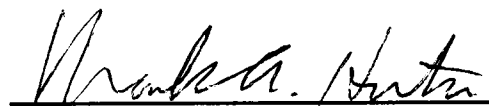


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Sandra Leigh Daigle entitled "A Phenomenological Investigation of Relocation by Corporate Executives." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.



Mark A. Hector, Ph.D.,
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of the Graduate School

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE
RELOCATION EXPERIENCE BY CORPORATE EXECUTIVES**

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Saundra Leigh Daigle

May 1993

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Donald H. Daigle and Gerry B. Daigle, and my brothers, Paul Daigle and Chuck Daigle, with whom I've discovered that distance is not a barrier to being close, and to Bill Powell, my husband, who lived this doctoral program with me and made it all the more fun because he did.

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ABSTRACT

Relocation as a personnel-management strategy requires that employees and their families uproot from one environment and move to another, often unfamiliar, environment. Through phenomenological interviews, a total of eleven volunteers from the oil and gas, paper, aluminum, and electronics industries described their experiences of relocation. Transcribed interview protocols were analyzed by a phenomenological research team. An individual synopsis of each transcript was produced. Common themes across all interviews were identified and categorized into groups. From the individual synopses and common groupings a general structure of the experience of relocation was derived. This structure rendered a description of the experience of relocation.

Three themes emerged from the interview transcripts: Conflict, which depicts the struggles inherent in accepting relocation proposals; Adjustment, which illustrates the processes of settling into a new environment; and Sacrifices and Benefits, which characterizes the net effects of relocation on executives and their families. Each theme was present in every transcript. The themes emerged within the context of time and relationships with others in all interviews. Results are discussed with respect to other findings on corporate relocation and are related to literature on adaptation within the context of the family.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The corporate practice of relocation poses a myriad of challenges for hundreds of thousands of executives and their families every year. The process of relocation is becoming more complex with increasing numbers of single-headed households, and dual-earning and dual-career couples who present relocation needs and dilemmas different from that of the traditional male executive. Evidence exists indicating that relocation is a stressful and life changing event which can be handled successfully with awareness of and attention to the stressors and losses involved in moving, as well as to the opportunities and excitement (Richards, Donohue & Gullotta, 1985). It is also known that relocation can become a tremendous source of personal, family, and marital conflict and can engender feelings of alienation, insecurity, resentment and grief.

Literature Review

Relocation Trends

Transferring employees is an important personnel management technique for filling vacant positions, grooming junior employees for senior level positions, for promoting or demoting employees, or for changing an employee's work environment (Pinder, 1989; Sell, 1983). In recent times corporations have been forced to respond to fluctuating economic influences and changing work force demographics by adjusting relocation policies to minimize increasing costs and to keep in step with the

needs of their employees so that employees will continue to accept relocation (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Gault, 1984; Rothwell, 1985).

Vandervelde (1979) cited a survey conducted by the Employee Transfer Corporation which produced a composite description of the typical relocation employee. The overwhelming majority were married males with a total family income of \$41 thousand or more per year. Transferees were usually family people, and the majority held college degrees. Most had been employed for five years or more with their current employer and moved an average of once every five years. The largest proportion of transferees held jobs in management and production (Debats, 1982). Banking, transportation, retail sales, petroleum, natural gas, chemicals, and engineering are industries known to routinely relocate employees (Pinder, 1989, p. 48).

Impact on Spouses and Family

In Holmes and Rahe's (1967) Social Readjustment Rating Scale, which ranks life events according to perceived intensity, adults rated a change of residence as a significantly stressful occurrence. When faced with a move, transferees and their families are largely concerned with getting along in their new environment and regaining a sense of normalcy.

Women and children have been the primary focus of research on the effects of relocation on the family. Temporary adjustment difficulties experienced during the moving process, the observed correlation between relocation and depression in women, the negative impact of relocation stressors on children, and the emotional

impact of relocating on women are common trends in this research (Richards, Donohue, & Gullotta, 1985).

Relocation is a situational crisis which requires novel coping strategies of family members. Vandervelde (1979) found that family members responding to a move often (a) make outrageous emotional demands on each other, (b) are consumed with needs and emotions, (c) unrealistically turn to the family for identity, and (d) become bitter and resentful. She posits that denial of or defense against these feelings can result in anomie. Similarly, Pinder (1989) cited loss of social life, feelings of not belonging, lack of identification, and difficulty in developing new friendships as important social effects of relocation; yet, the opportunity to make new friends was also perceived as a benefit of relocating.

Family members frequently feel pressures from one another to appear happy and composed during the upheaval of relocation. In the corporate world, management unofficially collects information on characteristics such as marital status, dual income status, age of children, and past moving history to help classify employees as movers or non-movers. The purpose of this strategy is to avoid expensive, erroneous personnel decisions (Goldberg, 1980). These labels are well known by corporate employees, and once deemed a "mover," the individual and the family are expected to fill successfully those shoes. Goldberg (1980) notes that because the full spectrum of the transfer experience is unknown to others, even friends, relatives and acquaintances of relocated individuals will adopt a rose-colored "buck-up" attitude toward the transferees (p. 215). Results of negotiating the initial

obstacles of transfer are frequently mislabeled as successes or failures by transferees, their families, and others outside of the relocation experience. This categorization obscures the complexity of the transition process and leads to unrealistic expectations for performance.

According to a survey conducted by Vandervelde (1979), adaptability was the personal characteristic valued by the largest number of corporate wives. These women indicated that coping with a transfer can result in increases in self-efficacy and family intimacy, as well as rejuvenation from the change of environment. They also reported that moving frequently prevented them from feeling deeply rooted to any one place, from having more than a superficial impact on a community or group of friends, and from maintaining close ties to extended family. While leaving family behind is a commonly reported negative consequence of relocation, Grieco (1982) challenges the idea that the corporate employment context, and specifically relocation, narrow and/or weaken kin connections.

Occasionally, a transfer will precipitate a premature altering of the traditional nuclear family when adolescent children do not relocate with their parents or the employee relocates alone, either permanently or temporarily until the school year ends or a child graduates. In Pinder's (1989) surveys, adjustment problems of teenagers were the most frequently reported personal costs of transfers. Weissman and Paykal (1972), in their study of moving and depression in women, reported direct connections between depressed mothers and deviant behavior in children.

Quisenberry (1981) explains that ". . . the exact effects of geographic relocation upon the emotional, social or cognitive development of young children, as well as the most vulnerable age level for coping with a move, are not clear" (p. 42). Moving requires, at the very least, that children of all ages acclimate to new environments and daily routines, and leave friends and familiar surroundings. The degree to which a child's development will be disrupted by a move depends upon a number of factors including, the frequency of relocation, the reasons for mobility, family attitudes toward the transfer, socioeconomic status, and the child's before and after transfer achievement performance (Carruthers & Pinder, 1983; Quisenberry, 1981).

Impact on Transferee

Research from the transferee's perspective has centered around mobility as a means of career advancement, the implications of refusing a transfer assignment, and the inherent obstacles an employee faces in changing jobs and relocating the family. Reassignment potentially offers the employee new travel destinations, new friends and colleagues, more money and increased career possibilities. In a series of surveys of 800 managers and their spouses, Pinder (1989) discovered that a majority of transfers involved promotions coinciding with increases in salary and benefits. Moving expenses and differentials in the cost of living from one geographic region to another, however, occasionally nullified any financial gains intended with the reassignment. Additionally, the loss of or decrease in a spouse's income may offset monetary increases the new job carries (Hall & Hall, 1978; Milbrandt, 1983).

Because lateral moves are too costly for employers, transfers usually are linked to promotions (Milbrandt, 1983). This trend creates a special dilemma for the corporate employee who knows that refusing a promotional opportunity more than once is a sure step towards ending a career (Vandervelde, 1979). Many companies formally state that they do not penalize employees for turning down a transfer. But as Pinder (1989) notes, the unstated message is that refusal to relocate is ". . . seen as an indication of low commitment to the company - and only the committed get ahead" (p. 56).

One occupational hazard of climbing the corporate ladder is that accepting promotions can lead to the ostracization of employees and their spouses by former friends who remain on lower ladder rungs (Kanter, 1977). Social lives often become business oriented and transferees are excluded from the personal social lives of members of the community (Pinder, 1979).

In a questionnaire study on the process of relocation, Brett and Werbel (1980) found that husbands designated job related variables as being central to managing successfully the transitions. Examples of important job related variables included knowledge of the new position and knowledge of its responsibilities. The potential effects of a move are complex, however, and depend upon a host of life stage, familial, psychological and environmental factors in addition to ease of job transition.

Researchers have elucidated both positive and negative features of geographic mobility from the points of view of employers, employees, and families. Despite the number of corporate families who finesse relocation hurdles every year,

there sometimes exists little interchange between the employee and his or her family and the corporation regarding a transfer (Snow, 1984). Richards et al. (1985), in their review of the literature on corporate families and mobility, state ". . . there is no recognition of the interaction between work and family" (p. 69). They point out that research on relocation in men (typically the corporate executives) has targeted adjustments in the work world and career patterns rather than personal and social components of mobility. Richards et al. (1985) conclude that studies have traditionally examined either the perspective of the transferee as worker and part of the corporation or the perspective of the transferee's family.

Research has not addressed the total effect of relocation on the transferee. The impact of relocation on the corporate executive's identity as a husband, father, colleague, community member, friend, uncle, son, etc. has yet to be explored largely because studies have highlighted the executive's experience as an employee. The meaning of relocation to corporate executives, as generated through their lived experiences of transferring in the context of their co-workers, friends, families and/or spouses, is absent from the current literature on relocation.

Phenomenology

The domain of existential-phenomenological thought is the understanding of the human life-world manifested in human actions, consciousness, and elemental human issues (such as anxiety, freedom, love, etc.). Phenomenological methods of inquiry are essentially descriptive, without consideration of the origin or cause of experience, and allow for the common essence of the phenomena under investigation

to emerge from descriptions of the experience (Kvale, 1983). Phenomenological philosophy and methodologies have been used in exploring a variety of topics including time (Dapkus, 1985), Iranian immigration (Barr, 1988), lesbian experience (Hall, 1986), friendship between women (Becker, 1987) and consumer experience (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1990). Phenomenological research methods give precedence to understanding experience clearly before moving on to describing and making assumptions about phenomena. In illustrating the objectives of phenomenology, Polkinghorne (1989) states, "Instead of studying the body as an organic object, it studies the experience people have of their bodies" (p. 45).

It is the intention of the phenomenological researcher to understand phenomena as they are presented, rather than to approach the study with presuppositions such as hypotheses or assumptions about outcome (Kvale, 1983). By having the participant describe his or her experience as it is "lived," the researcher's task is to uncover personal intentions, relationships and cultural meanings (Thompson et al., 1990). This contextualized approach differs from objective modes of analysis which are traditionally viewed independently of the contextualized setting (Valle & King, 1978).

Osborne (1990) succinctly compares the natural science and phenomenological paradigms as follows: "Natural science research aims at objectivity through explanation, control and prediction, while phenomenological research aims at the elucidation of meaning and understanding of human existence from an individual's point of view. Natural science methodology looks for statistical generalizability

while phenomenological research strives for empathic generalizability. Natural science looks to a reality in itself while phenomenology looks to the actuality of human lived-experience as the primordial reality" (p. 86). Phenomenological research strives to understand the phenomenon from the first-person perspective rather than from an objective, or third-person perspective. The participants in a study are viewed as the experts, describing their own experiences.

Methodological Issues

The human subject interview has often been considered an inferior research method because it does not meet the traditional standards of reliability and validity. Before rejecting phenomenological research strictly on the grounds that it does not stand up to traditional methodological scrutiny, it is important to examine these criteria closely for evaluation.

Even when the natural science researcher speaks of reliability, notions of validity underlie his/her methods of assessing reliability. For example, one inevitably has a conception of the appropriate universe to be sampled, and what will constitute variance when selecting research design parameters (Osborne, 1990). Osborne (1990) emphasizes, "Reliability is always context bound. One never assesses reliability in the abstract. Measurement is always measurement of something which has to be conceptualized in order to be measured (validity). The nature of the construct being measured will have an effect upon how it is to be measured (reliability)" (p. 87). Conceptual ambiguity results from this unavoidable definitional intertwining of reliability and validity (Osborne, 1990; Wertz, 1986).

Validity typically refers to the extent to which a method of investigation measures what the researcher wants it to measure and not something else. Within phenomenology, debate exists in the literature regarding how validity is to be established (Polkinghorne, 1986), because it has to do with how well a researcher brings forth the organized structure of experience within the data (Wertz, 1984). The possibility of an arbitrary analysis and synthesis of complex interview material can be difficult to control. Because there is no absolute or true interpretation of a set of data, the best the researcher can do to obtain reliable and valid results is present a description as clearly and strongly as possible, support it with references to the data, and leave the final evaluation of the results to the reader.

According to the topic of interest, the interviewer designs a question that will encourage a rich description of the phenomenon. Colaizzi (1978) states that the success of the methodology rests on the extent to which the questions "...tap the subjects' experiences of the phenomenon as distinct from their theoretical knowledge of it" (p. 58). The interviewer approaches the dialogue seeking a first-person perspective and so attempts to elicit descriptions rather than confirming theoretical postulations (Thompson et al., 1990). It is the participant, not the interviewer, who directs the course of the discussion.

