

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN ADAPTATION WORK FOLLOWING AN EMPLOYEE
RELOCATION

By

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ABSTRACT

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The twenty-first century job market is characterized by a high degree of workforce mobility. Employees are often called upon to relocate to new communities to get jobs, keep jobs and advance in jobs. Family members who are not themselves part of the employer/employee relationship are affected when they must leave their homes and communities to accompany the transferred employee, and effort must be expended to re-establish both the family as a whole and each individual family member to the new home.

The majority of corporate transfers are husband-centered as 83% of domestic corporate transferees are male. (Marshall and Greenwood 2002). Thus, it is primarily women and children whose lives are affected by an employer-employee relationship of which they are an unacknowledged participant. In addition to the home and community-related costs, transferred spouses often give up their own employment and interrupt their own career trajectories. The relocated employee has accepted new work but the family has also accepted the work of re-creating their daily lives. This study investigates what this work that I have termed “adaptation work” consists of, who does it, and what challenges and aids are encountered in carrying it out.

The project used a qualitative methodology of in-depth interviews with husbands and wives who recently underwent an employee relocation. The research found that adaptation work is very real, very protracted, and very multi-faceted. Further, gender

plays a prominent role in the definition and distribution of adaptation work such that employee relocation is a phenomenon rife with gender inequality and contributing to gender inequality. Adaptation work spans categories of productive and reproductive work. Productive work includes family members taking on activities to find new employment after the move or carrying out activities that maximize financial benefit to the family from move-related activities. Reproductive work makes up the majority of adaptation work, and it includes emotion work, kin work, household labor, child care, household management, and care work outside the home as a by-product of volunteerism and network building activities. Adaptation work also includes the important work of meaning making and identity formation.

The research revealed four macro categories of adaptation work that relate to the following four important realms of social life - identity construction (*Framing the Move*), construction of home (*The mechanics of physical relocation*), construction of work (*Defining or Re-defining the spouse's labor role*), and construction of community (*Building social connections and support networks*).

Definitions of adaptation work across gender reiterate the association of women with care work and emotion work. Women are more likely than men to recognize the need for the emotion work of renegotiating their own and their children's past relationships. Women are more likely to recognize the need to develop new social capital. Most importantly, women are more likely to consider the totality of effects of each adaptation action on different family members and then to define and manage work accordingly to maximize each family member's benefit and minimize each family member's burden.

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PREFACE

The research undertaken for this dissertation project was inspired by my own experiences and struggles as a person, a wife and a mother who has been, repeatedly, part of a relocating family. The antithetical feelings of loss and excitement; the sense that following upward mobility is sensible even though it hurts; the feeling of being on a moving train that you can't get off. These were my emotions as I packed up a house and found myself plopped down in what felt like a foreign land. And each time I had two little faces...then two bigger faces...then three faces, looking at me to see a comforting smile and to find out "what now?"

As our young family was moved (or we chose to be moved? It's hard to tell which was really the case...) once, then twice, then a third time, I felt a strong sense of loss and a great deal of burden. I also saw many other families - some I knew well, others I didn't - going through similar circumstances. Most didn't seem to question the wisdom of their decisions as I did, but they were all saddled with two responsibilities - making a life and making a living - that seemed to be at odds with one another. One thing that seemed clear to me - it was the wives and mothers in these families who were somehow responsible for bridging the gap between the seemingly contradictory activities.

Sociology has long recognized the evolution of labor over the twentieth century into two categories, productive and reproductive labor. The discipline has been active in identifying the conflicts and disparate power balances that result from the division and its direct association with gender. There is even a relatively new sub-discipline that looks at balancing work and family. But no theory or definition seemed to satisfy the situation in which I repeatedly found myself. No theory explained how it is that the person who did the reproductive work is supposed to smile

when that work is undone and she must start over again. That hard-to-conjure smile is itself one of the fundamental tools of the rebuilding effort, yet the world we live in also tells us to value our friends, our family, our homes. The people around me expressed, in what seemed a genuine manner, that they dearly cherished their friends and relationships, that they consciously and deliberately created worlds for their children that they believed were worthwhile. At the same time, they needed to and often did smile at the prospect of parting from those friends, relationships, and worlds.

As an analytic soul, I wanted to find out simply - "Is it just me?" Maybe it is. Or maybe the mandatory smiles on the faces of others in my situation are hiding the fact that I'm not really alone. Maybe the smiles are masks of indifference that are the product of some underlying issue. I am uneasy with the competing requirements of the responsibilities of making a living and making a life, so as Mills (1959) implores, I have chosen to try and understand the social elements of the problem - to find out "how much of this is a personal trouble and how much is a social issue?"

I have chosen to look at the process of closing the gap between making a living and making a life when a family is moved and to see what truths about our social world today are revealed in the process. In order not to be vague, I will disclose that my first move came immediately after giving birth to my second child and at the request of my husband's employer, a Fortune 500 company that listed this 3-year assignment as part of his grooming to move "up the corporate ladder". The second move came as my children were entering pre-school and elementary school when the grooming assignment came to a close. The third move came just two years later when the company was taken over by an even larger entity and the corporate

ladder we had invested in disappeared along with my husband's job. He was unable to find a job in the area where we lived, so we packed up again, this time with three kids in tow.

Through the interviews I conducted for this research I saw clearly that my story is not unique. Thus, I am not including my own experiences in this study. I have taken off my "relocating-mom" hat and put on my "sociologist" hat, hoping they don't look too much the same. I have worked hard to stay true to the research process but recognize that some of my own feelings may have leaked through. For this I hope I will be forgiven, as readers recognize the fundamentally social nature of "social science".

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In the new millennium, the labor market for Americans is a facet of the overall global economy. Regardless of the industry or the form of business ownership, individual jobs occupied by Americans are affected by decisions and actions made in locations both near and far, foreign and domestic. One implication of the global economy on individual lives is workforce mobility. Employees, along with their families, are often called upon to relocate to new communities within the U.S. or across the globe, to get jobs, keep jobs and advance in jobs. Hodson and Sullivan (2002) point out that more than half of all moves in the United States are believed to be work-related and that “promotions, new job responsibilities and even just job retention are sometimes attached to geographic moves” (79). Also, they contend that “frequent transfer is a technique firms use to train managers and initiate them into the company” (313). Commonly, professional middle-class and upper-middle-class employees are relocated or asked to relocate repeatedly, “sometimes as often as every two or three years and, on average, every 5 to 7 years.” (Eby and Russell 2000: 44). “Relocation is just a tool of our culture,” explains an officer for one major corporation that transfers up to 1,300 managers each year (Taussig 2009).

Employers and the relocation industry (e.g. real estate companies, appraisers, household goods movers, relocation management organizations) are so interested in maintaining a mobile workforce that they have formed committees, councils, and lobbying organizations that support the process. They research barriers to relocation; devise strategies to encourage relocation and reduce the attendant costs; and, follow legislation that can impact relocation. These initiatives

include the Worldwide Employee Relocation Council; national organizations like the Canadian Relocation Council; statewide organizations such as the Kentucky Relocation Council; and, regional, city-wide or community-wide organizations like the Chicago – CRC.

The secondary data on incidence of employee relocation in the U.S. is mixed. A March 2002 survey by the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that about three million people moved to another county, state or country because employers had transferred or recruited them (Kilborn 2005). OneSource Relocation, a U.S. domestic and international employee relocation management and consulting services company located in Atlanta, Georgia estimates using trade association and IRS statistics that the annual average number of U.S. domestic transfers is 794,000 (OneSource 2011). According to the Worldwide Employee Relocation Council (ERC), the international trade association for individuals and businesses with an interest in workforce mobility, there were approximately 287,000 corporate-paid employee relocations among their members in the U.S. in 2009 (Worldwide ERC Facts and Statistics 2010). After a decline in transfer activity from 2006 through 2009 as a result of the economic climate, the transfer volume of current employees was expected to rise at a rate of 6 percent in 2010 (Lamech 2010). Employee transfers make up about 74% of relocations. The additional 26% are new hire relocations that occur as a result of deliberate job searches seeking career advancement, jobs pursued in reaction to job insecurity and threat of reorganizations, and jobs pursued as a direct result of job loss from reorganization and downsizing (Ibid).

However, it is not just businesses and employees that are involved in this transaction. Annual tracking surveys show that 84% of domestic transferees are married and 65% have children (Marshall and Greenwood 2002). Extrapolating the most conservative estimate (287,000 transfers) and the more inclusive estimate (794,000) using the predicted growth rates, the

marriage rate and an estimate of 1.5 children per family with children reveals that employee relocation affects between 1 million and 2.5 million individuals in the U.S. each year. And most of these individuals are family members who are not direct participants in the employer-employee relationship that precipitated the move. Both estimates are cautiously generated as the 2000 U.S. Census reports an average of 1.86 children per family in families with children.

The majority of corporate transfers are husband-centered. Data show that 83% of domestic corporate transferees and 87% of international corporate transferees are male (Marshall & Greenwood 2002). It is, therefore, primarily wives and children whose lives and activities are affected by an employer-employee relationship of which they are an unacknowledged participant. Accompanying family members who are not themselves part of the employer/employee relationship are profoundly affected when they find themselves far from their sense of place, their existing support networks and the context within which they conduct their daily lives. Consequently, great effort must be expended to re-establish both the family as a whole and each individual family member.

Though economically-motivated, intra-national transience has been a constant throughout our nation's history, the character of that transience and the categories of individuals who are subject to it have changed. Through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was low-income, struggling individuals who found themselves on the move in search of opportunity. In the late twentieth century it was corporate managers with life-long commitments to and from major firms who moved with the confidence that their employer would be a constant in their changing life (Margolis 1979). Today's transient managers engage in relocation within the context of an uncertain job market characterized by down-sizing, reorganization and little to no assurance regarding their status with their employer. In addition, they are members of families

that are more likely than families in the past to need and/or desire that their partners also have paid work outside the home. In today's historical context as in the past, economically motivated migrations affect entire families, not just wage earners themselves. But the effects of and remedies to the challenges brought on by the moves are different as the relationship between families and major social institutions has changed.

When families are moved to a new community to facilitate a job change for one member of the family, the other members of the family are affected in a variety of ways. There may be some benefits from the move, but there are also costs. An employee's family members, who are disproportionately women and children, must give up their previous home, including the physical dwelling and the surrounding community with its offerings or lack of offerings of arts, activities, stores, scenery, etc. Also, they give up a sense of familiarity, and they give up the close proximity to individuals and organizations with whom they were connected and from whom they drew varying levels of resources such as companionship, support and identity. In addition to home and community-related costs, transferred spouses give up their own employment and interrupt their career trajectories. This is not an insignificant effect as approximately 65% of domestic corporate transferees are part of dual career marriages (Marshall and Greenwood 2002). In some cases, the effect of the move is large. In other cases it is small. And the effect often differs for different members of a family. The cost may be high or low depending on the degree to which the community and its accompaniments factored into a family member's life and the degree to which it was currently meeting a family member's needs. All of the costs are borne within an economy characterized by uncertainty. The recession which began in late 2007, sometimes referred to as the "Great Recession" and described as the worst economic downturn in the U.S. since the Great Depression (Sum et al. 2009), has exacerbated employment uncertainty

and vulnerability and minimized Americans ability to choose the circumstances and locations of their employment. In the global economy, moving every few years is the route to the executive suite -- or mere survival (Kilborn 2009).

