed over here.

I: Do the Jewish people give the local people the same feedback?

Sam: Yes, I think so. You see, in Bloom's book he was trying to justify a preconceived notion of his. And say that the Jewish people do not want to communicate with their neighbor is not even the worst thing that he says in his book. Either in his book or in his subsequent article that says that he was actually paraded by one of the Jewish inhabitants of Postville greeting a non Jew, which is obviously total nonsense. Another sign of his ignorance is that he calls all Jews here either Lubavitches or reformed. Had he looked a little deeper he would have realized right away that the Jewish community here is rather heterogeneous.

I: Where could Jewish and old time Postvillians communicate together, apart from outside greeting and short conversations?

Sam: This actually poses a little problem; it is actually by design that there is a certain buffer that Orthodox Jews create around themselves and it actually serves us well. You have to realize that the incidence of crime of juvenile delinquency and so on is a lot lower in the orthodox Jewish community than it is in the surrounding communities. To a vast part that could be an attributive to the fact that we do not have television in our houses, we are really careful who our children play with and so on. We make no excuses for creating certain barriers around ourselves and thereby protecting ourselves from the popular culture.

On the other hand, there are many opportunities for interaction between the Jewish community and the surrounding communities. Number one, I would say, is that we are neighbors. I am very friendly with both of my neighbors. They are wonderful people and I hope that the feeling is mutual. I hear it from a lot of people in Postville, "Oh, yeah, my neighbor is so and so". We get along really well with each other; their kids come over to my house and they play with my granddaughter. That happens quite often, I would say that it is a good opportunity for interaction.

And on the other hand, we do not pray in the same place, we don't send our kids in the same school and those two are one actually the primary places of interaction that we do not have.

I: What about, for example "Taste of Postville" do events like that provide background for the intercommunication?

Sam: Yeah. Actually that is something that I neglected to mention "Taste of Postville." "Taste of Postville" is also a wonderful area of interaction between the communities. It is an event to help the interaction and intercommunication. We have Jewish artists who come and perform at the "Taste of Postville," we also have "Jacobs Market" that is the kosher restaurant and the festival takes place right outside the Jacob's market, so that's really convenient. "Taste of Postville" is a wonderful thing for Postville.

I: How can you account for the fact that some long-living Postvillians are not totally accepting the town's new look?

Sam: It is very hard for somebody to accept this radical change in his or her hometown. I know that from experience. I go back to Johannesburg, South Africa very often, and the country that I grew up in does not exist any more. And of course, from one perspective it is very good, because there was a lot of discrimination and thank God that is gone now, but we are not only talking about that. We are talking about just the quality of life and a lot of crimes in Johannesburg, people are afraid, there are fences around the houses: and that is not the way I grew up. And it is very hard for me to accept that.

So I can imagine how difficult it is for the town's people in Postville who grew up in a very-very homogeneous environment, to suddenly be exposed to such diversity and to be expected to just accept it without any reluctance. So I do not think there is anything wrong with that. I would say the vast majority of people of

Postville has accepted it, has appraised it. And because there is a few people running around who find it difficult to adjust to the new way of life, which is by the way no only in Postville but throughout the United States does not reflect on the vast majority of Postville.

I: How else, do you think, apart from “Taste of Postville” could the long-time Postvillians find a background to communicate with the Jewish people?

Sam: In the Jewish religion, we do not really believe in ecumenical services where we invite people of other spaces to participate in our religious services. When we are engaged in Jewish ritual, we see little value to other people joining us in that ritual because it is a Jewish ritual and most people are not Jewish.

I: Do the long-time residents show any interest for the Jewish culture?

Sam: I think that people are interested in Jewish culture to the extent that they are interested in other cultures other than their own. You should also take into account that according to Jewish tradition we are not supposed to be encouraging converts. So because of that there is no real movement among the Jews to encourage active interest of participation in the Jewish religion. We are not trying to sell our culture; it is kind of unique, because everybody in America is trying to sell their culture. They want to sell the uniqueness, the significance of their own culture. Orthodox Jews do not do that.

On the other hand, nothing prevents us from inviting the people to our celebrations and our fests, for example, my son is going to be Bar Mitzvah next month, and we are inviting quite a large number of our non Jewish friends to the Bar Mitzvah. Happily so! It is not a religious ritual but it is a celebration of my son’s attaining a level of adulthood and in order to celebrate it, we want to celebrate it with family and friends and this happens to that many of my friends are not Jewish. I happily invite them and they happily come. And we have good time together.

I: Are the local people also inviting for their big events?

Sam: We receive invitations from the gentile population, yes they do. Of course the fact that we do not go to pray to the same houses is a certain barrier, you understand.

I: Is there anything you’d like to see changed about the intercultural communication between the communities?

Sam: I think that some long-time residents of Postville are under the erroneous impression that the Jews are not friendly. Because some of the Jews do not speak English here or in other bigger cities does not at all mean that we are not friendly. I would like to see that changed.

I: Sam, and what future do you see for Postville?

Sam: I have no idea. I do not know what will happen tomorrow, so how can you be asking me about future? (Laugh) What I can tell you is that I think that Postville has a bright future. Postville is blessed as few other cities in Iowa with a lot of industry and a lot of economic vitality, with tremendous cultural diversity and I think because of all of that Postville has a very bright future.

I: Thank you very much!

Sam: It is my pleasure.

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANTS' BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Six respondents participated in this research project.

Long-Time Postvillians:

Kate, (early 20s)

Sonya, (mid 40s)

Bella, (mid 60s)

Jewish Residents of Postville:

Ben, (late 20s)

Larry, (early 40s)

Sam, (mid 50s)