Giorgi (1989) submits that "...a phenomenologist is motivated to be as faithful as possible to phenomena as they occur in the design of research, and of course, the claim is that descriptive analyses of everyday descriptions can be rigorous" (p. 66). In response to Nisbett and Wilson's (1977) claim that verbal

reports are unreliable, Giorgi (1989) offers an eloquent and powerful argument: "The use of description in science is so taken for granted that its omnipresence is noted only in its absence...Without the orientation and expressive power of description, science would grind to a halt" (p. 60). Giorgi further emphasizes that while most mainstream psychologists are ambivalent about the use of description, even the most scrupulous scientist uses words to explain experimental conditions and apparatus for the explicit reason that someone else could replicate the experiment based on his description. Yet, he quips, "...if the same hard-nosed scientist would obtain reports of experience from subjects, he would consider such reports to be untrustworthy data" (p. 61).

Kvale (1983) in his discussion of the research interview asserts that it appears possible to reinterpret traditional criteria for research evaluation such that similar standards will be congruent with the frame of reference of phenomenology. For example, the concern over interviewer bias in sensitivity to themes from the same interview protocols is not considered problematic, since reliability in the traditional sense is not an intrinsic requirement of phenomenological research. A phenomenologist strives to be aware of and specify his presence and approach to a participant so that variance becomes a constant, rather than attempting to standardize conduct in an effort to nullify the variance introduced by being human.

In phenomenology, varying sensitivity to themes in a protocol provides multiple perspectives of a phenomenon which can be assembled to create a unified description of the experience. It is considered an advantage that interviewers vary

in sensitivity (Giorgi, 1975). This yields a richer, broader description of the themes and allows other observers to adopt a similar approach and to arrive at a similar understanding of the experience under study, or to take a different approach and arrive at a different understanding. Fischer (1989) states, "Disciplined, examinable descriptions, then, are achieved not by trying to exclude the assessor's subjectivity (individuality, perspective, involvement) but by explicitly taking it into account" (p. 65).

Given the complexity of human beings, no research methodology stands flawless. Qualitative methods are neither more or less flawed than statistically based research methods. The conceptual base of phenomenology, however, opens new possibilities for inquiry and suggests the creation of different research questions. Because its paradigmatic focus concerns the structure of experience, phenomenology presents a superior alternative for the study of life as it is lived. Phenomenology offers contextualization of human experience and stays closer to the unreduced meaning of experience, thereby allowing for the understanding and comprehension of the unique meaning of another person's experience.

Statement of the Problem

Dramatic changes over the past 20 years have occurred in the mobility of corporate employees. These changes, largely resulting from an increase in dual-career couples and from more families refusing to move, have led to expanded financial services and spouse employment assistance programs (Carruthers & Pinder, 1983; Debats, 1982; Gould & Penley, 1985). New services benefiting the employer

and the employee in the context of his or her career, as well as in the context of his or her family will continue to increase as the structure of the nuclear family changes and as more companies recognize that relocation assistance is not only an employee benefit but an inescapable cost of doing business (Gault, 1984, p. 31).

Family therapy literature has largely ignored the effect of the corporate context on the family life of executives (Goodrick, Rampage, Ellman, & Halstead, 1988). The corporate employee, traditionally the husband, pays a high price for the power, status, and income gained from his position in the corporate structure. The daily challenges, scheduling demands, uncertainties, pressures and competition that are part and parcel of the job are not only difficult to handle but are also often related to, if not the causes of, various stress related diseases and illnesses (Goodrick et al., 1988). Additionally, because the corporate career consumes the majority of the executive's time, home life frequently suffers and a break down of the marriage and sense of family may result (Pinder, 1989). Yet, the bulk of research on the impact of relocation on men has targeted career development rather than personal development (Richards et al., 1985).

Given the lack of research on the total effects of relocation on the corporate executive, a phenomenological investigation was conducted to illuminate the experience of relocation by the corporate executive in terms of his/her lived world. Rather than address a specific and limited question, the purpose of this investigation was to explore the phenomenon of relocation guided by the following questions: "What do corporate employees say spontaneously about their experiences of

relocation?" and "What are the experiential aspects and essential nature of relocation?" The purpose of this study was, thus, to describe the experience of relocation by corporate executives.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Data Collection

Participants

Participants were recruited from the Executive Development Program of the Management Development Center, in the College of Business Administration at The University of Tennessee, and from the human resources departments of two major corporations in Houston, Texas. The Executive Development Program is a personal and professional development program for managers representing a wide range of organizations and backgrounds.

Eleven participants were chosen to be interviewed for this study. The selected number of participants was based on a comparison of similar phenomenological investigations in which interviewing a comparable number of participants was sufficient to result in a rich description of the phenomenon (Barr, 1988; Colaizzi, 1978; Dapkus, 1982). No controls for demographic variables were established, nor were incentives or compensation offered for participation. Participants were selected based on their ability to acknowledge that they had lived the experience of relocation and could articulate that experience. One of the eleven participants was a female in her late thirties. The other ten participants were males who ranged in age from middle thirties to upper fifties. Three of the participants were from the paper industry; three were from the aluminum industry; four were from the oil and gas industry, and one participant was from the electronics industry.

All of the participants held middle to upper management level positions.

The Interview

To describe the phenomenon of relocation from a first person perspective, the qualitative research interview procedure outlined by Kvale (1983) was selected for data collection. The participants in the study were viewed as the "experts," in describing their own experiences of relocation.

Each participant was interviewed separately and privately by the primary researcher for approximately sixty to ninety minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants were given pseudonyms and identifying information was changed in the transcripts to protect confidentiality. (A sample interview protocol is included in the Appendix).

The interviews began with a request, such as: "Please describe as completely as possible your experiences of relocation." Participants were told to speak of each of their relocations just as they remember them. Descriptions of actual situations and experiences that come to mind were sought. Participants were discouraged from talking abstractly about relocation. The researcher attempted to clarify interview material by asking open-ended questions based on participant remarks and by repeating participant words and phrases to seek clarification and further description. Interviews were discontinued when the participant indicated that he or she had communicated an exhaustive description of his or her relocation experiences.

Data Analysis

Bracketing

To increase rigor, a standard bracketing interview was conducted in which the primary researcher described her experience of relocation. The purpose of this interview was to help the researcher become aware of any presuppositions she had concerning the phenomenon.

Interpretive Group

Because total abeyance of one's bias is impossible, an interpretive group composed of the primary researcher and a graduate and a doctoral candidate from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Counseling Psychology Program was formed to analyze interview transcripts. Group members followed the procedure for thematization explained herein, and participated in discussions within the interpretive group regarding possible meanings of the descriptions.

Thematization

Data were analyzed using methods based on those developed by Giorgi (1983) and Thompson, Locander, & Pollio (1990). The primary researcher and the other two members of the interpretive group first reviewed each interview protocol, labeling evident patterns or themes. Segments of the interview that were relevant to each theme were then grouped together and organized by the primary researcher to produce a thematic summary of relocation for each participant. The summaries

were presented to and discussed by the interpretive group, and then reorganized by the primary researcher to arrive at a structural description of the experience of relocation.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Interview Description

Interviews were conducted during business hours in the offices of each participant. The interviews lasted approximately sixty to ninety minutes. The researcher began each interview with a request of the following nature, "Please tell me about your experiences of relocation." Interviewees occasionally asked for clarification on how to proceed, what to include, or where to start. They were encouraged by the researcher to say whatever came to mind regarding their relocation experiences. Typically, participants discussed their first relocation assignment and then continued to describe each transfer in chronological order through their current positions. One participant described every move he'd made since childhood, while another participant related his experiences of being moved by the military before he was employed by his company.

For purposes of clarity and brevity in the presentation of results, participant quotes were slightly edited. Sections of sentences, complete sentences, and repeated material were occasionally omitted from passages to condense quotes. Despite these deletions an attempt has been made to maintain the integrity of participant statements.

The descriptions of relocation invariably included being approached about a possible transfer, personal and family reactions, and the process of moving and settling into new home and work environments. Participants related not only their

own experiences of relocation, but also their perceptions of spouses' and/or children's experiences of relocation. Upon completing their relocation descriptions, many executives closed their interviews with a spontaneous summary statement about relocation. These summary statements were most often retrospective opinions about relocation and its impact and effects. The following are examples of such summary statements:

Obviously, I've had a good career. I've enjoyed it, made good money, but did I make the right decisions in doing this with the trauma that you sometimes go through? That's a good question...I think on balance for my wife and I and the kids, it's been a good thing. It's a lifestyle that, like I said, has some sacrifices, heartaches and emotional trauma, but on the balance, we'd do it again.

One gal asked me, uh, whether or not I wanted to be interviewed about relocation. I said, "Well, uh, does the company want me to or do they expect me to convey a certain attitude about relocation? Because if they do, they are probably going to be surprised that I'm not a strong advocate of relocation. Despite the fact, I have submitted to it for years.

Overlap of Themes

Before presenting each of the themes, it should be noted that the themes exhibit overlap. An executive who is presented with the option of relocation experiences conflict in some form or another. When relocation is accepted action is taken which requires change. The change necessitates adaptation and adjustment. The end result of the experienced conflict(s) and adjustment may be positive, negative, or a mixture. These events in relation to one another and viewed holistically constitute the experience of relocation by corporate executives.

The three themes in relation to one another depict a description of a particular set of meanings, for a certain group of individuals reflecting upon a

specific set of their experiences. Decisions of whether the themes seem descriptive of relocation, and whether events from transcripts seem descriptive of a particular theme ultimately reside with the reader.

Structural Description of the Experience

Relocation is a life changing event which requires the executive to physically transfer his or her family and domicile to a different geographic location. A relocation assignment is invariably presented to the executive as an opportunity for career development within the corporation, although the offer carries implicit consequences for accepting or refusing the relocation in terms of the executive's future with the company. The possibility of relocation is experienced as generating a conflict between the executive's career life and the executive's personal and/or family life. Relocation is lived as an intensely emotional event; the executive experiences personal feelings about the move which may include, pride about the job, grief and loss, and/or guilt about moving his or her family away from their present home. The executive is also affected by the emotions of his or her family, friends and co-workers and may be the recipient of anger, sadness, resentment, happiness or excitement from individuals who either are resistant to or supportive of the move. Relocation necessitates change, which is sometimes painful, on the part of executives, and they adopt a variety of strategies in approaching the complex process of adjustment to relocation. Finally, there are consequences of relocation which are experienced in the lives of executives and their families as both sacrifices and benefits.

The Ground of Time/Others

In all of the protocols the experience of relocation was set against an existential ground comprised of two essential aspects: Time and Others, which overlapped and interacted in forming the context for the participants' experiences. This ground of Time/Others was present in all of the transcripts and constituted a fluid foundation in which the lived experiences of relocation were imbedded.

Throughout the interviews, the executives described the input and reactions of family members and/or important friends and co-workers who were involved in each transfer. Relocation was discussed as a phenomenon that enveloped the executive and his/her family unit. Participants described relocation from their own perspectives and consistently presented their perceptions of the perspectives of their family members. As the following example illustrates, the executives' relocation experiences were thoroughly grounded in the experiences of others involved in the process:

Well, the first thing we did is, I mean, my wife was just hysterical. We got, and I don't know if this is a mistake in retrospect. We got her parents involved in trying to mediate what was going on. And as you would think, her father was very supportive of the move, and you know, said if this is what Steve needs to do to take a better career for himself and provide a better family life for all of you, this is what you need to do. Her mother, on the other hand, was the same way that my wife was, "Just quit your job. Just go out and get another job." You know, that was the easy solution for it.

The ground of time for the experience of relocation was manifested in five specific ways and is, again, intertwined with and inseparable from the ground of others:

- 1) Time is marked chronologically by relocation experiences.
- 2) The time spanning a relocation is divided into phases with specific tasks.
- 3) Limited time is allocated to make relocation decisions and to complete the process.
- 4) The date of the next relocation assignment is unknown.
- 5) There are better and worse times in which to relocate.

Participants related their transfer assignments chronologically beginning with their first moves to their current positions. The descriptions of their lives were punctuated by successive jobs and accompanying moves. Time was also marked by the phases of relocation. Participants described a sequence of events which encompassed a transfer and included, being informed of a relocation assignment, the actual migration, and the adjustment to and consequences of relocation.

The limited time executives had to make decisions regarding relocation and to maneuver the obstacles of transferring was directly related to the intensity of the conflict, emotionality, and difficulty of moving described. Examples of how the brevity of time for relocation impacts the transition are seen in the following statements:

Maybe it was two weeks, maybe it was three weeks, I don't know. But, it was almost like, go home and pack up your bags. And there was really no time for just, you know, winding down your job and saying goodbye to our friends and moving on.

So, I moved out there in June and it was about September when they moved me to Ohio. So, uh, you know, it was just really fast. My wife got a job that she never reported to.

The fact that the date of the next relocation was an unknown was figural in

participants' experiences of relocation. This created a kind of constant "temporary" state in each new location and required participants to stay ready for relocation proposals. The following passages exemplify how the uncertain timing of the next relocation permeated the participants' existences:

But no matter what, I mean one thing that happened was every single time I have moved, even though in your heart you know it's coming, when that phone call comes it's still a shock! It's hard to explain it, but when the phone call comes that says we have an opportunity for you and you're moving, it's all kind of mixed feelings. And you know, the first thing is really somewhat like a shock. It's here and it's too soon. To me, it always felt like it was too soon. Yeah, I knew it was coming, but not yet. You know, maybe I'm not quite ready yet.

Uh, we would talk about it, but most of them occurred so fast. I can remember one or two moves where, for instance, I was asked to relocate on a Wednesday, in the middle of the week, and I was on the plane headed for the new location the following Monday afternoon or Tuesday.

We were there for four years. I knew that it was temporary. I mean, temporary in that I would expect our company to move me. That was the philosophy.

Participants also discussed better or worse times in which to relocate as a function of the stage of their personal lives during which each move occurred. Participants referred to moves being easier or more difficult depending on whether or not they were married or had children, the ages of their children, their own ages, and other life circumstances. The following excerpts depict the impact that family life cycle stages had on relocations:

It was not a big move, but it was from an apartment to a house, and that, at the same time we had our first child. So, 1975 was our first house and our first child. We were very excited.