With employee relocation, the employee accepts new paid work but the family must also accept the work of re-creating their daily lives. This study investigates what this work that I have termed “adaptation work” consists of, who does it, and what challenges and what aids are encountered in carrying it out. Adaptation work would include tactical, practical, and emotional activities as varied as house hunting, finding new paid work for a partner, getting phone service, registering kids for school, setting up play-dates with new classmates, and providing comfort and encouragement to family members grieving the change. Most importantly, it is a set of activities that is undertaken specifically as a result of an employer-employee arrangement.

In the U.S. we operate under the myth of separate spheres, that is, the myth that work and family are separate and distinct institutions (Garey 1999, Brush 1999, Osmond and Thorne 1993). Corporations follow this mythical framework as they relocate labor to where it is expected to be most advantageous for business, but the separation is not real. In reality there is a significant interconnection between the world of work and the world of family. The phenomenon of employee relocation offers a unique picture of the true connection between work and family. From a macro-level perspective, the institution of work is imposing on the institution of family by creating this movement of people across communities and the subsequent need for adaptation work. On a micro-level, within relocated families this adaptation work must be allocated across family members through domestic politics and then executed.

The goal of this research is to discover how families go about the process of rebuilding daily lives in new communities after an employee corporate relocation and what

the role of gender is in that process. The study will ask what tasks, efforts and strategies are required to acclimate all family members to a move, to get them to a sense of normalcy, and to a situation where they have the resources, attitudes/feelings and schedules they require. In short: “What does ‘adaptation work’ look like?” The question is a complex one - Who in the family takes on which tasks in adaptation work related to overall family needs, each partner’s needs, and/or children’s needs? Why is the work distributed this way? Are there different forms of adaptation work necessary for families with one earner compared with families with two earners? What community characteristics help or hinder the execution of ‘adaptation work’? Adaptation work likely includes primarily reproductive labor but it may straddle the productive and reproductive categories, given the modifications that may be required in some families in accompanying spouse's paid work role and activities. Defining Adaptation Work, then, will help to further expose the fallacy of the division between work and family.

In developing the project I hypothesized that, like other forms of reproductive labor, adaptation work is highly gendered and disproportionately performed by women regardless of their own labor force participation. Where men take on tasks that can be defined as adaptation work, I expected the tasks are more likely to be practical tasks (ie. arranging for electrical service), rather than strategic tasks (ie. selecting new schools and doctors), relational tasks (ie. arranging activities to get to know neighbors) or emotional tasks (ie. encouraging children as they venture into new settings). In couples where men are in the role of accompanying spouse, I expected them to engage in adaptation work regarding their own paid labor activities.

My hypotheses followed past findings in studies of reproductive labor. Hochschild (1979) laid the groundwork for recognizing and challenging the devaluation of often invisible

aspects of reproductive labor such as emotion work, that is, work involved in interpersonal support of family members, the active construction of home as a place of comfort, and other activities built around the feelings and emotions of the family. I expected adaptation work to involve many instrumental tasks, but emotion work was also expected to be a predominant activity in bringing about a sense of normalcy after relocation. In past research emotion work in the family has been found to be disproportionately led and carried out by women (e.g. Duncombe and Marsden 1993, DeVault 1999). It was important in this study to consider how emotion work is a component of adaptation work and whether the distribution of emotion work in this unique circumstance varies from typical gendered distributions. To truly understand what people do, one must understand why they do it and how they feel about it. Hence, emotion will be examined as part of the project.

Many feminist scholars (e.g. Di Leonardo 1998, Devault 1999) followed in Hochschild's path studying emotion work and other subcategories of reproductive labor and revealing the disproportionate burden women bear for these categories of work. Also household labor studies reveal that women perform the majority of work in the home especially on-going, nondiscretionary, mundane activities like cooking and cleaning. Men, on the other hand, do less household work and more often perform occasional, time-flexible activities like yard work and home repairs (Coltrane 2000). Finally, based on findings from my preliminary work (Whitaker 2004, 2005, 2010) and literature on the role of social capital and social networks in middle class milieus (e.g. Hansen 2005, Wellman 1998), I expected women rather than men to do the work of generating community ties, friendships and support networks.

The research used a feminist methodology, that is, a conscious aim to connect women's experiences in families to the larger social context and to capture how women struggle against and adapt to family relations that both nurture and oppress them (Thompson 1992). While the research examined multiple variables including economic, community, network, and life-course conditions, gender acted as a primary organizing principle in data collection and analysis. Throughout the research process, I actively sought out the gendered aspects of employee relocation adaptation and uncovered ways that gender impacts it. The project involved qualitative, in-depth interviews with both husbands and wives in relocated families allowing for a study of women's experiences mediated by theoretical analysis (Cancian 1992). By including, analyzing and contrasting reports of women's experiences with those of their husbands, the research was able to clearly determine the unique perceptions of the adaptation work by gender.

This research is a follow-up to my earlier exploratory research project on the decision process and the adaptation process that professional, middle class families undergo when relocated within the U.S. for a husband's employment (Whitaker 2005, Whitaker 2004). The exploratory study was based on interviews with a small sample of accompanying wives only. Results suggested that professional, middle-class families feel pressure from the increasingly tenuous nature of managerial jobs and the frequency with which employers reorganize their businesses and their workforces. The first phase of research also pointed to the loss and subsequent rebuilding of social capital and social networks in the reproductive sphere as critical to the experience of relocation and the success of family adaptation.

Past work in the social sciences on relocation has been sparse and has emphasized primarily the decision between spouses on whether to undertake a move. This research will

make a unique contribution because it offers a theory of the move and post-move processes of transition and re-settlement using a new theoretical framing of ‘adaptation work’.

The chapters that follow fall into three general groups - additional study specifics, detailed findings by category of adaptation work, and a conclusion. The additional study parameters are found in Chapter 2 which provides a summary of the varied literature that contributed to the analysis and Chapter 3 which explains the research methodology. Chapter 4 serves as an introduction to the detailed findings by explaining the temporal facets of adaptation work and a offering a summary of the four categories of adaptation work that were identified. Chapters 5 through 8 each delve into the specifics of these four categories of adaptation work. Finally, Chapter 9 offers a conclusion that ties findings together and thus defines the role of gender in family adaptation after an employee relocation. Limitations to the study and potential next steps are offered in the conclusion.

Chapter II

THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The impact of employee relocation on families is a relatively unexplored area of inquiry within sociology. Works that address relocation are infrequent, are found primarily in business, economics and psychology venues, and the majority are concerned only with the decision to relocate (e.g. Lichter 1982, Bielby and Bielby 1992, Shihadeh 1991, Pixley and Moen 2003, Cooke 2003, Hiller and McCraig 2007). Therefore, an overview of the relocation literature within the social sciences must include works from multiple disciplines and from multiple sub-areas of sociology including feminist theory/gender studies, work-family studies, migration studies and social capital studies that contribute important theories and concepts to the research.

Relocation Literature

The body of academic research that specifically addresses employee relocation is limited yet diverse. In works that investigate the decision process or the propensity for family migration, several theories have been presented including the family-life cycle theory, human capital theory, power balance theory, and gender-role theory. Although this project does not look directly at the process of deciding whether or not to undertake a move, theory generated in past research on this topic is important for understanding and analyzing the dynamics behind negotiations and labor divisions of adaptation work.

The family life cycle model suggests that migration is more likely for unmarrieds (Smits, Mulder and Hooimeijer 2003) and younger marrieds with no children or young children who have not yet entered school (Nivalainen 2004). In the earlier years of one's career and one's

family “individuals are less tied to a specific geographic area due to family concerns and are typically more oriented toward developing new skills” (Eby and Russell 2000: 46).

The Human Capital Framework derives from a neo-classical economics approach. A pure neoclassical economic view of migration uses the concept of the 'rational migrant' who makes a move decision based on estimation of how to maximize lifetime utility in both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits (Sjaastad 1962). Pollacheck and Horvath (1977) moved the theoretical discourse beyond the study of individual behavior by recognizing that families must make joint decisions. They suggested that, as with the individual 'rational migrant', family members maximize the net present value of migration on the combined costs and benefits to all family members.

Mincer (1978) introduced the critical factors of 1) uneven return across couples, and 2) disproportionate return across gender. Specifically, he postulated that women were more likely to be the disadvantaged party in a dyad moving for one spouse's job, even if the move brought overall positive net gains to the couple. He held that women have lower earning potential and more discontinuous labor force participation, hence the disadvantage. Mincer's theoretical position was consistent with economic rationality as the guiding principle behind the family/couple decision, but he did recognize the complexity of joint consequences. In spite of the recognition of unequal returns, economists use the consensus model to justify the value of economic rationality as an explanatory mechanism. The consensus model says that individuals in a family unit consent to acting in the overall interest of the unit by using one pooled utility function for the family (Lundberg and Pollak 1996).

A variation, though still fundamentally a product of the concept of rational behavior, is the human-capital theory of family migration. The human-capital theory of family migration

says that family migration decisions will pool information on the income-producing capacity of each family member. Thus, interests of the higher-producing member (assumed to be the one with the most human capital) will be weighted more highly in the accounting. Alternative forms of human capital are recognized and shown to have different impacts on migration decisions. General human capital, (defined as education) is believed to have a positive correlation to relocating, but location-specific human capital (job experience) is believed to discourage relocating (Nivalainen 2004). The human-capital model prevails as the most conceptually dominant explanatory theory, though it has not stood up to empirical challenges (Cooke 2003). Human-capital theory deviates from the broader view of neoclassical economic rationality in that it confines itself to monetary benefits, ignoring other intangible costs and benefits.

The gender-role ideology model argues that family migration decisions, like many social acts, are likely to follow socially constructed perceptions of appropriate but unequal gender roles in work and family. Therefore, men's careers are prioritized in family migration decisions. Specifically, women are expected to place family ahead of personal goals and to have ultimate responsibility for reproductive activities. Men are expected to assume the position of primary breadwinner, and as such, place emphasis on economic and career success. The gender-role theory suggests that women defer to their spouse's interests on questions of *his* job-related decisions but they place family considerations first on questions of *their own* job-related decisions (e.g. Bielby and Bielby 1992, Lichter 1983, Shihadeh 1991). The model has been empirically supported, but still it remains the less dominant paradigm (Cooke 2003).

Bielby and Bielby (1992) considered the degree to which gender-role ideology “introduces asymmetry into the process by which husbands and wives decide how to respond to a job opportunity in a different location” (1245). Their research was confined to dual-earner

couples and it revealed that gender role ideology along with labor market structure contribute to a husband's greater power within the dyad. Pixley and Moen (2003) investigated the degree to which a gender-role ideology model still held in this period when a majority of women are active wage-earners, and they found that "contemporary couples more often choose the strategy of favoring the husband's career than of favoring the wife's career" (199). They did, however, find that while career hierarchies in families continue to favor men, the gender preferences are much less pronounced and less universal than in past generations. Older men, more highly educated men and men from families with more traditional gender-role ideologies were most likely to receive priority over their wives. Bielby and Bielby (1992) also found traditional gender role beliefs to be relevant and to be positively correlated with the decision to decline a wife's relocation opportunity.