Okay, here I am, at that time, I was 43, no 42, uh, and this guy is telling me that I'm never going to get promoted again if I don't leave here. So, I

started thinking, "Okay, one daughter, the oldest is in the 8th grade now...and the other is in the 6th grade. Next year, I'll have a freshman and a 7th grader, just going to high school and junior high school. If I'm going to move, isn't this a good time to move? Because I get them at the front end of, rather than having to move a junior or senior...I'll get them through the high school years." So, that was my thinking.

The Experiential Themes

Theme 1: Conflict

Relocation poses a conflict between requirements of the corporation for the executive's career development and the executive's personal and/or family life. In this conflict the executive is forced to weigh his/her current lifestyle versus possible opportunities in a new location. The decision of whether to relocate or to stay in the current location is experienced as requiring an evaluation of short term sacrifices against possible long term gains. The sacrifices often are painful and are demanded of not only the executive but also of his/her significant others. Acceptance of a relocation may mean leaving a satisfying job or geographical region, distancing oneself from extended, and (occasionally) immediate family, distancing oneself from friends and a comfortable community, or standing in opposition to the wishes of one's family in favor of career opportunity.

Participants described relocation in terms of conflicts experienced between the needs, demands of, and desires for their career lives versus those of their family and/or personal lives. Executives reported experiencing conflict when asked to relocate because doing so would mean leaving satisfying personal lives in their current locations. Another form of conflict was described when executives were asked to relocate and knew that refusing a reassignment would very likely prove

detrimental to career development. Finally, executives experienced conflict as a result of family members not wanting to relocate when the company decided it was time to do so.

Personal Conflict

Executives experienced conflict when faced with the fact that they would be forced to give up friends, familiar surroundings, favorable geographic regions, and family. The executive had to weigh his/her career aspirations against current lifestyle factors and make a decision. The following excerpts illustrate how participants described personal conflicts with relocation:

All of a sudden, I wouldn't have any friends, you know, down there. All of a sudden, all the people that I knew at work, I would not know. And that just gave me a real feeling of discomfort...And uh, I just did not like that feeling. And uh, from a personal standpoint, that's why, you know I shied away from it...

You go ahead and put your head down and do what you know is best and you kind of forget about the short term implications and you look at the long term perspective. So, you know its just the question of being torn.

I really hadn't been thinking about moving because I liked it over there. I could look out and see the ocean. I mean that, like being in Seattle where you can get up and look out your back window and see Mt. Rainier.

Conflict with Corporation

Executives reported knowing and feeling the impact of their company's development policies in considering relocations. Participants experienced pressure from their companies to accept relocation assignments realizing that refusing a relocation carried certain consequences for one's career development:

But my opinion, the way I took that message was, "Listen, here's two opportunities and you're either going to take one or the other. That's it. If

you don't want one of those two, we don't have a place for you." That was the clear message I was getting.

Well, our company is, "Do you want this job?" "No." But if you turn one down, uh, don't plan on getting one, an offer for that again any time soon. There is a stigma with rejecting what the management development process, whether that is one individual or many, uh, what they consider to be "your right next job."

Consider the following passages in which participants relate experiences of being in disagreement with corporation management over the appropriate course for their careers:

And that was an opportunity I really didn't particularly care to take...I was tired of moving. I liked what I had down here at the time. I liked the environment to work in. I felt like I still had some learning to do, and I didn't need to go. I could have been O.K. here but circumstances were such, the pressure was put on pretty hard to take that job, and I never refused them before, so I said, "O.K., I'll go."

And the two cities that I told the company that I didn't want to go to were Cleveland, Ohio and Buffalo, New York... And a week later they called me in and said, "We've got you sales territory for you and it is Buffalo, New York."

Executives also reported being in conflict with the corporation due to family situations. In the following examples the participants described being torn between what was best for their careers versus what their spouses and/or families wanted:

...I let them know here that I'm having problems with the girls on this move, and if we can't resolve it, we'll have to ask for another assignment...So, I was prepared to do that if I knew the kids couldn't adjust.

...you may get hit with an ultimatum. I don't think anyone can take job security for granted anymore...So, I think I'm secure but I'm a little uncomfortable about it. But I have told these girls that I will never move them again. And I intend to keep that promise. I hope I am never faced with that....But, I'd even go and live someplace alone and leave them in school so they can get through school before I would make them move, if it came to that.

Conflict with Family

Interviewees described conflicts that ensued when they were in agreement with the corporation regarding the next relocation and their families were resistant to the reassignment. Depicted in the following passages are representations of the conflicts that executives experienced with their families:

From a career standpoint it would be a good move. From my family's standpoint it would be like tearing their hearts out.

I talked to my wife about it and she just went to pieces, I mean, you know, there was just no way in the world that she could move away...Now it's even worse, because now she can't take her children away from their grandparents...I tell you it was like playing tennis. One second I was on one side of the net saying "Hey, there ain't no way in the world I can turn this down, this is the best job opportunity that could be presented to me within the company." On the other side of net, then all of a sudden I came 180 degrees, "There's no way in the world I can live in Tennessee, I mean, who am I kidding?" Then I would go back to the other side and I would say "I gotta take this job. Who am I kidding?" You know like the two little people on your shoulder with one saying "Do it, do it, do it!" and the other one saying "Don't do it."

I'd signed on to do a job with this company. It was a job I wanted, I needed, the opportunity was, and uh, they were just going to have to live with this. That was just the way it was going to have to be. Everything didn't always work out the way we wanted.

...I got the call from the company, "I've got a job for you at the refinery." Something I'd been hoping for, for 12 years. I was so excited that I probably didn't fully appreciate it. I knew I was going to be in for it with the family, but I was so excited myself that I overlooked the impact it would have on them. My wife and kids. And uh, it was brutal. Absolutely brutal.

...and was in a job that she absolutely loved...She had never been happier or had more job satisfaction than that... So there was apprehension. "You know that job you like so much, well uh, guess what, you're going to have to give it up if we choose to take this opportunity."

Theme 2: Adjustment

The challenges and dilemmas of relocating are experienced in terms of a variety of strategies for adjustment by the transferee and his or her family. The process of adjustment typically includes the life management tasks involved in leaving one place of residence and establishing another, reconnecting in a new environment and coping with the emotional, social and psychological consequences of moving, and getting back up to speed in a new work environment.

Life Management Tasks

Participants described the life management tasks of relocation in terms of the buying and selling of homes, the transportation of household goods, the reestablishing of a household, learning how to maneuver in a foreign community, and getting used to different climates and cultures. Executives commented on the expenses incurred as a result of moving and on the extent of their companies' relocation assistance policies:

So the actual, physical part of moving, the company took care of everything, you know, they give you an extra paycheck, a 30 day paycheck to cover all the incidentals and everything else that's involved, the deposits...It costs you a lot more to move than you ever imagine. Even when you think, "The company's going to pay for everything, so what's it going to cost me?" It costs a fortune, that's what it costs you.

All moving expenses are taken care of. All time, all legal fees, all house buying expenses, all house selling expenses, really everything is paid for by the company. And that makes it very easy.

The process of looking for and selecting new residences, and selling old residences was discussed as an important part of getting one's life back in order once a relocation assignment was accepted:

I mean the pressure is just get in there. And part of you says, "Alright, I'll just find a place. I don't really need to find a place of my dreams because guess what, I'm going to be relocated again."

It was just fast, like, put your house up on the market and either take our offer or don't take it. You have 30 days to do that, and it was somewhat difficult from that standpoint.

Transferees also articulated some of the ways in which one handles the experience of physically settling into a new house, community, and geographical region:

...when you move you have it down to a routine. You bring in the packers and let them know what you want where. You've been through this before. I mean, gee, it's not too bad. There are no surprises.

There are certain things you look for. You look for schools, you look at churches, you look at the residential area, the shopping. You know that's the standard stuff you look at.

So you move into a very small, very modest environment. That's an adjustment. The climate is pretty nice, so that doesn't take a whole lot of adjusting. But the people...if you are comfortable in this culture, you will be very uncomfortable in that culture.

Reconnecting in a New Location

Transferees discussed how they and their families responded emotionally, socially, and psychologically to their new environments. Executives related their prescriptions for successful and unsuccessful moves and described experiences of trying to re-establish comfort and normalcy in their lives.

Interviewees discussed their impressions of their children's experiences of adjustment to relocation:

So what you find out is that kids are pretty flexible. So, kids don't know everything, and sometimes they'll give you some grief about, you know, "We don't want to do this." But, uh, if they give it half a chance, it works out.

They worked in. I mean kids adjust like that, faster than we do...Just like that. That's the way they are, really adaptable.

The adjustment process of spouses and whether or not spouses were supportive of relocation were described by participants as having both positive and negative impact on their own adjustment. The following excerpts stand as examples of this adjustment interaction between partners:

...if everything had gone well at home, it would have made my transition fine...and I think that's where, if she had the emotional support and maybe some sort of support group, it would have made our transition a whole lot easier.

...my wife would say the man, the breadwinner, has a lot easier time moving than the spouse, the woman usually, because she's at home. She's isolated. She has to sort of make her way. She has to develop her network, friends, etc. and if she doesn't have a job, if she's not active in church, kids aren't in school, she doesn't make friends at the school, it's going to be difficult.

I think she approached it from the standpoint that this is a good thing. This is an adventure. I'm very positive about it. I've got a great deal of confidence in my husband and know he'll be successful. I know we'll make it work regardless of what happens...Without that support at home I would not have made the move. If she had not been for this move I'd still be in Arkansas. It's that important that both people believe in it.

Getting involved in the new community and taking initiative in meeting people were discussed by executives as critical steps for emotional, social, and psychological adjustment to a new location. The opposite, distancing oneself from involvement with people and the community, was also used as an adjustment strategy to protect the individual from another inevitable departure caused by the temporary nature of his/her environment. The following passages characterize executives' tactics for adjusting to their new lives:

Get out of the house, meet people, get involved, because if you sit in the house and you don't meet people, and you sit around and feel sorry for yourself, you're just going to prolong the inevitable.

...people don't come to you to make it easy. We found that out early. They don't just knock the door down and say, "Gosh, welcome to our community. It's really great to have you." They just don't do that. You have to go out and do it on your own.

...we really got into the community through our church...They had a very active young couples group. And we immersed ourselves in that, and from there it, it expanded our social life.

Because you just kind of have this mind set that they're going to call me, and I'm going to leave here. That doesn't mean to say that you don't go out and do anything, but it just does make you distance yourself a little bit, because you meet people and think, "Oh, these could be life long friends," and you develop a closeness and really it's tough getting up and leaving so you just avoid it.

Some executives attributed their ability to adjust to new environments to their personalities, backgrounds or gender:

My boss told me I'm a chameleon.

I've always taken the philosophy that I can live anywhere, because I'm very adaptable. And you know, I can get used to anyplace. I think it's just me.

...I think it's one of those, what I perceive as one of those differences between men and women. Men, like me, and other men that I know, tend to have pretty superficial relationships with people. Uh, and because you do, it's easy for you to shed those relationships. Whereas my wife and many other...as well as my two daughters are the same way, uh, boy, they get into real deep relationships with other people. And so, when they have to break those with other people, that's really asking a lot of them.

...there are some people who are professional movers. They can move from environment to environment...I did not feel that I could be like that. And I'm not like that.

The attitudes executives held about relocation, about their careers, and about the companies they worked for were essential to their adjustment processes:

...I've always looked at it in a optimistic, positive way. I say, "Here's a new opportunity. I'm going to get in there and make that place the best I can. Take advantage of the situation. Build a strong team. Get some results. Get promoted. Do some things that in the long run will be an advantage.

If you want to be a successful mover, look for the plus, the positives and don't dwell on the negative or you will be absolutely miserable.

I just knew that we were ready to do whatever it took. That was a little bit of romance, of going out and being your own person and doing it your own way.

But, I think that there is just, this feeling about the job, and it's what I'm happy about, and it's the backbone that brings you through and allows you to deal with the other stuff that goes on in your life. You have to be real excited about the job and real happy about the success.

Allowing for the natural passage of time was also discussed by participants as a means of adjustment:

Uh, it helps that the longer you are here the more friends you make. Maybe the comfort level rises some because of that.

And it just takes time to work through things. And to try to do something in a shorter span than when time would allow it ordinarily to happen, I think is kind of pointless. And, to me, for the most part, the solution is time.

Getting Up to Speed

Despite the fact that relocation typically means a promotion or developmental advancement in one's career, there is also a certain amount of adjustment that is required when going into a new job. For some executives this was experienced as a challenge and carried potential stress. For others, the corporate environment was experienced as protecting them from drastic change, and the new work setting was simply a logical consequence of being transferred.

Consider the following examples of executives discussing the need to learn their new jobs quickly and to become competent in their new assignments:

I had a tremendously large workload I could sink my teeth into. I had a strong desire to prove to that company that I was, that I was worthy of their trust in hiring me.

Now all of a sudden, I come down here and I'm in charge of a department of thirty, and there are thirty people down there that know more than I do. And that is a major obstacle to try to overcome, and you are driven to overcome it.

So, the pressure was get yourself in the office and on the job. Because your new boss is sitting there saying, "Hey, there's nobody in this office, and you better learn the job pretty quick, because I need you here." And what you are always going to choose is getting in and wanting to do a good job, because you want to obviously please the new person you are working for.

Some executives reported that these transition times in a new work environment were difficult:

I worked hard there...very stressful. I worked hard, a lot of hours. I don't know how I did it. I was probably, I probably wasn't as good a father or husband as I could have been at this time.