Finally, a power balance approach suggests that in family decision making it is the differences in resources, not the gender of the spouse, that counts when looking at which spouse has the greatest influence on major family decisions like long distance migration. In the past and in marriages with more traditional wage-earning arrangements, men were more likely to have the power that linked to resources but that relationship has weakened as women's labor force participation has grown. Smits et al. (2003) found that in the Netherlands an unequal balance in earning capacity was linked to migration propensity regardless of which spouse had the higher capacity. Compared with a human capital approach, the justification for a move under power balance theory is linked not simply to economic rationality but to differentials in marital power. Conceptual variants of the power-balance theory are family resource theory (Shihadeh 1991), marital power theory (Smits et al. 2003), and social exchange theory (Bielby and Bileby 1992). Family resource theory suggests that a move can exacerbate the power differential in a couple by

lowering the material contribution of one partner at the same time that it raises the contribution of the already-more-powerful partner. Ultimately, decisions result from an accounting of costs and benefits, though different costs and benefits are weighted differently based on power derived from resources. Power-balance theory recognizes age, education and gender as factors that in practice potentially relate to differences in resources through their effect on human capital development (Nivalainen 2004).

Joy Pixley's emerging research on dual income couple's "career-prioritizing, described in an interview with the Sloan Work and Family Research Center", used gender as a central principle (Casey 2010). Pixley uses the term 'career prioritizing' because couples must (consciously or not) either give more priority to one partner's career or give equal priority to the impact of the decision on both partners' careers. She breaks down couples' career prioritizing as falling into the following five types - 1) 'no decision', where couples never face any major decisions that would affect both their careers; 2) 'equal decisions,' where they face at least one major decision about moving, but any decision has approximately equal effects on each spouse's career; 3) the 'husband moderate gains' pattern, where couples make one or two decisions that are somewhat better for the husband's career and no decisions favoring the wife's career; 4) the 'husband large gains' pattern, where one or two decisions are substantially better for the husband's career, often preceded by an early decision slightly more beneficial to the wife's career; and, 5) the 'taking turns' pattern, where couples make at least two decisions that alternate between favoring the wife's and favoring the husband's career (Casey 2010).

Not all of the couples in my sample were dual- income as Pixley's were, and none fell into the first category of "no decision" since, by design, all relocated for one spouse's paid work. Her categorizations acknowledge the difficulty in negotiating careers in the current historical

period when women in couples are usually paid workers. Her research also draws attention to the importance of looking at gender when studying these effects. Again by design, my project includes couples who prioritize the wife's career, but Pixley found that situation to be rare.

I have only discovered a handful of academic works that examine post-relocation activities or satisfaction. Findings suggest that the earnings outcome of relocation is beneficial primarily to men and that “neither single nor married women seem to be successful in translating migration into gains in the workplace” (Morrison and Lichter 1988: 171). Shihadeh (1991) looked at wives’ postmigration employment and found that because females deferred to their partners’ employment-related decision to move, they experienced subsequent penalties in their own employment regardless of whether the wife held less, equal or greater human capital and earning power than her partner (441). In Shihadeh’s study, the researcher looked not at the different value placed on productive versus reproductive labor but at the “normative pressures arising out of traditional gender-role distinctions” (Shihadeh 1991: 442). Cooke (2003) also challenges the human capital framework in support of the gender-role model by looking at post-move incomes and concluding that “the effect of family migration on individual earnings is largely a function of gender” (347).

Feminist Theory

This research is guided by feminist theory and feminist principles as applied to the subject of work and family studies. Given that feminist theory has multiple and competing definitions, it is important to clarify the foundations that will underpin the subsequent analysis. Academic feminism as we know it today is a by-product of the women’s movement – the first wave that was active from the 1850’s to the beginning of the first world war that fought against social and legal inequities, but more importantly the second-wave that emerged in the 1960’s to

rail against women's subordination (Osmond and Thorne 1993). During the 1960's and 1970's there were multiple perspectives of feminist theory including liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism. All forms of feminism "offered different answers to questions about why women have lesser social status and fewer advantages than men. Despite their differences, each implicated the family in one way or another" (Baca Zinn 2000: 45). Thus was the role of feminism in family studies solidified.

Feminists challenged the pervasive view of the naturalness and rightness of separate spheres, linking that ideology to women's subordination in the home and the greater society. They disputed the concept of innate role differentiation to reveal oppressive family politics. Academic feminism continues to have a political motivation such that it calls for the development of knowledge that will further social change, not just the development of knowledge for knowledge's sake. Its objective is to confront and end the subordination of women and related patterns of subordination based on social class, race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation. (Osmond et al. 1993: 592)

The central themes of feminist theory in family studies today are: 1) Women's experiences are central to our understanding of families, and gender should be a basic organizing concept of family research. Past research has ignored the life experiences of women and thus has skewed our understanding of the world; 2) Gender and families are socially constructed and historically changing. Gender is not a fixed concept and the use and exaggeration of biological distinctions is simply to legitimize and perpetuate power relations between women and men; 3) Social and historical contexts are important to understanding women and families; 4) There are many forms of families; 5) Individual families are the product of human agency. Human agency is critical to understanding how people cope with, adapt to and change families to create

meaningful lives for themselves; 6) There is no objective, unbiased observation of humans; and, 7) Families are linked with larger institutions and structures.

Additionally, we must attend to the ways that families affect the other structures and institutions of society (Baca Zinn 2000, Ingoldsby et al. 2004, Osmond and Thorne 1993). Cooper (2001) reiterates the importance of clearly delineating guiding themes through this declaration: “There is no neutral space from which to describe theoretical and conceptual issues...and [attempts at research on human subjects comes] from a particular perspective and defines the key concepts accordingly” (Cooper 2001: 12).

The impetus to family migration in this study is work, and feminist theory informs us of the highly gendered nature of work in our society. In order to understand any work phenomenon, one must consider the disparate valuation given to types of work and workers. When considering work in the U.S., feminist theorists refer to productive labor and reproductive labor to express the dichotomy of activities that are perceived to exist for men and women in the middle class. Productive activity, or paid labor, is treated as men’s domain while reproductive activity, unpaid labor necessary for the reproduction of everyday life, is treated as women’s domain. Brush states, “Men’s productive activity counts historically and financially. Women’s reproductive activity yields, at best, private and non-pecuniary rewards.” (Brush 1999: 161) Even in the increasingly prevalent cases where women work, that is, they engage in productive activities, they have not been alleviated of their position as primary performer of reproductive activities (Hochschild 1989, Greenstein 2000) Though the production/reproduction dichotomy does not accurately reflect the experiences of many families, especially minority and immigrant families, the perception of this dichotomy as a real one affects the actions of corporations and gender role ideology in the United States.

Also, the dichotomous treatment of productive and reproductive labor results in unequal costs faced by individuals in relocated families. In the industrialized west, when a husband's job (as mentioned earlier, 84% of transfers are husband-centered) results in a physical move for the family, the importance of that productive activity is transcending the importance of other family members' area-specific activities. Reproductive labor is treated as portable and other family members' productive activities (such as women's and children's jobs) are treated as either portable, replaceable or expendable. The gendered nature of productive work and the corresponding advantages bestowed upon it result in disparate power in the decision process (Whitaker 2005).

Some academics and activists argue that we are currently in a third-wave of feminism that began in the early 1990's. The third wave has been deliberately hard to define, lest it be confined and become exclusive (Gillis et al. 2004). Some suggest that the third wave is for younger women who enjoy improved gender equality than their second wave predecessors but still continue to keep feminism alive (Ibid). Others offer that it is an expansion beyond a white middle class feminism and it incorporates concerns about social and legal inequalities for women within a more complex framework of intersections with race, class, gender, age and sexual orientation (Ibid). Still others contend the third wave is where women use their improved power to forward gender-inclusive causes and not just seek out women's rights (Lorber 2005). The pursuit of family friendly workplaces and recognition of the different plights of working women across primary and secondary employment markets would seem to fit within these varied definitions.

As third wave feminism emerged in the 1990's, so did new theoretical manifestations of feminism, most specifically "social construction feminism", which I rely on heavily in my

analyses. Lorber (2005) says that social construction feminism "looks at the structure of the gendered social order as a whole and the processes that construct and maintain it. Social construction feminism sees gender as a society wide institution because it is built into all the major social organizations. As a social institution gender determines distribution of power, privilege and resources". Other major social statuses combine with gender to produce an overall stratification system. The process of 'doing gender' is central to this perspective, as is the perception that *not doing gender* can work to weaken traditional binary definitions of gender. In this study, I combine the institutional vantage of social construction feminism with themes and challenges feminists find within work/family studies.

The following discussion of work and family literature is not distinct from a discussion of gender, but rather is a continuation of the same. As Gerstel et al. (2002) say, "To think about the relationship of work and family is to think about gender".

Work/Family Studies

Work and family studies is a relatively new multidisciplinary academic field. Rosabeth Moss Kanter was among a small, first generation of researchers who insightfully saw the critical linkages between the institutions work and family at a time when each was viewed as the purview of different academic specializations. Kanter's *Work and Family in The United States* and *Men and Women of the Corporation*, both originally published in 1977, were important first works that provided an integrated view of the two domains. Both served to pave the way for sharing ideas across disciplines, and over time the new field of work-family study emerged. It has integrated ideas and efforts across research from such previously disparate groups as law, economics, psychology, management, social work, human resources, labor relations, sociology, history, and public policy. In addition, it has provided a forum and language for an important and

on-going discussion. As work and family both continually evolve in an ever-changing world, it is imperative that work-family researchers regularly contribute to discussions that bring and keep the two endeavors in sync.

Work-family research examines not just the overlap between work and family, but the reality that work and family are intertwined. This dichotomy must be differentiated from the dichotomy between types of labor (productive and reproductive). The work-family dichotomy refers to the view point that work and family as institutions are discrete. Our society operates under the myth of separate spheres, the belief that work or productive activity exists within the public domain while family-life takes place within the private domain (Baca Zinn 2003). Through this ideology, employing institutions are able to design workplaces and expectations that center only on one aspect of the equation of an individual worker's life, the work side. For the equation to balance, the individual must reconcile both sides, often to the detriment of each. Home and family are more likely to suffer when there is discontinuity. The disadvantaged position of the home realm comes from both cultural factors that deem paid work as more valuable than family and from structural factors that give employing organizations power over the individual. The incongruence between the design of job demands and organizational career systems and the labor force's need to have flexibility and support to enable regular participation in caregiving roles is referred to as structural mismatch (Kossek 2006). Structural mismatch is an ongoing problem between work and family as each domain evolves and changes. The work-family literature seeks to clarify the connections between the domains through study of the work-family interface.

Two streams of work-family research exist - one that looks at the impact of work on family and another that looks at the impact of family on work (Pitt-Catsouphe et al. 2006).

Definitions for impacts, strategies and effects have been developed within the new discipline (Greenhaus and Singh 2003, Lambert 1990). Positive impacts are defined as enhancements or enrichments, while negative impacts are referred to as conflict. Individuals may manage work-family conflict through accommodation (reducing involvement in one role to accommodate demands of another role); compensation ("efforts by individuals to offset dissatisfaction in one role by seeking satisfaction in another role" (Greenhaus & Singh 2003)); or, segmentation (intentional separation of work and family roles such that one role is actively suppressed from affecting the other). The interface between work and family can affect one or multiple individuals. Spillover occurs when one domain of life affects the other domain for a single individual. Crossover occurs when work-family conflict experienced by one individual affects another individual in the same social environment such as a spouse, child or co-worker. The existence of both spillover and crossover demonstrate the fluid boundaries between work and family life (Westman 2005).

Work and family life have undergone significant changes since the late 1970's when the work-family field began to emerge. In the world of work changes have included a continued move toward a post-industrial, knowledge based economy; expanded globalization; high rates of technological change; and a decline in long-term employment relationships (Farber 2007). Women have continued to engage in paid work at increasing rates, age demographics have shifted, and the number of single-parent families has increased. As these structural changes occur, modifications are needed in work and family to allow the two to interface effectively.

Thinking of corporate relocation through a work-family lens, involves looking at crossover effects of work imperatives on other family members. This research assumes that the crossover results in a set of tasks that I am calling adaptation work. Adaptation work must be

accomplished to reconcile changes that result from a move. Analysis of the distribution of adaptation work across employer, employee and other family members should demonstrate the level of corporations' adherence to the myth of separate spheres. To some degree this misguided ideology must persist if a move is introduced. By definition, the ideology assumes other family members' activities are separate or secondary to the productive activity that precipitates the offer.

I expected to find that families continue to bear responsibility for privately reconciling changes that result from a move. The myth of separate spheres between work and family absolves the corporation of the need to address and recognize how relocation may infringe on a family. Families must consider the costs and benefits of the prospective move and make a decision. The corporation need only consider how the move affects productivity and the economic goals of the business.

Hochschild's (2003) research argues that separate spheres ideology continues. She examines the interconnection between work and family and the ways in which corporations draw upon the family but justify exemption from offering reciprocal support. Specifically, the discussion reveals how the workplace colonizes families, using their social resources, energy and social capital for its own purposes.

Margolis (1979) undertook an early work of qualitative research among managers and their families. She looked specifically at the impact of serial relocation for managers at large corporations in the early 1970's, and she notes the corporation's colonization of the family for its own purposes that was explicated by Hochschild decades later. Margolis' work makes a longitudinal comparison to this study possible. The comparison will contribute to understanding how the erosion of white collar job security has impacted families that must acquiesce to the demands of an uncertain labor force. The context of corporate moves has changed since

Margolis' data collection was completed in 1973. In that era, she found that families were very reliant on the corporation for their sense of attachment because the corporation was one of the only constants in their lives. Margolis says "Men and women did not become autonomous; instead they transferred their needs for security, nurture and community from family and friends to the corporation" (53). Corporations operated with the conflicting assumptions that families were separate and distinct from the workplace yet there was a reciprocal sense of loyalty and obligation between them. Workers still move for corporations but there is no longer a contract of loyalty between the two. The corporation does not act as "father figure" any longer, a source of care and support throughout the years. Margolis' findings suggest that, when transferred, the needs for security, nurture and community are met by the employer, and therefore these needs are not in need of being replaced.

Margolis' work is different than the present study because her study looked only at the careers of men and it assumed without challenge the primary role of wife as domestic caretaker. One can see this vantage point in statements such as "His announcement to his wife that a transfer is in the offing is similar, especially in the early years of his career, to her announcement of a pregnancy" (50). Since Margolis' research, women's role in the family and the labor force has expanded, thus complicating the work and sacrifices women must accept in a corporate relocation.

Work/family research has also looked into the micro aspects of the interaction between work and family through studies of domestic politics and divisions of labor in reproductive work. A lot of research has examined how household labor is distributed within a family (e.g. Feree 1990, Thompson and Walker 1989, Hochschild 1989, Zvonkovic et al. 1996, Presser 1994, Bianchi et al. 2000, Lee and Waite 2005). The topic has been of keen interest in the fields of

family, work and family, and also gender over the past several decades because norms and behaviors surrounding gender and unpaid work have not evolved at the same pace as norms and behaviors surrounding gender and paid work. Women's labor force participation rates rival men's but women continue to do the majority of housework (Lee and Waite 2005). In an overview of the sociological literature on household labor, Coltrane (2000) argues that "these patterns can only be understood by attending to the symbolic significance of household labor in the social construction of gender and by analyzing the social, cultural, economic and political contexts in which men and women form families, raise children, and sustain households" (1208). In his important synthesis of past research on the subject, Coltrane reviews conceptual developments in household labor studies that fall within the categories of gender construction, economic and exchange perspectives, institutional influences, socialist-feminist theories, life-course factors, and psychological and socialization theories. Theories of the household division of labor are fundamental to an investigation of gender distributions of adaptation work in an employee relocation.

Gender construction theory, also known as social construction feminism as described above, begins with assumptions of social structural constraints and power imbalance. It is an interactionist perspective that posits active definition of gender through symbolic differentiation of roles and tasks for men and women (e.g. Ferree 1990, Osmond and Thorne 1993). An exchange perspective is very different and offers the argument that the delegation of tasks by gender within families is somehow sourced in efficiency and the maximization of utility for the family as a whole (Becker 1981). As the name implies, the institutional influence lens has been used to examine the ways in which social institutions impose constraints on family decision making such that household divisions of labor are the natural outcome. Examples include

studies on the effects of job-scheduling (e.g. Presser 1994); migration (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992), and the post-industrial economy (e.g. Gerson 1993) on household divisions of labor. Socialist Feminist Theory relates household divisions of labor to the dual systems of capitalism and patriarchy whereby the hierarchical distribution of work reduces women's status and serves to reinforce both a capitalist economic system and the primacy of men in that capitalist society (Hartmann 1990). A life-course approach is a hybrid perspective that incorporates family ecology, role identity, and socialization theory, among others, to hypothesize how life transitions related to aging, marriage and child-bearing impact the sexual division of labor (e.g. Pittman and Blanchard 1996). Finally psychological and socialization theories argue that individuals are socialized or taught the appropriate roles of men and women through words, observation and interaction. The degree to which individuals adhere to traditional attitudes learned through socialization will drive the adherence to a sexual division of household labor.

Household labor is not the only facet of reproductive work that is gendered and undervalued. Important sociological studies have made visible the important activities associated with emotion work (e.g. DeVault 1999, Hochschild 2003), kin work (e.g. Di Leonardo 1998), and of course, care work (e.g. Garey 1999, Gerstel 2002).

In an investigation of the move experiences of women whose husbands were clergy with regular reassignments, Frame and Shehan (1994) examined the situation of serial relocaters (individual who relocate repeatedly over time) using the premise that husbands are always earners while women are always the trailing spouses,. The qualitative findings revealed several key stressors for women relating to household divisions of labor and emotion work including: an increase in demand for women's household labor when setting up house; the reluctance of women to form friendships due to anticipatory grief; a denial of women's desire to personalize

and connect with one's home due to a lack of permanency; the disruption of children's social networks and the need for mothers' assistance in readjustment; the responsibility of women for re-establishing instrumental support systems; the disruption of women's employment; a lack of support from husbands who are preoccupied with career transitions and do not recognize the strain on other family members.

Below I provide a more thorough discussion of the gendered nature of the work of developing social capital as a resource for middle class families, a form of work closely related to kin work which accomplishes the maintenance and on-going strength of extended family networks (Gerstel and Gallagher 1993).

Migration

Studies of ethnic group migration have frequently discussed the importance of ethnic enclaves, or discrete areas of ethnic group residence and interaction, as important sources of varied resources and support (e.g. Portes and Bach 1985, Gold 1995, Gold 2002, Light and Gold 2000) including money, shelter, loans, jobs, references and referrals, friendship, companionship, shared culture and other forms of assistance and relief. I found in an exploratory study evidence of a parallel phenomenon among relocated families (Whitaker 2010). Relocated families in this study reported that they shared a common situation, common challenges, and common understandings with other relocated families. Thus, they were ideally suited to offering each other support and a sense of community and connectedness. Families with successful moves sometimes found themselves in “relocation enclaves”, that is, areas like towns, neighborhoods or subdivisions with a disproportionately high percentage of transferees where interdependence among families was commonplace and easy to develop. The concept of enclaves will be

considered and applied to the nationally migrating middle-class families in this study in the context of identifying community characteristics that facilitate adaptation work.

Social Capital

Family migration requires a period of social transformation when family members must renegotiate the nature of many social connections and when they may need to develop new social networks and new support resources. Different individuals rely differently on other people in their daily lives and proximity can be an important factor in the supportive potential of friends, family and acquaintances. Previous research (e.g. Whitaker 2010, Hansen 2005) shows that middle class families do need and draw upon relationships and support resources in the areas where they reside. As such, social capital theory is an important basis for analysis and theory generation in this study. The application of social capital theory must consider context in terms of both class and gender. First, however, conflicting definitions of social capital must be sorted out for clarity and application to the study at hand.

Social connections as a means to resources, otherwise labeled social capital in the social sciences, have been the subject of extensive academic discussion in the past decade. Many have argued in the vast social capital literature that the concept, social capital, has become overused and over-applied to the point that it is now ill-defined and not useful (e.g. Wilson 2001, van Meter 1999, Portes 2000). Portes (2000) addresses the confusion and controversy by distinguishing between social capital as applied on an *individual level* versus social capital as applied on the *community level*. He clarifies that the original theoretical developments by Bourdieu (1980) and Coleman (1993) referred to a “set of benefits accruing to individuals or families by virtue of their ties with others” (Portes 2000: 2). Portes describes social capital as something that must be actively created, something that is “the result of participation in groups

and the deliberate construction of sociability for purposes of creating this resource” (Portes 1998:

3). He argues that in order to develop social capital, individuals must make some form of investment, and that social capital is a two-way street where individuals must somehow reciprocate when they are recipients of resources. The form of reciprocation can vary greatly, and the time horizon on reciprocation can be long or short depending on the situation. Portes (1998) developed the concept of bounded solidarity for groups in like circumstances, whereby individuals who find themselves together in a common predicament identify with and support each other.

Using the individual level of analysis, social capital is conceptualized as a commodity belonging to individuals and not to the communities who are affected. However, some communities may have a higher level of “civicness” or social capital availability for the individuals who reside there (Portes 1998). Wuthnow (1998) suggests that networks are formed much more loosely and from a variety of different sources. His discussion also focuses on how *individuals* find ties, suggesting that the ties are there but the community itself is not a primary source. Instead, ties can be formed through means such as the workplace (which is increasingly far from a worker’s home), through internet connection, from past relationships in school and higher education and other geographically widespread sources (Wuthnow 1998).

This perspective suggests questions for the study of employee relocation: Do communities offer meaningful support networks and connections for relocated families? Although people today have the ability to maintain relationships long distance, can those long distance relationships offer the day-to-day resources people need? If the area around one’s residence is not a critical source of social relationships does moving affect social capital? This project explores these issues.

Past research has shown that the benefits that individuals seek or achieve with social capital vary by class (e.g. Wellman 1998, Rapp 1999, Stack 1974, Edin and Lein 1997). Because social capital is linked to class, it is necessary to consider the class position of the study population - families who are moved by a corporation to fill a job. Families that undergo a corporate-paid move would occupy a relatively homogeneous class position with most being in the middle to upper-middle class. Because social capital is linked to class we must consider its meaning in this distinct social location. Wellman contends that “personal community networks in more prosperous First World milieus are principally relations of *reproduction*” (Wellman 1998: 237, emphasis his). This is a class-specific generalization that recognizes the higher incidence of *economic* reliance and sharing or “pooling” among the poor and working classes (Rapp 1999: 185). In the relocated population of this study, the middle-class construct holds – social capital primarily serves needs in the reproductive sphere. In fact, this construct is mandated by the norm assuming the appropriateness of middle-class family self-sufficiency; the norms that discrepancy of condition between extended family members and friends is acceptable; and, that infringing on kin or friends for financial resources or assistance would only be appropriate in dire situations. When exceptional economic resources are called for among the middle class, non-familial institutions are usually called upon in the form of medical insurance, credit etc (Rapp 1999).