I'm not sure that I'm 100% during these transition periods. Uh, I mean, I try to remain focused, but I remember when I first got to California, and things were so gruelling, and uh, I really don't think I was retaining things well. Uh, and I would, you know, get into a conversation or meeting or something, and somebody would say something about what we talked about that day, and I would have absolutely no recollection of it.

Other executives experienced no difficulties in their job adjustments:

We don't go from one strange environment to another. We go from the same environment to the same environment, and you know the biggest thing you're really gonna do including sleeping is work. And when the work environment just does not change, then stress is not added.

But I had a job to go to, and it was just kind of routine, just a change in...of an office location, was the way I felt about it.

Theme 3: Sacrifices and Benefits

Because relocation is in its most basic form, change, there are consequences of leaving one job, home and community and moving to another. Transfers may be experienced as requiring sacrifices or providing benefits. Most often the transferee experiences both, thus the net result of moving becomes difficult to calculate due to the many trade-offs encountered in corporate relocation. Sacrifices of relocation may include distance from extended and immediate family, distance from friends, loss of relationships, difficulty settling into a community, lack of "roots," financial hardships, marital conflict, alienation by spouse and children over decision to move, loss of or damage to possessions, loss of established credibility and competence in each new work setting, downgrades in quality of life and housing, and developmental difficulties with relocation among children.

The benefits of relocation may include: promotions and raises, status increases in the corporation, upgrades in quality of life and housing, opportunities for travel and exposure to new geographic regions, people and cultures, increased family closeness through shared experiences and adversity, development of new friendships, extended visits from relatives and friends, development of independence and achievement in children, development of adaptability and flexibility, and maintenance of relationships in the corporation over time despite location.

Sacrifices

Participants in the present study described the sacrifices (and benefits) unique to each move throughout the interviews. Executives described the difficulties of

establishing roots or a sense of permanence in any one place, and the difficulty of becoming a real part of a community. The following examples illustrate the loss of stability that executives experienced due to relocation:

...I was beginning to feel a sense of loss, and then I guess I didn't have my feelings completely connected to it...and didn't realize that I was actually experiencing that loss of friends and loss of environment, loss of a home that I'd grown to like. Uh, loss of the structure I had developed within the job that I was occupying, and I guess that's what caused, according to the doctors that I visited with, caused the deep depression in me until 1981.

It's hard to put roots down. You know, you don't, so your roots are a family rather than a place.

...You don't have the depth to the experiences, certainly outside of work that I would feeling like, "Okay, this is my home, and I'm going to live here." Just that feeling of, "This is temporary," makes you do that. It just makes you have a shallow life outside of your work life.

... people ask me, they say, "Where are you from?" and I say, "Well, I can tell you where I'm from, but I really don't have a hometown." I don't feel like anyplace is really home. I've been over six different places, and no place is actually home.

Participants discussed the sacrifices required of their families and the negative impact that relocating has had on their relationships with their spouses and children. The following passages represent the executives' descriptions of the negative effects of relocating on their children and of the effects of moving on their relationships with their children:

...but my daughter felt like that we really didn't give her any voice in any of the decisions. She was just kind of like the, like they say the old Army brats were, they were just drug from post to post...

...and the girls were quite unhappy with their parents, particularly their father. It wasn't very pleasant. We had a rather tearful, crying, hysterical scene in a hotel room in New Orleans while we were there, and uh, that wasn't pleasant for anyone.

My son, my older son at that time was, let's see, he must have been 14 or 15 years old, and...but he was very active in sports in the Seattle area, and he just told me I was ruining his career there by going to Mobile.

We're having problems with our oldest daughter that I would never have dreamed about being possible. Uh, in fact my wife and I have talked about it a lot lately, and we don't know what to attribute it to. All we can attribute it to is her continued resentment of the move.

Oh, they were terrible with me. I mean, they hated me. They wouldn't even permit the name of the company to be used in the house. They didn't even want to hear about the company. To this day.

Executives also described the losses their spouses endured as a result of relocation and the deleterious effects of relocating on their marriages:

Uh, it strained our marriage, but, it put a tremendous amount of strain on our relationship, right down to the point where we were ready to leave each other.

And she really gave up a lot...she felt real badly about taking the grandchildren away from their grandparents for three hours, and now 3000 miles away was very, very difficult for her.

It was a great strain. I mean, I hated her for what she was putting me through...yeah, you know, here I was trying to do the best thing...it was a tough time.

Relocation may be a financial advantage or disadvantage depending upon the current economic state, the region of the country to which one is relocating, the size of the executive's raise if a raise is received, and the extent of the company's monetary assistance. Participants described experiences in which relocation resulted in a financial hardship:

Yeah, and I didn't get that big of a pay raise that, for about the first two years that we were there, it was a big financial stress on us as well.

...and cost of living went out of sight. And so, except for if you just looked at the job progression, everything else had dropped.

...after you get your first paycheck and you moved into a new location, and uh, your increase that you got to go for this promotion is now eaten up mostly by state income tax which you didn't have in your last location. And you look at it and say, "You know, we went through this and the take home pay is about what we had before, and you know is it really worth it?"

Transferees also discussed the sacrifices of relocation in terms of having to leave close relationships with family and friends and the difficulty of maintaining these relationships over distance:

Yeah, it was just a very emotional time for both of us. Uh, saying goodbye to family and friends and not knowing what the future held...So, it was very, very difficult to say goodbye. It was difficult for me to say goodbye to the people at work.

The farther away the relocation is the less the contacts are. Now in Mississippi I have absolutely no contact with anyone now at all.

So, but long distance relationships really take a toll. And the other thing, is that it's just plain difficult to keep friendships up when you don't live in the same city...You can't keep up with ten or twelve people long distance and have any kind of reasonable relationship.

I grew up, my grandparents were right there, both sets, uh, always very handy, you see them a lot. Family types of events, and Thanksgiving, Christmas, and when you relocate, particularly when you relocate away from your place of being raised, there's a lot of apprehension about moving away from family, old friends, family structure.

Benefits

Executives described the benefits of relocation in terms of their career development, the impact relocation has had on their families and their quality of life, opportunities for adventure, exposure and education, and in terms of their relationships with family, friends and colleagues.

Transferees related the positive effects of relocation on their spouses, children and family units:

...what I think, what it made my wife do was grow up a lot faster than she would have developed if she had remained up there. She was very much dependent on other people when she was up there. Me and other people. Down here she has had to become more self-reliant...

They might have had fewer problems if we hadn't moved around, but then again, I know they wouldn't have been the same kind of achievers.

In fact, I think we tended to do more things as a family. We had to stick together, what with all this moving around.

Despite all this, I think my wife and I have an extremely strong marriage...So, maybe this brings you closer together.

Participants reported improvements in their lifestyle when relocations were accompanied by raises, they profited on the selling of their homes, and they moved from areas of high cost of living to low cost areas:

Yeah, and I moved from a 2100 square foot house to a 3200 square foot house here with a pool. Living like a king now. It's great, living like a king.

And we had money. We sold that house. We had stretched like hell, and now we were coming back down where we could afford from a housing standpoint...

And now I'm walking into a house that I said, "Wow, I could afford this house." You know, I can live in a complex and with people with a much higher stature than myself...I could live in the same type of environment that they can and just something that I could never imagine doing, you know, up in Connecticut. I just lived like the common folk up there.

...and when you move to low cost of living areas as I have done, you begin to get relatively rich, because the money goes a lot further in these parts of the country.

Executives described what relocation meant to them regarding their careers and success in their companies. The following examples characterize the opportunity and sense of accomplishment that are associated with being transferred:

It's like, if there ever was an offer you can't refuse, this is it. If I go out there and perform as well as they want me to perform, that really opens a lot of doors and opportunities.

It's just, to a certain extent I guess it is ego. I don't know, all of a sudden you're, you seem like a much more important person.

It's the first time I got the manager title, and that's, that's kind of a benchmark once you get a managerial title here. When you're a manager it means that you really arrived.

It's, for me it's always been a promotion. And so that's great. That's what I want. That's what I've been working for, a promotion. So, you know, when it comes and so, it's there, and my strongest reaction is happiness, pride, success.

Interviewees also discussed the opportunities that relocation provided them and their families for travel and adventure, exposure to different places, people and cultures, and for general education:

...and we just made that an adventure. And again, we had a great time.

...This was quite a learning experience for them, an exposure to different parts of the country, different kinds of people, different friends...

I didn't know anything about the rest of the United States, and I didn't know anything about different cultures and people, different dialects and people talking. And so the whole time that I've been moving around, it's been just an additional, I guess, cultural experience for me.

Like it's going to add to your base of knowledge. Not only knowledge with your particular field but knowledge of people, how they live, how they think...and it really is surprising how many different sorts of cultures we've got in the United States based on the particular geography.

So, we got to Arabia and spent 3 years in Arabia. A lot of traveling, the kids got to see an awful lot.

Finally, transferees reported the positive effects that relocation had on relationships with family and friends. Consider the following passages in which

executives describe how relocation enabled them to make new friends, maintain relationships within the company over time and distance, and in some cases allowed them opportunities to see more of their extended families:

...the location was ideal in the fact that my family, my mother and father had since moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania, so it was about four hours from Allentown. And it was about three hours from family in Massachusetts.

You know, now I actually see my father more than when I was up there...he'll come by and spend a week with me, and I never spent that much time when I lived there...And uh, I think my children enjoy him more now when he can spend a lot of time with us in you know, in a shorter time interval than the way we used to see him.

...I think in the corporate world now, you keep that network of friends that you make. You talk to them, see them in meetings, and uh, now we have, and uh, you get a network of people that you keep in touch with.

We have friends all over, get Christmas cards from all over the place.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Summary of the Investigation

The purpose of this study was to elicit a description of the experience of relocation by corporate executives. Unstructured interviews were conducted in an effort to understand the executives' lived experiences of relocation. Three global themes which comprised the overall experience of relocation emerged from the interview protocols: (a) Conflict, (b) Adjustment, and (c) Sacrifices and Benefits. These themes emerged against the ground of Time and Others. Before discussing each theme, it should be noted that each of the three themes has multiple sub-themes, and these different aspects suggest that themes were experienced in multiple ways by participants. All executives, however, described experiences of conflict, adjustment, and sacrifices and benefits of relocation. Participants did not experience the themes in exactly the same ways, and their experiences of the three themes varied across their individual relocation assignments.

In general, the participants in this study were open and candid in describing their experiences of relocation and produced rich stories of their and their families' transfers. The overall characterization of the interviews was that of a linear and somewhat intellectualized presentation of their experiences of transfer. Although the executives clearly described that transfers were emotional, often difficult, experiences for themselves and their families, their descriptions of the trauma involved in relocation were, often times, detached from their own emotions. It

should be noted, however, that all of the participants had the potential to be relocated again, and thus, may not have had the luxury to take a totally retrospective and involved approach to describing relocation. Because relocation is still a present phenomenon in their lives, the executives may have been reluctant, or even unable, to strip away defenses that are used to weather the experience of uprooting oneself and one's family and moving to an unfamiliar environment. One result of the tone of the participants' descriptions and of the intellectualized language used in their descriptions was that the themes initially appeared more as categories of the experience of relocation rather than descriptors of the experience of relocation.

Conflict

Of the three themes, Conflict was most prominent in participants' descriptions of their experiences of relocation. Being requested to transfer often puts the executive in a very difficult position between the corporation and his/her family. The executive may be thrilled about the job opportunity, but have mixed feelings about leaving a location, and know that the family will be resistant to and upset over having to relocate. Because of corporate mores, the executive feels unable to express ambivalence about relocating at work, less he/she appear uncommitted or not ready to meet the challenge. At the same time, the executive often feels pressure to build up the advantages of relocation and to, in essence, "sell" the transfer to his/her family members who are unhappy about having to move. This creates a situation in which the executive is pulled in different directions and is unable to find a hospitable climate in which to express his/her own feelings, fears,

excitement, etc. about the transfer. The executives' depictions of the conflict inherent in relocation helped to illuminate the familial context of the experience of relocation, and served to crack the image of the corporate executive as protected from and unaffected by the trauma of relocation.

When the theme of conflict was described it concerned a struggle between two opposing opinions regarding relocation. A conflict related to the self ensued when the executive wanted to relocate for career purposes but was reluctant to give up a current satisfying personal life, proximity to friends and/or relatives, or affinity for a certain city or geographic region. A conflict between the executive and the corporation was experienced when the executive disagreed with the corporation about the suitability of a relocation assignment. Conflict also was experienced between the executive and his/her family over relocation when the family was resistant to the move proposed by the company. This situation left the executive torn between the management development process necessary for career advancement, and his or her family's desires to remain in their current location.

Zedeck and Mosier (1990) discuss five models of the relationship between an employee's life at work and life at home. These models all focus on the employed individual rather than on the family unit. One of these models, Conflict Theory, seems applicable for conceptualizing the various conflicts experienced by the executive participants in the current study when they were presented with relocation assignments. According to Conflict Theory, achieving satisfaction or success in either the work environment or the home environment entails sacrifices in the other

environment; "...the two environments are incompatible because they have distinct norms and requirements" (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990, p. 241). As described by the participants, relocation was experienced as requiring sacrifices in either their jobs or personal/family lives, or both.

The theme of conflict primarily appeared early in the course of the relocation event when participants described being approached with a relocation assignment. Executives experienced various conflicts when they were presented with a relocation opportunity and, at that point, began considering the consequences of accepting the transfer. Sluzki, cited by Richards et al. (1985), has described transferees' alternating anxiousness, euphoria and fear during the preparation time prior to a move. Gaylord and Symons (1986) also assert that conflicting moods regarding relocation and its implications accompany the opportunity to relocate.