Unlike families in less-privileged classes, families in the professional middle-class behave as if networks are not available for financial support and that they ought to maintain economic self-sufficiency at the nuclear family level. “The networks of First Worlders are therefore often built around achieving companionship, soothing domestic stress, and obtaining reliable, flexible low-cost domestic services. These are not trivial pursuits, because few people want to place themselves at the mercy of markets and institutions to deal with such needs”

(Wellman 1998: 237). Implicit in the work on class and networks, then, is the fact that forfeiting networks for the population under consideration here equates to forfeiting reproductive resources, the resources drawn upon primarily by women, the stewards of the reproductive sphere. Hansen (2005) argues that middle-class families have increased their reliance on networks to help them rear children and do care work. The increase, she says, can be explained by the structural changes that have created harsher conditions in middle-class and working class communities, the precariousness of middle class employment, employment insecurity, longer work hours, and a shortage of available kin assistance (12). It follows from the work on social capital in the middle class that adaptation work following a relocation would include the rebuilding of social networks of support, that effort must be expended in this rebuilding effort and that women would be most invested in the process.

Healthfulness and sense of well-being have also been tied to an individual's level and quality of social ties (e.g. House et al. 1988, Knapp and Hewison 1998, Helliwell and Putnam 2004). Social inclusion has been found to be a determinant of positive mental-health. Belonging to a social network of communication, support and mutual obligation gives people a sense of being loved and esteemed which has a powerful effect on health (e.g. Wilkinsin and Marmot 2003). Just as inclusion has positive effects, exclusion can have negative effects. Social exclusion has been linked to increased incidence of depression (Glover et al. 1998) and higher likelihood of dying from all causes (Berkman and Glass 2000). The exact causal mechanism at play is somewhat unclear and one suggestion has been that social ties provide a buffer against stress which is itself detrimental to health (VicHealth 2005). There is also the potential of reverse causation and selection bias whereby healthy and upbeat individuals are more likely to engage in social relationships. However, Helliwell and Putnam (2004) contend that the consistent

patterns and relationships between levels of social capital and levels of health and well-being are persuasive that social capital does have a causal effect on well-being, and the effects are not a product of selection bias.

Stress claims resulting from job relocation are a growing sector of workers compensation claims relocaters have higher suicide rates than non-movers (Reimer 2000). Reimer looked at levels of stress experienced by families subject to job relocation and found that in the absence of external supports, it became more important for immediate family members to bolster one another and come together as a group. This discussion has implications for the importance of social capital in a move and the importance of emotion work with children and spouses to alleviate stress and loss.

Recognizing potential negative impact of a loss of social ties, Swidler (1996) coined the term “unsettled lives” for the circumstances of individuals who, as a result of significant change in their circumstances, need to renegotiate their social situation and redevelop social capital. The relocated individuals in this study are hypothesized to be such individuals. When faced with situations of social transformations, people use their understandings of how to interact with others and the world, along with their skills, talents and abilities as tools to re-establish themselves. Together, these resources comprise a person’s “cultural tool kit” (Swidler 1996). One adaptation strategy to adjust to a mobility-induced disruption of social relations may be increased social activity such as high levels of “neighboring” and increased rates of contact with distant friends and relatives (McAllister et al.1973). The qualitative research in this project will investigate whether these or other consistent themes exist in the “tool-kits” described by relocated families.

I have devoted the majority of the literature review to theory and research that considers social capital at the *individual level* of analysis. The findings will also focus primarily on an individual level of analysis, on the effects of relocation on the individual mover, and on the strategies and implications of lost and gained social capital for the individual mover. As an ancillary discussion I will attend to the *community-level* discussion. On the community level, social capital has been discussed as an attribute of the community, that is, a condition whereby the overall level of sociability within a community creates benefits that define and belong to the community at large. This framing of the concept of social capital has been particularly developed by Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000). While he recognizes that it is individuals who are connected through social networks, he is primarily concerned with the external effects those inter-individual networks have on the community. In fact, the average level of connectedness within a town or neighborhood can be termed its level of “community”. The community-level social capital literature laments the decline of community in America today and argues that Americans have become increasingly disconnected from one another, and social organizations and civic engagement have disintegrated. Putnam specifically blames mobility for the declining social capital in the United States. He says “mobile communities seem less friendly to their inhabitants than do more stable communities” (Putnam 2000: 204), and “mobility undermines civic engagement” (Putnam 2000: 205). His concern is the effect of the relocater on the community’s social capital rather than on whether the individual relocater has or can achieve the social capital necessary to meet her needs.

There are two forms of social capital which differently impact the community. Bonding social capital refers to connections between people who are alike in some important way, while bridging social capital refers to ties between people who are different in some important way

(Putnam 2000, 2007). Bonding social capital is said to be good for creating solidarity and providing social and psychological support for the individual, but it can negatively affect communities by creating division, self-selected segregation and a heightened sense of difference and mistrust. Bridging social capital is said to expand individuals' identities, contribute to social advancement and lead to higher levels of community trust and civic involvement. Putnam (2007) clarified in a recent address that these two forms of social capital are not necessarily inversely related as many assume, but may both flourish or flounder simultaneously.

When looking at the population of relocaters, all of the above theorists' variations on the topic of social capital will be valuable for understanding and questioning their situation in their new communities. Both Putnam and Portes argue that reciprocal actions must take place between parties in order for a network to be put in place, but Putnam finds that community members do not want to enter networks or have obligations to others. Portes paints a more optimistic picture, pointing out that people "in the same boat" can and do form solidarities. Wuthnow does not look to the community or neighborhood as the relevant source of social capital, suggesting that long distance connections are enough and the norm in today's world. Swidler looks not only at the general willingness of community members to enter networks, but at individuals' skills and strategies for finding and accessing networks.

Place and Place Identity

Milligan (1998) discusses the importance of "place attachment" and the role of home in a person's identity and self-conception. Through interactional processes people form emotional bonds with physical sites. Memories, experiences and relationships are to a large degree rooted in a physical area that provides a 'locus of identity' (Hummon 1986). Reimer (2000) studied sources of stress among relocaters and found for some a 'loss of roots', 'homesickness', and a

tendency to return regularly to one's previous area for visits and vacations. The strength of this 'longing' for a sense of home was directly correlated with age and indirectly correlated with time in the new community, both findings that must be investigated in this research for their role in adaptation work. Nostalgia, or recognizing and revisiting the past especially with those who share that past, is another strategy for restoring identity continuity in the face of physical displacement (Milligan 2003).

The relationship of identity to place has been put in question in recent years with globalization, increased mobility, and the ever-increasing and ever quicker ways in which geographically dispersed individuals can engage with one another. McDowell (1999) points out that "it is often assumed that the net result of the increasing scale of global interconnections and movement is a decline in the significance of 'the local'" (2). Wuthnow (1998) argues that immediate proximity is less of a consideration in the formation of social networks today than it used to be, but that networks continue to exist. As discussed earlier, he suggests that networks are formed much more loosely and from a variety of different sources. A social interactionist view argues that our sense of self derives from our interactions and the context of those interactions, or place, factor in significantly (Blumer 1969). However, the widespread nature of an individual's interactions with the increase in technology and globalization may serve to dilute the context and thus the role of place and home.

A place perspective opens up additional lines of inquiry in the examination of adaptation work related to employee corporate relocation. How does the local area factor into one's daily life and sense of self? Are the fluid support networks described by Wuthnow sufficient to provide support and connection for families on a day to day basis, to some degree negating the relevance of the immediate area? I suggest that the loss of connections with a geographic move

is a genuine loss; that the grief work in dealing with the loss is real work; and that rebuilding work in replacing connections and creating new experiences and memories is critical. McDowell (1999) says that globalizing forces reconstruct rather than destroy localities. I will apply her work in examining how the activities of adaptation work are a factor in that reconstruction, that is, how community participation or lack thereof serve to change the locality, and how relocation enclaves, if they are found, affect the character of a locality.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate how families go about the process of rebuilding daily lives in new communities after an employee relocation and what the role of gender is in that process. Because the concept of 'adaptation work' serves as the foundation to develop a theory of gender and relocation, it is necessary to first define 'adaptation work' and the subcategories therein. Further, it is necessary to understand the ways 'adaptation work' is partitioned and/or shared among family members, the *processes* through which this distribution is negotiated, and finally the *processes* through which 'adaptation work' is ultimately accomplished. Thus, the formalized research questions to be answered by this study are as follows.

1. What forms of adaptation work are necessary and/or undertaken following an employee relocation? Do definitions of 'adaptation work' differ across gender?
2. How is 'adaptation work' across family members distributed and why? What is the role of gender in the distribution of 'adaptation work'? Do perceptions of the distribution differ across gender?
3. What barriers or aids do relocated employees encounter in the performance of 'adaptation work'?

4. Does the research reveal any insights on how communities or employers may support relocated families in their efforts to re-settle and adapt to new daily lives?
5. What is the role of emotion in the relocation experience and the execution of adaptation work?

Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Justification of Research Design

Data were gathered through qualitative methods because qualitative methods are concerned with understanding processes. Qualitative research provides insights into “how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles and so forth” (Berg 2001: 7). This research involved input from both husbands and wives in families that have been relocated for one spouse’s job. The approach of using multiple lines of sight to examine the same topic, frequently called triangulation, allows for a more substantive picture of the implications of the phenomenon (Ibid: 4), and it offers a much-needed complement to several quantitative studies that look at the decision process behind family migration (e.g. Cooke 2003, Jacobsen and Levin 2000, Nivalainen 2004, Shihadeh 1991, Bielby and Bielby 1992).

Choosing a new home and adapting to that home are all processes – processes that we know little about and processes that involve multiple actors. It is the process focus of this research that necessitated a qualitative approach. “Quality refers to the what, how, when and where of a thing” (Berg 2001: 3), the very aspects the project sought to uncover regarding the relationship between relocation, family, and gender. Therefore in-depth personal interviews (IDIs) with relocated partners (men/husbands, women/wives) made-up the foundation of data in this study.

Though families have many diverse manifestations, this research focuses on families with two heads-of-household and one or more dependent children. This family form was targeted because I am interested in how relocation impacts individuals who are moved for employment reasons but are *not* themselves directly involved in the work/worker relationship. Although it may be important to consider other family forms in future research, targeting two-adult relationships with children was intended to uncover partner interactions and negotiations, impacts on women, impacts on dual-earner relationships and impacts on children. Married couples with children do make up the majority of relocations and available data show that single-parent headed families comprise only 5.9% of these moves (Marshall and Greenwood 2002). Also, the relocation industry has identified that the increasing age of marriage has implications for businesses as some of the more experienced employees who are the best candidates for relocation are also more likely to have young marriages and young children (Ibid).

Data was gathered through open-ended, semi-structured, in-depth-interviews with adult heads in families that had been relocated at least once in the past 4 years through a corporate-paid relocation for a head-of-household's job. Narrowing the research to those with a corporate-paid move ensured that the research looked at the intended population – families affected by the global nature of the workforce and employers' presupposition of workforce mobility. It eliminated those migrating solely for health reasons, family reasons, weather reasons, etc,

Sample Selection

Because migration in this study is linked to employment, choices regarding exactly where one will reside in the destination – which city, town, subdivision, apartment, house, etc. - are generally made within the overall market area surrounding the job site, that is, the metropolitan statistical area (MSA). MSAs are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and are

contiguous areas of relatively high population density that surround a central urbanized area. MSAs include counties that contain the core urbanized area and surrounding counties that have strong social and economic ties to the central counties as measured by commuting and employment.

The study areas evolved over the course of data collection in response to economic structural changes in the U.S. and challenges in recruiting. Initially, two different MSAs (employment markets) were targeted as case study areas in order to consider experiences subject to different cultural characteristics and different scale in terms of population and urban sprawl. This was intended to create a collective case study approach that “involves the extensive study of several instrumental cases...intended to allow better understanding or perhaps [enhance] the ability to theorize about a broader context” (Berg 2001: 229). Concentrating the study into just two different employment markets, rather than more markets, was expected to allow for targeted informant recruitment. Ultimately the project did utilize two foci for recruitment - the Chicago MSA and the state of Michigan - but it also included families outside of these zones (as a result of snowball sampling) and families who had moved from these zones rather than to them (to incorporate more effects of deindustrialization on Michigan and its residents/former residents). The evolution of the sampling strategy is described further below.

The original study areas (Chicago and Detroit MSAs) were selected on several criteria – size of MSA, ranking in transfer activity, employment market activity, and convenience for the researcher. Chicago is one of the most active relocation markets. It was expected to offer a diversity of experience and have a high number of potential informants. These expectations proved accurate and Chicagoland was used as a key study and recruitment focus through the project. The Detroit area was the tenth largest MSA in the U.S. in 2006 but it has faced serious

employment transitions throughout the past decade directly related to globalization and the post-industrial economy. The global recession that began in late 2007 and included two automobile manufacturer bailouts by the U.S. government made Detroit more challenging for use as an inbound relocation destination than was originally expected when the study was designed and approved in early 2008.

When the sampling plan was re-visited in late 2008 to address difficulties in locating candidates in the Detroit area, other smaller MSAs within Michigan, especially the Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor areas, were faring better than Detroit economically and they continued to have positive population gains (5.1% and 7.7 % respectively from 2000 to 2009) (US Census Population Division, 2010). The entire state, however, has felt the pressure of de-industrialization and its citizens have been experiencing a revision of the state's identity and economic viability. While the United States as a whole grew in population from 2000 to 2009 by 9.1%, overall Michigan grew by only .3%, a ranking of 51st of 61 states and territories on growth. The University of Michigan National Poverty Center (UM-NPC) has elected to study the southeast Michigan region to better understand the effects of the national recession on workers and families. The following statement justifying the selection of southeast Michigan for their study articulates how Michigan and Detroit offer unique insights into the implications of the current economy.

"The Southeast Michigan region, long affected by deindustrialization and the loss of well-paid middle class jobs, has been hit especially hard by the current economic crisis, making it an ideal place to carry out this study for several reasons. First, the region has suffered extensively during the current recession; foreclosure rates are very high and unemployment rates are among the highest in the nation. In addition to job losses, the automobile industry and its

subsidiaries are undergoing major restructuring that has resulted in a permanent and significant downsizing of the industry that was once the major regional employer" (Danziger et. al 2011).

Through 2008 recruiting study participants in the Detroit area proved too difficult to allow for adequate progress on this project. Yet, the allure of Michigan as a site uniquely subject to the effects of the new economy persisted. The sampling methodology was redesigned with review committee approval to include the Chicago MSA, all of Michigan including both in-bound and outbound relocations, and snowball sampling referrals out of these markets.

Table 3.1 - Study Zone Characteristics

<u>MSA</u>	<u>Population size*</u> <u>(2009)</u>	<u>Rank on</u> <u>transfer</u> <u>activity</u> <u>(2005)**</u>	<u>% Pop</u> <u>change*</u> <u>(2000-2009)</u>
Chicago, IL	9,580,467	4	+5.3%
Detroit, MI	4,403,437	Unknown	-1.1%
Michigan	9,969,727	Unknown	0.3%

*U.S. Census Population Division, 2009

**Lamech 2007

The original sampling plan for the project included strata by MSA and relocated-employee gender. In each market I planned to interview fifteen families, with at least four of the fifteen moved for the woman's job. As discussed, the majority of relocations are husband-centered, but the inclusion of a limited number of wife-centered relocations in the study were critical for allowing an analysis of the role of gender in 'adaptation work'. I also attempted to find some families with more recent moves and other families who have progressed further in the transition process without having formal strata for these characteristics. Based on the initial

quotas, the project was intended to result in sixty in-depth interviews in total among 22 families moved for a man's job and eight families moved for a woman's job. Table 3.2 describes the initial sampling quota broken down by strata.

Table 3.2 - Targeted Number of In-Depth Interviews

<u>Informant Type</u>	<u>Chicago MSA</u>	<u>Detroit MSA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Employee	15	15	30
Men	11	11	22
Women	4	4	8
Spouse/Significant Other	15	15	30
Men	4	4	8
Women	11	11	22
<u>Total</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>60</u>

Informants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling using personal connections, real estate brokers, newcomer organizations and stay-at-home dad groups as initial points of contact. Informant couples were offered a \$25 gift card to an area restaurant in appreciation for their time. Choices included Applebees, Bennigans, TGIFriday, and Chilis. The use of personal connections involved alerting friends and acquaintances in both the Chicago metro area and in Michigan to the study and the parameters for participation. The personal contacts were requested to either give me the names and contact information (phone and or email address) for individuals they knew who qualified or give potential informants my contact information so that they could initiate the contact if interested. Some of my personal contacts posted the Study Flyer in their places of business (See Appendix A). Personal contacts ultimately yielded 11 of the 31 informant couples. Four of the 11 were couples known to me that I approached directly; one of the couples emailed me in response to the flyer posted by a friend

at her place of business, and six of the couples were unknown to me but were known by a friend, neighbor or acquaintance who knew of my work.

Informants were also recruited using organizations geared toward newcomers. The potential groups in each employment market were identified through the internet site 'newcomersclub.com' where the "Newcomers and Moms Club Worldwide Directory" is posted and self-described in the following way.

"The Newcomers, Moms, Dads & Women's Club Worldwide Directory was created to help you locate clubs and organizations designed to give people new to the area or parents the opportunity to meet and develop friendships with others who live in the area. Many of these groups have general meetings and interest groups which encourage members to learn about their new city, its culture, activities, lifestyle, and to develop friendships by sharing interests and hobbies with each other. Some of the groups in the directory include New Neighbors, American Women's Club, Welcome Club, Welcome Wagon Social Club, Mothers and More, MOMS Club, Dad-to-Dad, MOPS, and more" (see www.newcomersclub.com).

Depending on what information was available through this website, an email or phone call was directed at each organization in the target areas. Club contacts were asked to pass on the information about the research to club members by posting or forwarding the Study Flyer or by allowing me to attend a meeting and introduce the research. Ten informant couples were ultimately recruited through contact with clubs/ organizations. Interestingly not all of the ten couples were themselves members of an organization. Several received the email alert about the study when organization members forwarded it to others they knew would be qualified to participate.

Twenty real estate brokers listed in the 2006 Worldwide ERC Directory as doing business in the target markets and holding a Certified Relocation Professional (CRP) designation were contacted through both mail and email. The contacts involved a description of the study along with a request to post the Study Flyer in their real estate offices and/or refer potential informants to the project. One of twenty realtors replied with willingness to post the flyer, but no prospects were yielded. The last ten informant couples were identified through snowball sampling whereby someone already participating in the project provided a referral. Table 3.3 describes the final sample breakdown by MSA, Gender and Relocated Employee status.

Table 3.3 - Actual Number of In-Depth Interviews

<u>Informant Type</u>	<u>Chicago MSA</u>	<u>Michigan Within</u>	<u>Michigan In-Bound</u>	<u>Michigan Out-Bound</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Employee	11	2	12	3	3	31
Men	10	2	7	2	0	21
Women	1	0	5	1	3	10
Spouse	11	2	12	3	3	31
Men	1	0	5	1	3	10
Women	10	2	7	2	0	21
<u>Total</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>62</u>

The recruitment process was successful in identifying a variety of family circumstances by informant ages, children's ages, number of relocations, time since relocation, pre-move employment status of accompanying spouse, community of origin, community of relocation, and industry of relocated spouse. See Tables 3.4 and 3.5. The study was interested in determining the relevance of social networking and social organizations to the relocation process, so it was important that relocation clubs like the Newcomers Club not be the predominant source of informants. This study need was satisfied, given that only 10 of 31 couples were found through

the initial club contacts and many of the couples who were located through the initial club contacts were not in fact themselves club members. Rather, fully half (5 of the 10) were merely acquainted with club members who told them of the study or they were on a club listserve but were never a club member. Twenty-nine of the thirty-one informant couples were white; one couple was African-American; and one couple was Hispanic. Therefore, the project does not offer a depth of information on potential differences in the relocation adaptation experience by race or ethnicity. Similarly, the sample included only heterosexual couples, and thus does not provide insights into differences by sexual orientation. About half of the families (n=15) had moved once since having children, while 16 families had moved 2 or more times, for an average of 1.8 moves with children per family. Table 3.5 shows a profile of informant demographic characteristics.

Table 3.4 - Profile by Life Course and Moves

<u>Life Course Stage by Age of Oldest Child</u>	<u>Distribution of Families</u>
Newborn	1
Preschool	6
Elementary school	15
Middle school	1
High School	8
<u>Number of Moves with Children</u>	
1	15
2	11
3	3
4	1
5	1
<u>Mean Number of Moves</u>	1.78

Table 3.5 - Family Demographics by Market

	<u>Chicago Metro</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Age Range	28-51	28-46	29-48	28-51	28-50
Number of Children	1-3	1-6	1-2	1-6	1-6
Range of children's ages	0-18	0-18	1-10	0-18	0-18
Number of moves	1-3	1-5	1-2	1-5	1-5

Email proved to be an important tool for recruiting compared with written notifications or phone calls. I believe that the mechanisms behind positive outcomes from email contact are: 1) convenience and 2) ease of reacting spontaneously. When interactions between myself and potential informants occurred by email, each party could answer at a time most convenient to them. On the other hand, out-going recruitment phone calls: 1) could be received at inconvenient times that made refusal seem the most expeditious response; 2) could be screened out as an unknown caller number; or 3) could require a higher level of commitment to the project to yield a positive call-back in response to a message. Calls placed back to me in response to a message were also more subject than email to no connection, after which a informant's interest level might wane. Also, for a informant to answer or place a phone call, they would need to be immediately prepared for a live interaction. Phone calls and phone responses may be perceived to put a informant more 'on the spot' to follow through, where emails inquiries may be perceived as less committal and thus less threatening. I received many one-line email requests for more information, and they all ultimately resulted in interviews. I also found paper methods of recruitment like bulletin board postings or flyers to be less effective than emails. Individuals whose interest might be piqued by hard copy solicitations would have to proactively record the

phone number and continue to be interested enough to act at a later time. I believe that the convenience and simplicity of response by email, and the ability of people to forward emails easily to other potential informants contributed to the success of the recruitment effort. One individual who responded to the study by email was familiar with Michigan State University and requested confirmation by my major Professor, Steven J. Gold, that the study was legitimate.