Adjustment

In their descriptions of the theme of Adjustment, executives in this investigation repeatedly addressed their own experiences as well as those of their spouses' and/or children's adjustments to relocation, again highlighting the personal/familial context of the experience of relocation. Participants discussed processes of adjustment that were necessary as a result of relocation, and described both positive and negative means of adjusting to relocation. They described the life management tasks of relocation as involving the logistical arrangements required to move from one house to another house, and as the acclimation to a new environment. A second aspect of this theme, reconnection, depicted the ways in

which the executive and his/her family responded to their new environments in efforts to establish a sense of home and belonging. Getting up to speed, the third variation of the theme of Adjustment, referred to changes experienced by participants when they assumed jobs in new locations.

Ramey and Cloud (1987) define relocation success as the positive adaptation to relocation, whereas relocation ambiguity, the opposite of relocation success, is defined as a partial adjustment that results in decreases in lifestyle satisfaction. They propose that relocation success requires "psychological balancing" (p. 152), and that the necessary tools for successful relocation can be developed through skills training. All of Ramey and Cloud's ingredients for successful relocation were mentioned in executives' descriptions of adjustment.

Problem Management, the first of Ramey and Cloud's ingredients, was figural in the life management tasks of buying and selling homes, selecting schools, transporting household goods, etc. Decision Making resided primarily with the executive and his/her spouse and was described throughout participants' interviews as being central to relocation success. Stress Management and Development of a Support System were emphasized in executives' descriptions of attempting to reconnect in new locations and included means as diverse as playing basketball, initiating friendships, and withdrawing from close personal relationships. Assertiveness, and Enhancing Positive Attitudes and Expectations, Risk Taking, and Flexibility in Thinking and Behavior were discussed particularly in relation to the adjustment of the executives' spouses and children. Participants described

themselves as often being in the position of encouraging these behaviors and attitudes in their families. The last of Ramey and Cloud's ingredients for successful relocation, Assessment of Personal Goals, Values and Priorities, is a fluid factor which appeared central to the executives' initial decisions to embrace careers which involved relocation, and continued to affect their degree of willingness to relocate and their opinions of relocation as they progressed through the life cycle.

Participants described beliefs, attitudes, values and actions that assisted them in making the transition to new work and home environments. Gullotta and Donohue (1983) emphasize that the literature on family adjustment to relocation has neglected fathers, serving "...as a subtle reminder that fathers lack a clearly defined familial role beyond production of income (p. 17)." It is interesting to note that executives in the present study often described their individual adjustments within the context of their families' adjustment. The transferees did in fact experience relocation through a familial role as well as through the role of employee.

Marshall and Cooper (1976) concluded from a comprehensive study of corporate mobility that the life stage of a family does affect their relocation adjustment. Carter and McGoldrick's (1980) model for understanding family life stages is helpful in predicting how a particular family will adjust to relocation. In this model, Carter and McGoldrick (1980) conceptualize problems within families in terms of vertical and horizontal stressors that impinge upon the family system. Vertical stressors are patterns of relating and functioning that are transmitted through the generations in a family. Vertical stressors include "...family attitudes,

taboos, expectations, labels, and loaded issues with which we grow up" (Carter & McGoldrick, 1980, p. 9). Horizontal stressors are anxiety producing events experienced as the family moves through its life cycle. Horizontal stressors include "...both the predictable developmental stresses, and those unpredictable events...that may disrupt the life cycle process (untimely death, birth of a defective child, chronic illness, war, etc." (Carter & McGoldrick, 1980, p. 10).

Participants in the present study described both vertical and horizontal stressors in their experiences of relocation. Vertical stressors were discussed in terms of the beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors related to relocation that were expressed by executives and their spouses and transmitted to their children. The following examples depict vertical stressors which affected relocation:

...we encourage our kids to be active and take part in extracurricular activities, and do things, whether it's Boy Scouts, or drama club, or football, or whatever. It was, that was one of my rules, they do it.

Uh, and I told my wife, it seems to me that she had a responsibility to not share her feelings about everything with the kids...So, I try to encourage her to, at least, in front of the kids, if you want to dump on me, dump on me. Do it in private, not in front of the kids, so it was hard for them.

Because it is an unexpected and sometimes traumatic event, relocation itself was described as a horizontal stressor. Executives described other coinciding horizontal stressors, both traumatic and maturational events, which affected their relocation experiences:

She never did come to Arkansas. It was during this time that she decided we'd go ahead and make the split and get a divorce, rather than her coming to Arkansas, setting up house and all that stuff and moving again...That was pretty traumatic. That was a double whammy.

Although, at a certain stage in your life, and I have maybe five or six years to go before retirement, you start wanting some stability...you don't want to move into a location for a year or two and then retire.

Although no attempt was made in the study to control for the age of participants, their ages did vary, ranging from mid-thirties to late fifties. Participants described both successful and unsuccessful adjustments to relocation and described how their priorities, values, needs, opinions, etc. regarding relocation changed depending on their positions in the life cycle. Whether relocations were successful or not was a function of the shared patterns of behavior within the families, such as pessimistic or optimistic views of change, values, and expectations about relocation etc. (vertical stressors). Other life stage events that were occurring in the executives' lives at the time of relocation, such as getting married, a youngest child leaving home, or planning for retirement (horizontal stressors) also influenced the nature and outcome of relocations.

Sacrifices and Benefits

The final theme described by executives, sacrifices and benefits, was experienced as a product of the conflict and adjustment inherent in relocation. Participants described sacrifices and benefits of each of their relocation experiences, emphasizing that the assessment of relocation is an ongoing process. Participants discussed the sacrifices they and their families experienced as a consequence of the transfers, and the sometimes deleterious effects moving had on their lives. Participants also discussed how relocation was often an adventure and an opportunity for enriching their and their families' lives. No participant experienced

only sacrifices or only benefits from relocation. In all cases, the net effect of mobility was a mixed bag of pluses and minuses, although most participants did describe a generally positive or negative flavor in recounting their experiences of relocation.

Certainly, whether one ends up developing an affinity or distaste for relocation and all of its trappings depends upon the degree and nature of conflicts experienced, and the extent to which the executive and his/her family successfully adjust to relocation. Important elements to successful relocation have been identified (Brett & Werbel, 1980; Carruthers & Pinder, 1983; Sinetar, 1986; Snow, 1984), and one of the apparently crucial constituents to a successful relocation experience concerns the meaning given to a move by the transferee and his or her spouse and/or family.

Executives in the present study related the meaning they attached to relocation in their descriptions of the sacrifices and benefits experienced as a consequence of relocation. For participants, mobility meant career development and success, and for most it meant financial success as well. It was experienced as an opportunity for improving one's quality of life, for travel and exposure, and for engendering independence and autonomy. Meaning was also ascribed to relocation by family conflict, and the loss of relationships and stability experienced because of relocation. Participants who ascribed predominantly positive meaning to relocation typically were those individuals who described predominantly successful relocation experiences; individuals who ascribed predominantly negative meaning to relocation

typically were those individuals who described predominantly unsuccessful relocation experiences. Similarly, Gullotta and Donohue (1983) assert that the families who have the easiest time relocating are those who accept the reason for moving and understand how the change has relevance for them. The meaning attached to a move by the family is also stressed by Sluzki, cited by Gullotta and Donohue (1983), as an important factor in staving off "decompensation," the period weeks or months after relocation during which the family experiences problems as a consequence of moving.

The concept of Sense of Coherence proposed by Antonovsky (1987) as a major cause of health and feelings of wellness is pertinent to the discussion of experienced relocation sacrifices and benefits by executives. The three components of Sense of Coherence--comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness--are inextricably intertwined, although Antonovsky (1987, p. 22) posits that "...the motivational component of meaningfulness seems most crucial..." to an overall experience of sense of coherence. Within this context, meaningfulness refers to the belief that life is emotionally balanced, and that it is worthwhile to approach at least some of life's dilemmas and demands with enthusiasm and commitment.

To the extent that executives were able to create meaning for themselves in their careers and personal lives through relocation, they appeared to experience the benefits of being mobile. Achievement in one's career, general life education, and providing a secure and comfortable lifestyle for one's family are examples of the meanings that executives created in their relocation experiences. Because the spouse

and/or children are not corporate employees their sense of meaning did not occur in the corporate context. Rather, spouses and/or children had to create meaning in the context of their own jobs, education, relationships, and community involvement. The experience of benefits from relocation were sometimes attenuated when the spouse and/or children of the executive did not perceive meaningfulness in relocation for their individual lives.

Conclusion

Most of the literature on corporate relocation is characterized by survey research in which subjects respond to structured interview questions (for example, Munton, 1990; Pinder, 1989; Sell, 1983) and by thought pieces on the stresses of relocation and how to negotiate relocation successfully (for example, Anderson & Stark, 1988; Gullotta & Donohue, 1983; Ramey & Cloud, 1987; Schoeni, 1991). To date, no phenomenological investigation of the experience of relocation has been conducted. This study is unique in that it allowed for the spontaneous description of individuals' lived experiences of being transferred. A structural description of the experience of relocation was produced which depicts the psychological organization of the experience of relocation.

The purpose of this study was to elicit a description of the relocation experience by corporate executives. It was intended that the study would illuminate the meaning that relocation held solely for the executive participants. In their descriptions, however, the executives consistently contextualized their experiences of relocation within the experiences of their spouses and/or families, to the extent

that it became impossible to separate out a participant's experience from the experiences of the members of his/her personal life. As a result, the executives' descriptions of the experience of relocation challenge assertions in the existing literature that transferees primarily experience relocation from a career perspective and have trouble free personal relocation transitions (Goodrick et al., 1988; Vandervelde, 1979), whereas their spouses and families bear the brunt of relocation difficulties. By means of unstructured interviews, executives described relocation as occurring within the family system as opposed to relocation happening to an individual. The descriptive methodology of this study allowed for a bridging of the existing gap in the relocation literature between the corporate executive's work life and personal life. Given the personal/familial context of the participants' experiences of relocation, it may prove advantageous to both corporations and professionals who assist in relocation to view and approach the experience of relocation as impacting a system comprised of the employee, the corporation, and the employee's family.

In their descriptions of relocation, participants indicated that their companies do not acknowledge, more than to give a cursory nod to, the complexity of implications for the executive's life outside of work. Given that the individuals in the present study discussed changing priorities, values and needs regarding relocation as they grew older and their lives changed, it seems important for management career development plans and for employee relocation success that corporations take more into account the life context of the executive. Open recognition and discussion

of the executive's personal/familial life in relocation assignment negotiations may be enough to significantly reduce the conflict experienced as a result of relocation, and may positively affect the executive's attitudes toward and satisfaction with relocation. Such changes would quite possibly carry over to the manner in which the executive presented the relocation assignment to his/her family, thereby altering the experience of relocation by the family system.

Finally, it should be noted that differing attitudes regarding the willingness to relocate were observed between the younger and older participants. More specifically, younger executives in this study expressed the desire to move ahead in their careers, but specified more limits and conditions under which they would accept relocation assignments than did the older executives. This trend was particularly evident as the older participants described their earlier career transfers. Several participants, in fact, commented on the changing corporate climate regarding relocation due to shifts in work force demographics and the structure of the nuclear family, and emphasized the need for corporate policy and philosophy to keep in step with these changes.

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APPENDIX

Sample Interview Protocol

Interviewer: I

Interviewee: P

I: Okay. I'd like for you to tell me about your experiences of relocation.

P: Are you interested in why people might want to relocate?

I: Certainly, if that's part of your experience.

P: Uh, I think maybe that's uh, that's uh, something I'd like to contribute because...

I: ok

P: My wife and I both grew up in small towns in the Midwest. Our families owned small businesses, small farms. We didn't want to do that. Uh, I went to a large corporation rather than work in the family business. Uh, we have interests in, both of us have traveled, doing different things, seeing different things. So, uh, I think part of our willingness to move gets back to our background and the fact that we opted not to stay in small towns. We opted to get out of that for awhile. So uh, I guess in that sense we were receptive to moving. Uh, I worked seven years in one location outside of St. Louis at a large refinery. I started with the company in 1960 and uh enjoyed it, had a good career there and probably could have stayed there. Uh, in 1967 I was asked to move to Houston, Texas and uh talked it over, both of us were quite willing and uh, eager to do our first move.

I: What do you remember about that time when you were uh called or contacted or whatever? Do you remember what maybe went through your mind, what you thought?

P: Oh, uh, I can't recall anything in particular. Uh, right then at that point I looked at it as an opportunity because with corporations, to advance, at that time the notion was you would move. That was the expectation.

I: You said at that time. You, you perceive that that's different now?

P: I think it's changing. I think the uh, the values and the willingness to make those changes, those sacrifices that moving asks are changing as a different generation experiences that part of the business. I know that it probably was one of the most, I shouldn't say difficult, one of the hardest decisions. It was leaving our home area. We were close to both families, close both uh geographically and physically...I should say not physically, but emotionally. We visited both families frequently. Uh, it was probably harder on my wife's parents because we had two

small boys that were the apples of their eyes. And so, that first move away from their home, it was rough, to a new location. Both of us knew nothing about Houston, Texas, had never been to Texas. Houston, Texas at that time was probably mostly toughest on my wife's parents. I came down before the rest of the family, worked down here, worked with my predecessor, made the transition and my wife came down... The one comment I do remember uh moving out the first time came from good friends of ours, still friends with him. He's a company employee. I carpooled with him. I worked with him - I was in Personnel Relations and he was in the Engineering group. And, he was very upset to see me go. Uh, he made a comment that uh other people had transferred out recently, and that well, "There's not going to be anyone left in that department that knows anything." So it was kind of a compliment in a sense, that my leaving was going to be a loss at that particular location. And uh, I remember that, interestingly, uh the transition into a new work place, a new location was interesting because the first time I ever did it, uh, I came down to spend uh six weeks and we were provided a house hunting trip.

I: Did you, excuse me, did you go back and forth during that time to see them?

P: No.

I: So, six weeks...

P: Six weeks, six weeks basically alone. And was uh, was uh really enthused. We owned our home in the midwest and in Illinois when we were there and we anticipated on buying one down here, and housing was cheaper in Houston and gave us an opportunity to upgrade. Uh, so, I did a lot of scoping out of the real estate market, and I thought it would really be nice to have a house with a pool cause, Gee, you're in the South.

I: Right.

P: So, I went out to places like, uh oh, of course Meyerland, the area was relatively new then, uh scoped out some houses there. I looked on the North, Northwest sides, looked in Memorial, but I couldn't afford that. So I went on the South side and uh I lined up some houses and my wife flew in on a Friday night after work and I couldn't wait because I had a realtor lined up to show her some of these homes that I had spotted. So she went with me and the realtor and we looked basically on the Southwest side which was nice, but no trees. My wife had grown up in Missouri which unlike Houston has beautiful rolling hills and trees much like Tennessee. And we spent hours of soul searching, staying at Rice Hotel. And I remember that, not staying at Rice Hotel - I had a dinner lined up at the Rice Hotel, the Flag Room, one of the better eating places. At that time Houston was dry and it had a private club and I could get a drink on my bosses

membership. So I remember after house hunting we came back to the Rice Hotel and had an awful dinner. During the course of the meal my wife just burst into tears. I was puzzled by that and asked, "What's wrong?" She said, "I can't live in this place. There's no trees in this place." (laughter) And I said, "Look, tomorrow we'll try the North side of town, there's plenty of trees in Houston, Texas." So, we ended up settling in the northwest side of town. So I guess that's the one event...I've told that story many times. It seems like uh, on practically every house hunting trip we get to the point of tears, disagreement, but we always seem to work our way through that.

I: Umm. So what's that like for you, uh to go through that each time?

P: Uh, I go through the house hunting knowing there's going to be some emotional trauma. Uh, how is that? That's a good question. Well, you say, "Well, we're going to avoid it this time, because we're smarter and older and uh we know what we want this time." Uh, but it's, it's not always the same thing. It's hard to anticipate. The first time it was location; sometimes it's a particular house, uh you know, I guess. So it's maybe sometimes puzzlement as to what it's going to be this time. (laughter) Saying, you know, "Well, we've worked it out before, we'll work it out again." There will probably be some trauma. There will probably be some discomfort between us, but uh, we've been able to work it out before, we'll work it out again. I can look back philosophically and say that I never felt that was a big issue, uh recognizing that there's going to be some, there will be some difficulty somewhere along that process. If it's not in the house hunting, it may be after you get your first paycheck and you moved into a new location, and uh, your increase that you got to go for this promotion is now eaten up mostly by state income tax which you didn't have in your last location. And you look at it and say, "You know, we went through this and the take home pay is about what we had before, and you know, is it really worth it?" So recognizing that somewhere along the line, there will be some disappointment in that move up. Uh, but it's never deterred us.

I: It sounds as if uh, I guess maybe the initial commitment that you and your wife both had, the initial mind-set that you had about moving has been important throughout?

P: I would think so. And, also that the uh, the opportunity for advancement, plus getting back to the norm of my generation in a large corporation, at least to this point, has been to expect mobility and mobility has meant opportunities and upward growth. Opportunities to do new things, see new places, see new faces. We're kind of adventurous, spend...I guess at this time we probably get, uh, how should I say, wanderlust, after about 3-5 years.

I: Meaning for you? You start to...

P: No, not only for me, it's for my wife, cause we start, after you've been in a house 3 to 5 years that starts needing things, repairs or paint or whatever, you're saying "I think it's time to move." (laughter) "We don't want to go through this." We laughed about that because uh we never stayed in a place long enough to where we had to restore it. We stayed one time 10 years, in a specific house, and 7 months and did do some renovation and decorating there. But we laugh, we've been able to move enough to avoid all of those things that have to be re-done after awhile. (pause) You want me to go chronologically? Is that alright?

I: Whatever makes sense to you.

P: Well uh, I've been told I'm a sequential thinker.... OK, we spent uh, after our first move, we spent one year in Houston or a little less than one year, and we had an opportunity to move to Indianapolis, Indiana. In Houston we were doing exploration and production; I was with manufacturing to start with, switched to refining, spent 7 years in a refinery, came to Houston to exploration and production and then was given, uh, a chance to go to the Midwest to build pipeline parts. Headquarters was, we had headquarters in Indianapolis and uh, it meant that we would be closer to our homes again, uh our original homes at least. So that was attractive, uh, so we moved to Indianapolis. Second move, uh, we spent 18 months there. It was a good move. I had a brick ranch house outside of, on the outskirts of Indianapolis. I traveled a lot, uh, we had two children when we moved the first time. The second time, we had the second two.

I: And how old were they at that time?

P: Oh, let's see. The one boy was born in 1960, the other was born in '64, so we moved the first time in 1967. So one was seven and the other one was three or four. We moved again in '68, and in Indianapolis we acquired two more children, twin girls and uh a large German shepherd because I was traveling a lot on that job, by car primarily, and a dog was required as security.

I: What do you remember, uh at that point, during that period, about, uh any reactions of the children with moving, uh or not that early on?

P: Not that early on. Although that's our, I shouldn't say impression, that's our opinion, uh that moving children early is not a problem. It's just, they adjust, they seem to fit in into the new environments. We made quite a splash when we moved into the neighborhood with our boys. There were neighbors across the street that had a little girl as I remember, and uh typical children's curiosity at that age, uh I think within the first week or month or so, the children were discovering, back in an old tool shed, exploring each other's anatomies (laughter). I remember the incident well. So we made a hit in the neighborhood

right away. (laughter) So we were in Indianapolis about 18 months, had an interesting job, good job, did a lot of traveling, negotiating with unions, had the full range of human resource/relations stuff that I did with a small shop with good people, great people in pipeline. I enjoyed it. Uh after 18 months we were asked to move to Seawarren, New Jersey.

I: What is it called again?

P: Seawarren, New Jersey. Have you heard of Perth Amboy, New Jersey? It's on a river which is one of the inlets to New York harbor. A lot of industry up there. And I was asked to be the Employee Relations Manager for this plant. It's a distribution point for the company. We distribute gasoline, jet fuel, chemical products, chemical uh the stuff you make cosmetics and pharmaceuticals out of high grain alcohol for example, was shipped in there and then sold to the cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies that are in New Jersey. Uh, it was also a lubricants plant, where they blend stuff to make lubricants. So that was the first job I had where I was in charge of employee relations and I reported to the plant manager. And there were probably about 400 people.

I: If I can stop you here for a second. You had talked, or mentioned a little while ago, I think when you were talking about your first move, about finding a new house and going into a new work environment and you talked about the house aspect. I'm wondering as well for you what your experience was going into a new job each time?

P: My boss told me I'm a chameleon. Uh, I have no problem, don't seem to have a problem getting to know people - what their interests are, what their values are, how they operate. That's never been a problem for me.

I: What do you attribute that to?

P: Lord knows. I grew up in a family of four kids. Uh, I was in the automobile businesses, ran a small business, uh sales of automobiles. And uh, I wasn't a salesman, but I saw a number of people in my life when I was worked there. I was a mechanic and worked my way through school, working for my father and also as a shade tree mechanic. So, I've been around the business and I saw customers. I got to know a lot of people when I was working at the business, mechanics who are still friends of mine. In fact, I visited one of the guys who is in a nursing home when I went back to my hometown. So, I, you know, working in a business like that with people, I got to know people well. I think growing up in a small town, too, you know a lot of people in a small town and they know you. You seem to have an ease with people or the Midwesterners do feel basically very comfortable with people...I don't know...

I: Umm hmm, that makes sense.

P: Uh, anyway, left pipeline, went to New Jersey, which was, I guess the trauma on the house...there wasn't really a trauma on the house in Indianapolis. Moving from Houston we had trouble selling the house, but we had a policy that bought the house, so we got rid of the house and moved into a nice ranch in Indianapolis - good house, good solid house, uh no difficulty finding it, but that was one of the occasions where you looked at your paychecks and said, "Hey, why did we do this?" because monetarily we weren't any farther ahead. New Jersey was probably one of the bigger traumas in buying a house, because New Jersey is right out side of New York and it had a very high real estate market. We are always able to move in at the peaks and move out at the valleys, so our investments in real estate are...(laughter)

I: How fortunate for you (laughter).

P: But we moved into New Jersey in 1970 and it was during one of the upswings in the New York real estate market, so we had a tough time finding a place we could afford. And uh we ended up in Middletown, New Jersey which is a great place, uh in a tract house, tri-level with four kids, the most ungodly floor plan you could ever imagine uh with a basement that leaked. Uh the house wasn't that old, 10 or 15 years, but it uh was one of those badly constructed...worst constructed houses we've ever lived in, in our lives, with a quote uh "country kitchen" that was the size of a uh small room in this office. I know my wife used to laugh at this country kitchen, but a beautiful area and great neighbors, big lot and we enjoyed it. But uh the trauma of moving from a very nice brick house in Indianapolis into a tri-level in New Jersey was a shock and with a very tight budget at that point. I was making about \$1000 a month and that was with 4 kids, a dog and all the other things. A good job, but a very difficult experience. The guy who was there who was the boss, he uh had a health problem, started to suffer from Alzheimer's, probably was an alcoholic, uh, was afraid he was going to lose his job and didn't want people in the head office, which was in New York at that time, to know about this whole thing. He was an ex-military man, was in World War II, awarded the Purple Heart as I remember in the Pacific. He was a very hard man, uh, he was very difficult to work with, uh, not just for me but for everybody. There had been a long bitter strike at that plant right before I got there; there were very hard feelings. People had chose their sides during the labor dispute, so it wasn't a particularly good environment at that location at that time.

I: What made you enjoy it?

P: Oh...

I: Despite all the obstacles, challenges?

P: Uh, because of the challenges and uh you're running your own shop. You got to do everything. I had labor relations, salary negotiations, uh, the whole thing. You got to run your own business. You were part of the employee relations world, if you will. You were reporting to the plant manager so, you know, in the corporate world to become a manager, for our company that's a very important title. It's the first time I got the manager title. And that's, that's kind of a benchmark once you get a managerial title at our company. They don't give titles very easily, very uh, just not easily. We're very conservative with our title structure. We won't have very many vice presidents. A lot of companies have huge numbers of vice presidents. We have a handful of vice presidents. And we use the manager title as a distinction that you really are now part of a supervisory board. When you're a manager it means that you really arrived. So you jump at the chance to get the manager's position because that's a benchmark in somebody's career. And it was a good job. It had a man to work with who was very difficult, and uh I formed some close friendships with other people up there, both personally and my family's. Even to this day my best friend in the world was a manager there. We formed a very close bond at that location. He's here in Houston now. Our families are real close. They're almost like brothers and sisters. And so, adversity there drew people together. It was a tough location to begin with because of the unpopularity of the manager at this time.

I: You mentioned a couple of times, uh, friendships that you've maintained, uh, in different places and I'm wondering if you could speak to that?

P: Well, uh...friendships back in my home area, hometown, we go back frequently. We visit frequently in the Midwest. In fact, I just got back last week. We went for Thanksgiving to see my brother. Uh, we always try to get back during vacations and Christmas sometimes, and we visit people. We make a point to see them. I guess that's it. In the corporate world, uh, if you travel around a lot you just sometimes meet up with same people, particularly here in Houston. This is my third time here so (laughter) so you don't necessarily leave people behind in a corporate job, and you meet up with them again, uh, at some other new location. Uh, I guess I don't have anything besides, other than that, saying we made a point to go back to our home base, if you will, to keep contact, keep relationships there, and uh, I guess also in a sense, uh, we've made it a point to talk to people, to telephone them. I think in the corporate world now, you keep that network of friends that you make. You talk to them, see them in meetings, and uh...now we have...and uh...you get a network of people that you keep in touch with.

I: Have your corporate friendships spilled over into your social life with your wife such that those friendships have become hers as well?

P: Oh yeah, sure, but I think we have a balance. Uh, we purposely, I guess...how would I say that? We purposely haven't made all of our social friends out of our corporate friendships. Uh, uh we've got corporate friends, good corporate friends who are good personal friends, but they're not our only good personal friends. And I've seen people do that, their whole friendships revolve around their jobs.

I: What has been the idea behind that? For purposely, indirectly or however, structuring it that way?

P: It may have somewhat to do with the fact of the kind of work I do. I'm in employee relations. I get involved in peoples' careers and sometimes make some very tough decisions about their continuing employment, about career changes, salary increases...And I've always felt I don't want to get too close to too many people because that may be difficult for me in dealing professionally with these people. So we do have some good company friends, but they're relatively few. I purposely have tried to not get too close to too many employees.

I: okay

P: New Jersey..the boss that was difficult has retired from the company, early; his health problems were known. They moved a new guy in who was the new boss that I worked with for only a short period of time, but he was an extremely good guy. Uh, one of the best managers I ever worked for and one of the best people I've ever seen. He was a graduate of the U.S. uh Coast Guard Academy and uh had a very large family...a big family man, a big sailor, named---, was his name. Also from the Midwest, grew up in Milwaukee. His father was a carpenter as I remember. --- was a very good worker. Uh, he was so good, he was probably...Uh, what's the term...? Canonized, for the time he spent at the plant. He turned it around, and he's a real good boss. Uh, I enjoyed working with him. He died at an early age of cancer after I'd left that location. So I've always considered that to be a loss for me personally and for the company, because I think he had the makings of a very good senior manager. Uh, it was a real tragedy. Uh, I worked for --- for about nine months and then we were transferred to Atlanta, Georgia.

I: So, you guys certainly had some big geographic changes.