Data Collection and Analysis

A semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted with each relocated employee and his or her partner. Data was collected between January 2008 and August 2009. All interviews followed a general interview guide (See Appendix B), and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes with an average duration of about one hour. Each partner was interviewed separately. Twenty-four couples were interviewed in-person - 20 at their homes and 4 in a local eating establishment. Seven of the couples were interviewed by telephone for logistical reasons. As discussed, each couple was provided with an incentive to participate and a thank you for their time in the form of a \$25 gift certificate to a local restaurant. In-person interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed. Telephone interviews resulted in extensive notes including direct quotes when possible. The project was approved by the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board as meeting parameters of human subject protections. Participants were consented separately to the project and to tape-recording. No one declined the interview or the tape recording after being apprised of their rights as a study participant (See Appendix C for consent forms). Informants were all friendly, appeared truthful, and readily offered details and personal information.

The data produced through the in-depth interviews was content analyzed using NVivo qualitative analysis software to identify common themes. While gender is the main organizing

concept of the research, the analysis also looked for differences by other criteria especially single-earner/dual-earner family status.

Chapter IV

DURATION AND COMPONENTS OF ADAPTATION WORK

The data analysis validated the basic premise of this study: that moving a family for an employee relocation requires work that falls outside of the employer/employee relationship. Donna, a 40-year old move trailer with 3 children, underscores the realness of the work she did when she discusses the year and a half of effort she put into adapting herself and her family to a new community after her first move only to find out unexpectedly that she had to move again (All names used are pseudonyms). She said:

"I really, I was like I don't want to do this all over again. This was physically and emotionally exhausting. And I'm finally to the point where I can enjoy the fruits of my labor and I wanted to enjoy it. It had, it just took some time to get there. I knew I could do it again but I wasn't going to do it to the same extent that I did it before...The worst part of leaving (new town) was the fact that all that work was for naught. Yes, I got friends out of it, but in my kids lives are they going to remember that blip? Like all the time packing and unpacking, the time I could've spent reading my child a book or doing a puzzle verses dealing with the move and the newness. So I was bitter that we had wasted time in my children's lives moving." - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

The data set also revealed that 'adaptation work' is multifaceted and continues for much longer than it takes to physically transport one's self from point A to point B. Adaptation work has temporal, spatial, functional and affective dimensions. Considering both temporal and spatial factors, adaptation work covers three phases. Within those phases, the research identified 4 major components of adaptation work.

Temporal Phases or the Duration of Adaptation Work

There were three distinct phases of adaptation work: "job acceptance", "planning and transitioning for final residence", and "getting settled". The first and the last of these components vary some in length, but averages and ranges appear to remain fairly stable over time. In 2010, employers gave employees an average of 16 days to respond to a formal transfer job offer (mode = 14 days) (Lamech 2010). Regarding time to become 'settled' in the new community once there, past research (Whitaker 2010) and the current data set suggest that it typically takes between 1 to 3 years. For example, Molly explained that her current move came just as she was finally getting settled after her previous move.

"For almost three years, I was up for moving. I even encouraged Brendan to find a new job because I just didn't feel at home there. Then after that third year, things started to pay off and fall into place. Of course that's when he sprung the transfer on me. So here I go again. If it takes another three years to get comfortable, that will be six years of my life." - *Molly, age 42, trailer*

Others were more pragmatic, as when Wren said:

"You've got to give yourself at least a year. It takes time." - *Wren, age 46, trailer*

Harry observed his wife's comfort level this way:

"Almost everyone there was a transplant, so I would talk to some of the other guys, and they'd say it would take a year to adjust and a year came and went and she still wasn't adjusted. That's the thing, because someone will say it took their wife 2 years and then we'd go 2 years. It did, somewhere between 2 and 3 years she was okay." - *Harry, age 44, center*

Phase 2, "Planning and Transitioning for Final Residence Phase", is the Phase where spatial dimensions of the move are handled. The activities and decisions related to leaving one

dwelling and shifting to another are subject to many external factors, variables and unknowns. Therefore the duration of this phase is more variable than the other two phases. Structural influences, including evolving gender role expectations and social norms about home ownership, but especially macroeconomic realities all strongly impact this temporal phase. Having a working spouse, which is more prevalent in the current historical period than in previous decades, introduces additional connections and obligations which must be severed. Time to selling a home is a significant factor in determining the length of this phase for an individual family, and the state of the overall real estate market significantly effects the average duration of this phase.

Homeownership has long been linked to upward mobility in the U.S., and it is often referred to as a staple of the "American Dream". The class position of workers involved in corporate-paid employee relocation, as discussed previously, is almost exclusively middle to upper middle class. Also, this study focuses on families with children. Professional middle and upper middle class families with children are expected to and usually do participate in homeownership. Adams (2009) challenges the dream of home ownership as offering only an illusion of empowerment, yet she concedes the continued invariability of adherence to the belief.

In this study's sample, all but three couples owned homes prior to their most recent transfer. Two of the couples who were renting before the transfer did so because the relocated spouse was completing a professional degree program. Both anticipated increasing their income dramatically and purchasing a home upon leaving the program. The third had lost their home in a business bankruptcy when the struggling economy caused the wife's business to fail. The move allowed the couple to somewhat escape the sad memories of that loss and it offered an opportunity to buy a new home. Butch was candid when he explained:

"Remember, we were coming from the bankruptcy, we lost everything. We got a \$50,000 signing bonus and then the possibility of another bonus if we got the contract and then a 10% raise on top of it. We put it all in the house." - *Butch, age 38, center*

Not everyone in the sample was coming from such a stressful situation, nor did everyone have such generous employer-provided assistance. But the challenges of coordinating the departure from one community and arrival in another in the face of many variables was a constant. In 2010 once an employee accepted a transfer offer, the transferee was allowed, on average, 29 days (mode=30 days) to report to work at the new work site (Lamech 2010). This average allowance is down 10 days from just one year prior. The range of time offered was between 5 and 90 days. The time between decision and work-start is short and potentially dropping, yet time needed to get a family moved is increasing for many in the current historical period. When the time allowed and time needed to report to a new community do not align, spouses may have to live separately and/or live in temporary housing situations to fill time gaps. Families may have to or want to sell a house, buy a house, wait for the school year to end, have spouses finish work assignments and the like. Often these activities take longer than the time allowed for the employee to report to work.

The state of the real estate market, a major component of the overall economy, drives home sale price, average time to sell a home, and availability and cost of homes to purchase. Informants in this study frequently expressed serious challenges related to the real estate market. When those challenges drew out the length of Phase 2 of the temporal time line beyond a few months, it was a serious stressor for the family.

The U.S. has been experiencing a serious housing market turndown since mid-2006. As houses become harder and harder to sell, families' time waiting to complete a move grows longer

and longer. The late-2006 'housing bust' followed a period of rapid growth in home prices. Based on a composite index by S&P/Case-Schiller, nationally single-family home prices peaked in the second quarter of 2006 and have declined 28.7% since. The Chicago Metro area saw a similar decline (30.4%) since its peak, and in the Detroit Metro area single family home values have dropped by nearly half (47.7%) (Maitland and Blitzer 2011). Price declines cause a reduced demand for transferee homes because they feed into the following phenomenon: the reduced appeal of home-ownership as a means to wealth, the availability of below-market foreclosure properties as alternatives, and current homeowner lock-in to their current residences as a result of loss aversion and negative equity positions (Ferreira et al. 2010). The real estate market is experiencing 15-year lows in sales, and average time-on-the-market for single-family homes in early 2010 based on months-of-inventory (9.5-12 months) is double to triple the average time from 2000 to 2006 (3.5 to 5 months) (Maitland and Blitzer 2011).

The state-of the housing market was problematic for the mobile families in my sample, as were other disparities between time allowed and time required to report to work. Many informants found themselves renting or separated from family members for longer periods as homes were not selling, capital for down-payments disappeared, and home ownership became less appealing. The data for this study were gathered during 2008 and 2009, but data referenced moves that took place anytime from 2004 (pre-bust) to 2009 (post-bust). Overall, 13 of the 32 families were subject to family separation because the employed spouse moved ahead of the other family members, and 12 of the 32 families rented post-move. Five families experienced both conditions. The reasons for temporary rental varied and included: getting the family together when a house was not sold (n=5), lack of desirable home options for buying with few houses on the market (n=1), a place to stay while a new house was being built (n=2), and desire

to learn more about the new area before committing to a town/community/school district (n=2).

The rental choice is often economically motivated, and it always contributes to incremental adaptation work when it is a stepping stone to purchasing instead of an end unto itself. Two families rented with no plans to buy because they were not convinced that they could build up enough equity to make it economically worthwhile before they might be asked to move again. Brad and Cassie were one such couple. Brad revealed that decision and the difficulty with selling his other home.

"I think both of us, based on the housing market right now, just wanted to rent. And, the fact that, you know, we are only going to be here for a minimum of 2 years. So, it's not a lot of time to build equity in a house or anything....And, um, we put our house down there on the market in February and we just signed on the contract now. So, it's been, you know, 6 months of kind of stressing about trying to sell that house and we have to pay rent here and the mortgage down there and everything." - *Brad, age 30, center*

Christie and Sam still have a home for sale several states away after almost 8 months. They spent time apart at first, but then used help from extended family to purchase the new home even while paying on the other. Both spouses seemed overwhelmed by the situation they were in and found it hard to really move on and settle as long as the housing issue was not finalized.

"We had an offer on our house which fell through hours before we were supposed to close...Sam has to start his job right away and we have two small kids that need their belongings and clothing and toys and some stability... We spent about six weeks with my folks, just me along with the girls while Sam had to come up here and start his job..... My father in law actually stepped in and gave us the money for the down payment...We are still paying on our other house. The housing market there is so bad and we're just keeping our fingers crossed that it sells. But

yeah it's been a very stressful year. This has been horrible... Borrowing from my father in law, I think it was fine. I think he was more than happy to help....Sam is more bothered about it than I am, I think....Sam likes to do things on his own, I think a lot of guys are kind of that way... We kind of looked into some other options and things kept falling through and falling through and I was miserable at my parents house with two small kids and him being away and I said you have to do something...And so I presented this idea to Sam... And he was like no, never. I can't ask my dad and I was like you've got to do something...We don't know how long it will take for our house to sell. He was living with some extended family of mine, who I don't know very well in like a basement bedroom type thing...There is a part of me that says this doesn't feel like my home yet, something psychological that says it's not yours, Sam says we are renting and in a way we kind of are." - *Christie, age 28, trailer*

Ethan and Mary had their house for sale but it didn't sell before Ethan had to begin his new job in Michigan. Mary was pregnant and had a toddler to care for.

"We listed the house right away, but November and December, no one even looked at it even though it was on the market. So the question was are we going to stay behind and try to sell the house, am I going to go to Michigan by myself? We went back and forth on that for a long time. She was due to have the baby in March so there was a closing time frame there where even if I was to go independently and she stayed to try selling the house, we couldn't buy a house until we sold the house. So the question was do we want to move twice? ...We had to move because we didn't want her to have the baby in (out west) while I was in Michigan. So we decided to just pack it up and go for it. So we had to be able to sell the house there." - *Mary, age 31, trailer*

Mary expanded on their decision:

"When we show up, we want to have a place to be and know that we can be there so we decided we'd just sign a 6-month lease somewhere and relax. Yeah, we paid double mortgage payments while we were trying to sell the townhome, rent payments, which was an expense we just had to eat. We ended up selling the townhouse in February, so it could've been worse, it could've been better. The 31st, we got there, we came here on the 1st or something. So it would've been better to be 2 months earlier. Over all our townhouse was on the market for 7 months. We had four months in the rental to find this place."

Zach and Ashley dealt with a similar situation.