P: Yeah, uh, Atlanta, we were there only a year. Worked, uh, again I worked in employee relations. Uh, I handled the company's distribution employees from Maine to Florida. So I went to Atlanta and I traveled every week, I think every week we were there for a year. I traveled out of the airport. Uh, I had a company car, but the biggest thing I used it for was to go to the airport. I think I drove it to Carolina once to a distribution point there.

I: Can you say more about that?

P: Oh, uh, it was very difficult cause you lose a lot in your life when you're on the road all the time. Uh, that's the first job I did where I did a lot of traveling. Let's see that was in '71, uh again, that was the first job where I had to travel. So I did it. Uh, another good job, enjoyed it. Trauma on that move was the fact that uh we sold our house in New Jersey. The market had gone down greatly as I remember. I think we sold it directly to a buyer, but anyway...Bought a house in Atlanta. It was a spec house, had to finish it out, uh, all it needed was paint. We decorated it. So we move into a hotel, a motel...4 kids, the dog and my wife and I and had two adjoining rooms. Uh, interesting experiences there. (laughter) We lost the girls on one occasion. Uh, I was coming back from a trip to Florida uh and got home and was told that there was a little bit of excitement - the girls had gotten lost. My wife was in room trying to deal with the contractors to get the house done and the girls were with their brothers. And their brothers were watching TV, and they were told to keep an eye on your sisters. So my wife finished up, went in there and saw the boys watching TV and no girls and she said, "Where are the girls?" And they said, "We don't know." (laughter) So after a panicky search and getting the hotel staff involved and running all over the place, she came back to the room and noticed one of their legs, one of their shoes sticking out from under the bed. They had crawled under the bed. They had to have been about three or four and fallen asleep under the bed. (laughter).

I: (laughter)

P: So...and I was a hero there, while living in that motel. It was, they were sitting at the pool one day, and I pulled up. All the kids were in there. There was another woman sitting there with her little boy, and they were at the shallow end, in I don't know, two or three feet of water. And the kid was sitting on the edge, and boy!...The kid popped over in the water and the mother evidently was, couldn't swim or whatever, but she wouldn't even go into the water, and she was screaming bloody murder. And uh, my wife mentioned, "You know, you better go in and get that kid. (laughter) So I walked down to the shallow end in my shoes and business suit and waded out and plucked the kid out. (laughter) So even though I can't swim, I was, I was a life saving hero there, saving that kid. Uh, the trauma there was trying to get the house done. Uh...

I: A lot of excitement in that motel, huh?

P: (laughter) We got the house done, got moved in there, spent a year. I remember moving a lot of red clay. The house was in an area which is north of the city of Atlanta. And I moved clay because in Georgia everything is red clay. And I had to level the front yard. So I had a great big pile of the stuff in the back yard and

had to move it, move it all in a wheelbarrow to the front yard to kind of finish off the yard. And by the time I got it done, we got moved. And we moved back to Houston the second time in 1972.

I: How did you, how did you like Atlanta?

P: It was a great place to live. Enjoyed it. Uh, I think one of the things I probably should mention...while we lived in all these different places, uh, we had help, from parents, particularly my wife's parents who would sit with the kids while we went off and went house hunting. Uh, we had a lot of visits from our parents, from both of our parents. They came to New Jersey, to Atlanta, places like this. So if you say, "How did you keep contacts?" Well, one thing is that we had, we had family and parents who came visit us. Friends too. And as we moved around it gave them an opportunity to visit places and see things. We got to be tour guides in New York City, tour guides in Atlanta. Every place we've been. We learn the place, so we become tour guides. So one of the ways you keep contact is not only to visit people, but to have them come see you.

I: umm hmmm

P: So, Houston was '73 to '82. Uh, everyone of these moves was, as I remember, it was a promotion. Uh got to Houston in '72. Uh, another traumatic event in uh buying a house. We bought on the Northwest side and uh with four kids had to get a good school system.

I: How old were they at that time?

P: Ooooh..., let's see. The girls were preschool and as far as the boys, they were about middle school, grade school, somewhere along there. And the Cy-Fair school system, at that time, was expanding, growing. We had friends out there. In fact some friends we'd made in New Jersey. Our kids were close to their kids.

I: uh huh

P: So we went and we looked in Memorial and decided we still couldn't afford that and uh ended up on the Northwest side of town, buying a house. And it was about a year and a half old, nice house, nice great big house-3000 square feet, but the house hunting trip.... We, since we...the north side of Houston was booming. All the 1960 area was being built, so we had choices, new homes, you know, homes that were just about finished, whatever. And we'd come out of a new home in Atlanta cause we had just got that finished off and it was time to move. So, it was, you know, kind of hard to go back into a house that, it wasn't new, at least from my wife's perspective. Uh, so we, uh got a house that we liked. It was only a year and a half old. Everything was almost brand-spanking

new. All the landscaping was in. It would be, from my perspective, a much better place to go into. But it was, I just remembered moving all this clay. (laughter)

I: Right, and you see a yard done and...

P: yeah (laughter) Anyway, we put our earnest money down and we're about to go back to the airport, to go back to Atlanta to relieve her parents who were staying with these four kids. And uh, that morning we were to leave we discovered in this development some new homes being built in the back of the development and my wife suddenly decided "Well, maybe we should get a new home," instead of this one we'd settled on. And it was a rather, uh, spirited discussion about that, about whether to forfeit the earnest money that we'd put down on this house. And we fought all the way to the airport, and it was a quiet trip to Atlanta. (laughter) But we stayed with the house and we bought it. I prevailed and said "No, we're not about to give it up." Uh, it's one of those stories that I like to tell later, cause, uh, we moved into the house and within a couple of years there was a flood in Northchester and uh, the homes that we didn't buy along the back area had seven feet of water in them. The home that we did buy was high and dry...So, uh, it's fun telling that story sometimes about our choices of homes. My wife, too, has a tendency to say that every home we've ever left was the best home we've ever lived in. She gets, uh, settled in and uh get very comfortable in the home, and every time we have to leave, she says, "Oh, this is the best house I've ever had." So, I kid her.

I: It must happen quickly, I mean given the turn around with some of your moves, it must turn from a house to a home rather quickly for yall.

P: yeah

I: How does that occur? What do you attribute that to?

P: Well, we're curious. We've got kids. You get involved in the community. Uh, particularly with kids. You get involved in school and events and so forth. All kinds of sporting events, little league and all sorts of events. The kids have been involved in every kind of team you could think of - swim team, soccer team, softball teams, baseball teams...

I: uh, huh

P: uh, I've got my work and I get very deep into that. My wife is a very outgoing person.

I: She, does she work outside of the home?

P: No, well uh, she has on occasion. She's a nurse and uh, but never had very much opportunity to have very much of a job where its been full-time and continual. You know, she's worked as a school nurse part-time. She's worked in a nursing home part-time. She was an emergency room nurse when we first got married. Uh, and after we got married, we had during that first year, we had one child. This is one of those cases where she was going to work a while and then we'd have our first child, but that was before the pill and other things. So within the first year, we were married in September, and our child arrived the next October. So, she's had a rather full life taking care of those kids.

I: yeah

P: So, she's worked part time, but she's a very outgoing person. Uh, she's been involved in all kinds of group sessions on the uh...during the seventies she helped with the club, what am I trying to say?, the recreational association, sort of the pools, the tennis courts and all that kind of stuff. She's been active in tennis, so she's had a very active social life. So, we just seem to, uh, between kids and our interests we just seem to get in there.

I: Get into the community?

P: Yeah, now, I've not ever joined any social clubs or socialized...well how should I say...I'm not a golfer, don't play golf. I never got into toastmasters or Lions or any of those kinds of things or organizations. Uh, moving around that quickly you really don't get those kind of experiences, when you move five times in five years. Luckily we got back to Houston and stayed in Houston ten years. I changed jobs here in Houston but didn't have to move. So we had a ten year period in Houston from '72 to '82 where we stayed in the same location.

I: uh huh

P: But, our kids grew up basically here. Went through a series of schools out in Cypress Creek, Cypress Fairbanks schools. So they grew up here.

I: So maybe then, they were more established here?

P: Yes, no question about that. Because the move then that we made overseas was in '82. One of the boys was at Baylor...the older children were both in college. One was going to be a junior. One was going to be a freshman. The two girls were in, I guess they were, they had finished 7th grade when we moved overseas.

I: That must have been a big change. What do you remember about when that opportunity came to you?

P: Well, the jobs I had in Houston all were traveling jobs. So, the ten years I was here, I was on the road an awful lot, not as much as I was at home, but I did travel a lot. I had responsibility for the company's retail sales in one job, distribution in another job and uh for what we call industrial relations planning. All those jobs involved travel around the United States and I was gone quite often for those ten years. I'd get back and maybe be in town for Saturday, Sunday, Monday and travel Tuesday through Thursday, get back on Friday. Some weeks and some months I didn't travel, obviously not a lot.

I: um hmm. You mentioned earlier that you kind of miss a lot when you're traveling.

P: Sure.

I: Umm, can you speak to that a little more?

P: Well, you miss kids' events, plays, boyfriends...uh, I was a little league, I wasn't a manager, I was a coach and really had to struggle to do that...

I: umm

P: to be there for the boys' practices and games and so on and so forth. And you miss some of the events where your spouse needs help. I can remember calling in from Maine. I got word from one of the kids that my wife was at the emergency room with one of the kids. He'd swung from a vine into a tree, as I remember, and she had to take him to get patched up. So, you called in sometimes and you...would you have been there, you obviously would have been involved in the support and the help, you know, if the kids get sick and so forth. So, its not only the good things that you miss. You miss some of the things that your spouse would have liked for you to have been there for.

I: Right.

P: So, there's that negative. There's, there's no question that you, you miss some of the stuff that goes on.

I: umm hmmm

P: Uhm...this question was triggered by you asking what I remember about the move overseas, Right?

I: Right.

P: My boss called me. I was on the road. I was in Ohio doing some work there and said uh, "We'd like you to consider a transfer to Arabia. And I'd indicated I was hoping for this, so that was not a surprise, but I was thinking England. (laughter) And he said, "We need to know rather quickly whether you will go." Now, I've always approached my wife when we were about to transfer and said, "We have this opportunity...." Uh, and if she would have ever said, "No, I don't want to do this anymore," I probably would have turned it down. Okay, but she always said, "Fine, let's go." So, I called her this time and said, "We have an opportunity..." (laughter)

I: The words...(laughter)

P: And that's it. That's the code - they're asking us to move. Okay, we're to go overseas. "Oh great!" - cause she wanted to go to England too cause some good friends of ours had moved there and we had visited them. So she says, "Where do they want us to go?" Arabia. And she says "Oooh" (laughter) So, anyway, I said "I've got to give them an answer tomorrow."

I: Wow, is that typical?

P: Yes.

I: that's fast. How do you deal with that aspect of it?

P: Well, the domestic moves in the United States have never been a problem because that's the way you move up. It's Houston to Indianapolis.."we've got a job up there and here's what it is." It's a promotion and its pay and, you know, you either go or you don't go. You don't need a whole lot of time to make that decision. You hear...well, okay, you say...just recognizing that in this era if you said "no" to moves, you're probably limiting how high you are going to go in the corporation.

I: um hmm

P: And that's okay. If you are happy in a location and you want to take your chances that your promotional opportunities may come down, that's fine. They won't fire you, but just recognize that you probably put one more barrier on your career as far as advancing goes.

I: um hmm

P: Uh, So anyway, my wife...well, our company is basically a domestic company. We're kind of the operating subsidiary in the United States. So there's not many of our people overseas. So there's this guy who's a member of the church that

we went to, who'd been overseas. So she calls him, says "Hey, there's a lot of things I want to do and could I travel to Africa and other places if we take this assignment?" And he says, "Sure, you can take all kinds of trips." And he goes on and on and says, "Yeah, you can take a trip to Africa." So, when I talked to her again, she says, "Yeah, we'll go!" (laughter) So you know it was about that quick. She checked into it and I did one other thing too. I have a friend who is in corporate security and he uh, one of his jobs was to check out locations in the Middle East. And I got a hold of him and I said, uh, I asked him about the security and he gave us assurances that, uh, not to worry. So uh, I took the job and was told that we had about in effect 6 months to uh prepare to go overseas. And the company does a good job of preparing their people to go into places like this. We spent about two weeks in Washington, D.C...

I: You and your wife?

P: My wife and I, receiving cultural training, language training. Although their language training was, well two weeks to teach somebody Arabic, grammatically correct Arabic, was just a waste of time. Uh, but uh, the move overseas was uh, fun. Uh, the trip itself was fun. I had uh, three women - my wife, two daughters and thirteen pieces of luggage plus carry-ons. I had to go into London, stop there and do some business with some of the outfits that were hiring people for us in Arabia, some of these placement outfits who basically recruited for us and spent some time with them. And then they asked me to stop by Amsterdam. We're building a refinery there. Now, I had traveled back and forth to Arabia several times, so I knew the ropes on how to get there. So it wasn't a new route for me, but I had my wife and two daughters, all this luggage. We flew into Kentwick and we had to get to a London hotel. So we have all this luggage and they have very small taxis. So we had 3 taxis - two for us and the one, the other one for just the luggage. So we got to the hotel and I did my thing and the girls did their thing. The girls had never been to London before. Well, my wife had been on vacation, so she knew a bit, and they did things. But then we had to go out of Heathrow, so I ordered a large limo, a Rolls Royce limo. It was an old one. So we got ourselves and all this luggage into the limo and then went to Amsterdam. After we got to Amsterdam, I had to take the train to the Hague. Well, my counterpart who was working at the refinery, his wife entertained my wife and daughters while we went off for a day and did our thing. And we came back to Amsterdam and went on through. And I've always said if I can transfer that many people and that much luggage through that many cities and not lose anything... We didn't lose our passports, didn't lose any money, didn't lose traveler's checks, didn't lose a piece of luggage. I didn't lose any of my kids, although there were times... (laughter)

I: That's incredible.

P: So, we got to Arabia and spent 3 years in Arabia. A lot of traveling, the kids got to see an awful lot. The other kids came and joined us. We went on a safari in Africa.

I: The two boys?

P: Yeah. In fact, uh, the two big trips that I remember, we met in Kenya one time. The first year, it was right after Christmas, we met them. The boys flew to Arabia, joined us in Arabia, spent some time there and as a family we flew to Kenya and took a safari for about two weeks and uh, then the boys dispersed back to the States. They were both in college. That was one memorable trip. And we skied once in Austria. My sons, one son came to Arabia, the other son who was with his fiancée and his best buddy flew to London and my wife, daughters and son flew from Arabia through Kuwait to London. We had a Shell group friend who loaned us his house outside of London. So, we all gathered in this house and did our thing in London and we were there through New Year's Eve. And then the girls and my wife and I flew to Switzerland, and the kids, the other ones, took a ferry across and a train to Paris and a train to Zurich. And we all took a train to Austria and skied in Austria. Then they flew back to the States and we flew back to Arabia. So those are the kinds of we did, uh, uh as a, as family. Those were big trips. There were other trips too. We went to New Zealand. The girls went with us and we took a cruise through the Aegean Sea. It's quite a difference growing up overseas. It was a great experience.

I: ummm.

P: The girls ended up going to boarding school. They asked us... You signed up for two years on this thing. The girls of course thought they'd be there for two years and would go to 2 years of school in Arabia.

I: They thought that the Arabia assignment was 2 years?

P: Well it was. You signed up for 2 years, but they had an option to ask you to stay longer. And they asked me to stay longer, so uh, I decided I would, but that meant the girls had to go out of the country because there was no school beyond the ninth grade for foreigners. So, they had to go off to school, and they opted, they could have gone to Switzerland, U.S., other places and their very best friend opted to go to a school outside of London. So, they opted to go there too. And uh, they weren't so sure they wanted to do this, but uh, they had signed up for 2 years, now here they were three years and they had to go off to boarding school. Part of the attraction was we went to Hong Kong and had a whole new wardrobe made for them, and then went over to the States and bought a whole bunch of clothes for them in the States. We shipped stuff from Hong Kong and all flew back to London together and went to see CATS and so forth. But there

was some trauma when we left them behind, both for the girls and for ourselves. Uh, we're not British. The British are used to sending their kids off to school early in their lives. It was difficult for us to leave them behind.

I: um hmm

P: So. we uh, took a boat across the channel and went to France, toured France, went to Nice, Nice to Rome and flew from Rome back to Arabia. The girls went to school in London. An interesting experience in that, uh, the girls uh, a good experience, but it was an adjustment. It was tough.

I: What do you remember, particularly, about that, for them, for you, for your wife?

P: Well, let's see. Uh, there were, I remember about caring teachers. It's a prep school, a lot of individualized attention. They were struggling with Math, particularly one of the girls, and this teacher who worked with them, who cared a lot about them... Uh, we never had any traumatic, tearful phone calls or anything like that, but you know, they said, "Okay, We'll do this for a year, but then we'll call it quits." Uh, my wife went to visit them, had a great time visiting the girls and their buddies. They spent a couple of weeks in Europe. Uhm, it was interesting, that more of the trauma came back in the United States, much more so than going to the boarding school.

I: hmmm

P: Let me tell you the, uh, I was asked to stay a 4th year. By then I had done everything I wanted to do in that job. I was ready to go back to the States and do something different. The girls were saying, too, well, one of them in particular, "We're ready to go back to the States and be regular teenagers." So they told me I was going to Houston, Texas. And, uh, then I got a call and they said, "Hey," uh...I knew this man, I've worked for him and he died. He was in operations, the ER manager in New Orleans. He died at a very young age. So they say, "We haven't replaced him and we'd like you to take this job in New Orleans." My wife had told me there was one place...she'd go anyplace in the world except New Orleans. Okay. So, I said, "Well, it's another promotion" and I said "Well, I'll probably take it but let me go tell my wife and daughters we're moving to New Orleans instead of Houston. This was on the 4th of July and there was a party at the house and I didn't tell them that evening because there was no time to do it. And the next day we had some friends come over from Baton Rouge, a good guy, also in the oil business...and his wife. They were not with our company, but he was working on this project with us. And uh, we were looking at Turkish carpets. We had a bunch at our house we were considering. And uh, we invited them over to look at the carpets and uh, we had the carpets

laid out and I told my friend, I said, "Do they have carpets like this in New Orleans?" and he said, "Oh yeah." I said, "I bet they really look good in homes in New Orleans, wouldn't they?" And he said, "Oh yeah." And I said, "Well, that's where we are supposed to go next." Well, our friends were just pleased as punch, because they're from Louisiana and they've got all kinds of family in New Orleans, but my wife wasn't. (laughter) So, I uh, I broke the norm there of asking her, of saying, "We have an opportunity, would you go with me?" And uh...

I: Did you, do you think it's because, you know that she wasn't, that this was one place that she might not be willing to go?

P: Oh yeah! I was being smart, and uh, because I knew I'd get resistance on this one. And uh, I figured with our friends there who were so much enthused about Louisiana and New Orleans, I had a chance of convincing her that it would be a good place to go. She resented the fact that I hadn't cleared that with her privately, and I had kind of broken the uh, the norm which was to say "Hey, we've got an opportunity."

I: umm hmmm

P: Cause that was one of the places that she definitely didn't want to go. But we went, uh...

I: What was, what was that like?

P: She's heard a lot about Louisiana, the education. She's talked to a lot of company wives who are out in the boonies in places like Lafayette, and some of them really hate it, really hate Louisiana and some of those places - the isolation, the education - all of those things you hear about Louisiana. So she had it in her mind, in her mind's eye what this place was like, and decided she didn't want to be a part of this. But it was a very good job, another promotion, more money. So we were able to come back to the U.S. in 1985, tried to sell our house in Houston, but that was when the real estate market had collapsed. Okay, and we're going to New Orleans where it hadn't collapsed yet. And the girls were quite unhappy with their parents, particularly their father.

I: unhappy?

P: Yes. They even suggested a separation where their mother and them come back and live in Houston and they could go to the high school their brothers had been...

I: mmmm

P: ...and I could work over there and come over on the weekends. (laughter)

I: Hmmm, What was that like for you?

P: It wasn't very pleasant. We had a rather tearful, crying, hysterical scene in a hotel room one night in New Orleans while we were there, and uh, that wasn't pleasant for anybody. Uh, interesting too, at this point, they were wanting to go back to boarding school. That experience with kids there, the bonding was so deep, uh, they were, by the time they had left, they were wishing, they were saying, "We wish you'd made a different decision, we would have stayed here another year."

I: hmm

P: And then the trauma of not coming back to Houston and going to New Orleans just added to that.

I: yeah.

P: So, it was even suggested that it might be better for them to go back to boarding school.

I: How did you guys reconcile this?

P: (sigh) Uh, well I, I told the girls that I loved them, but their mother and I weren't going to part (laughter) and my job was here. I needed to get on with it. The company needed me here. The guy I had replaced had died and there was no one there for 6 months. I'd signed on to do a job with this company. It was a job I wanted, that I needed - the opportunity was, and uh, they were just going to have to live with this. That was just the way it was going to have to be. Everything didn't always work out the way we wanted. Being the babies, they'd had a pretty good life, a lot of traveling, a lot of things, and this was probably the first time, cause when they came to Houston they were three 3 years old. So all the moves before then, they don't remember, and then the Arabian move. They'd had a pretty good life. So, this was the first time that they'd probably had to deal with something that just didn't go their way. I guess my bias is that life just doesn't always go your way and you need to try before you decide it's something you just can't deal with. I did talk to my functional boss over here. I had a boss in New Orleans, but I let them know here that I'm having problems with the girls on this move, and if we can't resolve it, we'll have to ask for another assignment.

I: What kind of support did you get on that?

P: In the sense that - "I understand. We hope you can work it out. Get back to me if it gets unmanageable." If I would have gone to them and said, "Hey, we're going to have some real emotional problems or the kids are going to run away or something like that, or they're doing these kinds of things" - they're going to help you handle it. So, I was prepared to do that if I knew the kids couldn't adjust.

I: um hmm

P: Well, we got in there so late, uh, late in the year as far as getting kids in school that uh... In the city of New Orleans there are some good public schools. There's some excellent private schools. The private schools were all filled. Uh, we got into a Lutheran school out in Metairie that had been recommended to us. Paid my fees. Got the kids in there. The kids went to school one day and that evening very calmly said, "We need to talk to you about this school, Dad. You paid your money, and that's fine, but we don't think we're going to get much of an education there." They then explained to me what had happened in the classrooms that day. So I went in the next day and talked to the principal and uh, he was very candid with me and indicated that, yes, they were in the process of, were going to have to work on that school to get its academic standards up and it was going to take faculty, parents, administration and students to do that. Well, I was, they were in their junior years and soon would be going to college, and we didn't have the time to work with them. So, we migrated across the lake there, Lake Ponchartrain to the northern shore which is a community of corporate people primarily professionals. They have a very good school system, comparable to the Houston suburban public school system. And the girls got into school there in Mandeville, Louisiana, St. Tammany Parish. And we ended up buying over there. My wife found a house that she loved in a place called Beau Chen, had a golf course. It was like a nature preserve. We had a great time over there. The girls were athletic. They got into the volleyball team, made good friends. That year was tough for them, their junior year. They thought Dad had done something awful, but uh, when they got to be 16 they could drive a car, and by the time they were seniors they had pretty much adjusted. But it was a tough year. They didn't want to be there.

I: Hmmm.

P: And uh, we moved back to Houston in 1988. We spent 3 years in New Orleans. We think New Orleans is one of the best places we lived. My wife does too, one of the best houses she's ever had. We go back, in fact, interesting...the girls were not going to go to school in Louisiana, not L.S.U. So they went to Stephen F. Austin their freshman year. Their sophomore year I got the opportunity to come back to Houston. So I called them up and there's this dead silence. You know, "We're coming back to Texas, isn't that great?" I get this dead silence. Uh, well,

one of them then decides that she'd like to go to school in communications at Loyola University. Loyola has a great communications school. So, one of them, as we transfer over here, she transfers back to New Orleans to go to school. (laughter) Her sister who stayed at Stephen F. finds every opportunity, she finds reasons to visit her sister in New Orleans. Okay. So what you find out is that kids are pretty flexible, and that time when they were sophomores and thought Louisiana stinks and New Orleans is a horrible place, by the time their freshmen in college they've discovered Mardi Gras, bars and all the other great things you can do in Louisiana, and you know, it's the place to be. So, kids don't know everything, and sometimes they'll give you some grief about, you know, "We don't want to do this." But uh, if they give it half a chance, it works out. So, anyway, we're back in Houston since '88. I'm probably going to end up my career here. Uh, we built a house in West University. We, uh, decided we didn't want to be in suburbia anymore. Uh, looked at a high rise, but decided we weren't ready to give up a lot of stuff yet. So, we ended up building a house in West University and went through the trauma of that. I say trauma - my wife totally enjoyed it. We've been in it two years. Have I covered everything?

I: Uh, I think you got probably most of...from my notes any questions I had. Anything else that comes to you about moving? From where things stand, you kind of made a couple of comments that gave me the impression that things are pretty alright for you and the girls now?

P: yeah.

I: ...that the trauma to the relationship between you and your wife and the two of them has been resolved?

P: Yeah, yeah definitely. One of them just got married. She's a great kid. Finished at Loyola, trying to find work here. The other one is still at Stephen F. Austin. She graduates Saturday. She's decided she's going to go on and get a master's. She wants to teach. She's very comfortable at Stephen F....Uh, I gave some thought to transferring around, uh, as part of this interview process. Would I do it again? Cause I know people that didn't transfer around, who stayed in Houston, have their houses paid for, living quite comfortably some of them, even better than I am. They've advanced their careers and they've done very well, advanced higher than I have, didn't make near as many moves, didn't work overseas. Uh, didn't go through the trauma of having a 30 year mortgage over and again. You know, was I dumb? Did I do the right thing? I don't know. Obviously, I've had a good career. I've enjoyed it, made good money, but did I make the right decisions in doing this with the trauma that you sometimes go through. That's a good question. I think on balance I'd do it again, because, as I said, I started out wanting to travel, learn, get exposure. Now my kids are something else. They may not agree with this. I've got a son who's working on

his Ph.D., and he's probably going to go to some small town and some college and not move around. My other son is a territorial sales representative, travels all over the country, and the girls - who knows? They like to travel. They're both wanting to get jobs overseas because of the exposure. So I think on balance for my wife and I and the kids, it's been a good thing. It's a lifestyle that, like I said, has some sacrifices, heartaches and emotional trauma, but on balance we'd do it again.

I: Bottom line, I suppose that's what counts.

P: Yeah.

I: that it's been meaningful and worthwhile.

P: Yeah, both career-wise and the things I've done, the people I've met, the places we've been, and the friends we have. We have friends all over, get Christmas cards from all over the place. We've got some Austrian friends who are working in the States who we're going to go see when they go on home leave to Austria - try to get to Eastern Europe then, since we'll have a home base in Austria. I couldn't do those things if we hadn't moved, hadn't been mobile. So, is that a wrap up?

I: Okay. That sounds good.

VITA

Saundra Leigh Daigle was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on June 22, 1965. She attended schools in Baton Rouge and Houston, Texas, graduating from McCullough High School of The Woodlands, Texas in May 1983. The following August, she entered The University of Texas at Austin and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology in May, 1987. In September 1987, she entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education in May, 1993.