"It was a reasonable rent, it wouldn't kill us. We broke even every month, and we had to really think about what we spent. It was always over our head about this house sitting in Idaho. Although her parents were watching it, it still made me nervous. Then, about then that's when all the news started that initially that something is wrong with the economy, we're in trouble. So you know, unfortunately I knew what they were saying and realized this might get really bad really fast. But, who would have thought it would get this bad. It was just the stress, and the house we were renting was up for sale too, and that really worried me. Because it was up for sale and we were on a month to month basis. If it got sold we knew we had sixty days probably to get out of the house, it was a constant worry for me." - *Zach, age 32, center*

Harry and Phyllis used the strategy of separating, with Harry moving ahead to the Chicago area while Phyllis and the kids stayed back with the house for sale. Their transfer included a high level of benefits and company oversight which helped to mitigate some of the delay in bringing the family together. Luckily the house sold in a total of 4 months. Phyllis did not mention the separation and apparently had not perceived it as significant factor in the move. Harry discussed the experience this way:

"There was little bit of pressure to sell the house, they wanted you to do a 60 day move, so there was a little pressure to price your house very competitively. We picked the realtor and when we got qualified, it was different. When we got a qualified offer, they bought the house and we became the middle man. You used to make money when you move; these people are very good at what they do. Having said that, they treated us with complete respect, I really have no complaints. But it was very efficient; I can see the benefits of the company because they still treated us right and yet, there wasn't a lot of flack in there. The good part was once we got a qualified offer, they funded our equity. I went out there and signed on September 29 and we closed here on October 1 or something like that. During the time I was out here and Phyllis was back in (the west),

I was in a corporate apartment downtown within walking distance from the office. I would go there every other weekend and she was allowed 2 trips to come here, so in two months, there were only a couple of weekends that I stayed here, watched TV and ate potato chips all weekend." - *Harry, age 44, center*

Looking at the three temporal phases of relocation, and the considerable variability in Phase 2, I estimate that adaptation work from Phase 1 through Phase 3 can extend from 6 months to 5 years. During that period, specific efforts must be undertaken by movers that non-movers need not deal with to get to a point of comfort or normalcy in their lives. Adaptation work is real and often goes on for a long time.

Components of Adaptation Work

Though each family's journey is somewhat different, many different forms of adaptation work emerged during the research to answer the first research question:

- What forms of adaptation work are necessary and/or undertaken following an employee relocation? Do definitions of ‘adaptation work’ differ across gender?

The dimensions of time, space, functionality and emotion are attended to through four categories of work, each of which has multiple sub-types and unique gender dynamics and challenges.

1. Psychological reconciliation or "Framing the Move". For each spouse this is the work of creating within themselves an understanding or explanation of why the move occurred. This work begins in the first temporal phase, "job acceptance", but continues to evolve through time as individuals' perceptions and memories of the relocation as part of their life experience are refined.

2. The mechanics of physical relocation. The majority of this work is carried out in the second temporal phase that was discussed in detail above. The complexity and structural challenges encountered in this work can compound the types of work necessary and the overall duration of adaptation work. Some preliminary research on the requirements of the mechanics of physical relocation may be carried out in Phase 1, job acceptance. This category has the most sub-types including:

- disposal of previous residence
- ending or modifying ties to previous community
- movement of goods
- selection of new residence
- preparation of new residence
- satisfaction of basic needs - e.g. utilities, documentation, healthcare, education.

3. Defining or Re-defining the spouse's labor role. This work begins conceptually in temporal phase one and carries through into phase three "getting settled".

4. Building social connections and support networks. This work is variable and long in duration. It is the most mentioned, discussed and seemingly important work. It carries into temporal phase three, but can begin before the family arrives in the final residence if one spouse joins the new community ahead of others, if the family joins the community in a temporary housing situation during phase 2, or if any family member begins developing contacts/connections long distance.

Each of these categories will be examined individually in its own chapter. The categories will be more clearly defined and the distribution of the work, perceptions of the work, barriers to the work and aids to the work will be discussed in response to the specific research questions posed for this study and listed in Chapter 3.

Actors involved in carrying out adaptation work of course include spouses and children in the moved families, but friends, family and employers may also assist in some capacities. For some relocaters, employers attempt to alleviate various burdens of adaptation work through formal or informal policies providing market-based solutions, financial supplements and/or time-off allowances. The analyses that follow will demonstrate that employer-based provisions are perceived as valuable, but there remain many types of work that cannot be mitigated through these means.

Adaptation work falls primarily under the umbrella of reproductive labor, as hypothesized, including heavy doses of housework, carework, emotion work, and kin work as will be seen later. Family management work, as presented by Orrange et al. 2003) is present also. Beyond reproductive work, multiple grey areas exist where activities arguably fall in the category of productive labor and this offers yet further evidence that the line between home and

work is blurry at best. Our existing definitions must be stretched and recognized as fluid in discussions of this extensive form of labor - adaptation work.

Chapter V

CIRCUMSTANCES - FRAMING THE MOVE

The circumstances of corporate relocations can look very different from one another. Some are for jobs with the same company, and others are for positions with new companies. Some arise because the family or the worker pursues them. Others come up unsolicited. Sometimes a primary bread-winner loses a job and therefore needs a new one. Other times a bread-winner will no longer have a job if a transfer is declined. Some are serial moves. Together, the 31 informant couples in this research have experienced a total of 55 moves with children. Not surprisingly then, the transfers cover the gamut of circumstances. In discussing family moves, it became apparent that some aspects of each move are objective and clearly measurable. For example, the start date for a new job and whether the job is with the same or a new employer are absolutes. In this sample, considering just the most current move of each family, fifteen were for jobs with the same company and sixteen were for jobs with a new company.

Other circumstances are subjective - that is, they represent the framing of the move process as the informant experienced, understood or constructed it. Creating a framework for understanding what is happening or what has happened in one's life is an aspect of adaptation. Frameworks, which are likely malleable over time, affect an individual's behavior and the experiences of other family members. Studying the way individuals frame the move circumstances and the degree to which frames are consistent across gender and across move-centers verses move-trailers is important to revealing differences in priorities and meaning-

making. The interview addressed specifically "circumstances of the move", but also how and why the informant "decided to move". Each partner at some point or in some capacity did prompt, agree, or acquiesce to the move and the shape of that assent was fundamental to the adaptation process.

The framing process for some was just a statement of objective circumstances, but for many it was a process of creating a rationale for their actions that made sense to them and that they felt was defensible. I will refer to these stories of circumstances and decision making as "Move Frames". Move Frames can be likened to "Strategies of Being" as described by Garey (1999) in her analysis of explanations of work/family choices by working mothers. Garey defines the "Strategies of Being" identified in her qualitative research as explanations of plans of action that contribute to construction of identity. Relocaters must reconcile their actions with normative perceptions of good workers, good parents and good friends, just as working mothers wanted to construct their choices as consistent with their identities as mothers in a society that often views working and motherhood as antithetical.

The majority of informants listed multiple themes within their Move Frames, often offering a positive supplement to circumstances that were negative from the teller's perspective. Across partners, primary themes were generally consistent. However, supplementary or secondary themes often differed or revealed different emphases between partners. Women were more likely to re-define negative experiences through the addition of supplemental themes. It was also more important to women to find a favorable angle to define situations rather than simply reporting that they were subject to difficulty. All of the Move Frames contained at least one of the following concepts - Structural Concerns/Economic Rationality, Duty, Opportunity, Adventure, or Extended Family.

Structural Concerns/Economic Rationality

Macro-structural realities contribute to many, if not all, relocations in some capacity. The state of the economy, the company and the job market come into play, as does the fundamental need to provide for the family. Eight of the 31 informant families (25%) were in situations where a primary or sole earner had lost their job due to cut-backs, reorganization, business failure, or an ending contract.

Ethan worked for a small software company in the Western U.S. that went out of business. As he looked for new employment, he took a practical stand. The company he ultimately took a job with offered him a position in either California or Michigan. He accepted the Michigan offer strictly based on cost of living factors.

"There was nothing really appealing in Michigan, just the economics of California and stuff, so I said what about Michigan?" - *Ethan, age 31, center*

Janet and Mike moved from Michigan to another mid-western state about a ten hour drive away. This move with four children ages eight through sixteen occurred after Mike was laid off due to a reorganization. He was unemployed for about three months when he got the new job offer. He did not pause in accepting it after experiencing the worry of having no income. The offer came when Mike still had some time left on his severance pay, and he was relieved to have the extra cushion of severance pay to help with move expenses. He had feared his severance would run out before a job came along, and felt grateful to instead have what he likened to a small bonus.

The above examples demonstrate *direct* structural influences - cases where there was a specific and known economic factor driving the choice. Some moves that are not the result of direct structural influences are still structurally motivated albeit in an indirect or invisible way by

the overarching sense of insecurity many workers feel today. These would include cases where relocation or even willingness to consider relocation is affected by an employee's desire to stay one step ahead of reorganizations or to make oneself known to be loyal or indispensable should a reorganization or downsizing come along.

The re-engineering of work in the 1990's created an environment that researcher Sarah Ryan (1999) calls "management by stress". She lists "corporate mergers and reorganization with workforce downsizing" (335) as one of seven major aspects of work re-engineering. She points out that "while manufacturing jobs have typically been thought of as most vulnerable to layoffs...white collar work was as insecure in the 1990's." The vulnerability of middle class, middle-management jobs has persisted from the 1990's into the new millennium as technology has continued to change at an increasing rate. The changes in the organization of work that derive from changes in technology increase the demand for the cognitive and interpersonal skills used by educated professionals and managers and reduce the demand for routine analytical and mechanical skills (called "routine tasks") that characterize many middle-educated white-collar positions and manufacturing production jobs (Goldin and Katz 2007). Thus when families link the insecure nature of managerial work today with the belief in the need to maintain economic self-sufficiency within the nuclear family, middle-class families are reminded that they are wage laborers. In cases where the family's livelihood is potentially at stake, acquiescence to the move is based on economic rationality.

For example, Ken and Wren moved from Michigan to the Pacific Northwest. Wren said;

"Ken got a great job offer within his company, a promotion and a big raise, as part of a reorganization, but frankly it was not clear whether there would be any job for him at all if he turned it down". - *Wren, age 46, trailer*

Amber was the main breadwinner in her family. When offered a move to Michigan, she was not excited at the prospect but ultimately agreed.

"This promotion came available and they asked me if I'd be interested and I thought Michigan, cold, snow. But anyway, weighing all of the benefits and that they asked me to do it, there's a little more emphasis when they ask you to take a promotion than if you're pursuing one so it's like if I say no, what will happen, will they blackball me? What could be the consequences of saying no?" - *Amber, age 29, center*

Other couples took a longer view, but ultimately used economic rationality as the primary frame for making move decisions. Donna moved twice in the last three years and has been told to expect another move within 5 years. She is opposed to it because she wants to be near her aging parents. In explaining how she feels about the prospect she takes a practical stance.

"The biggest thing would be trying to find another job here. I think everybody's looking for back-ups in Michigan right now but I think we would probably do everything we could to stay but the bottom line is you have to take care of your family." - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

Anna explained that her family moved in order to have the resources to live on a single income. For an earlier move, she explained the decision to this way.

"We just followed his career path. We wanted someone to stay home so whoever was making the most money was gonna work." - *Anna, age 35, trailer*

Mark and Megan's story shows both direct and indirect structural influences, and it also shows a difference in the Move Frame across partners. Mark's situation put a lot of stress on him when he relocated his family to the Chicago suburbs to avoid a potential layoff, and then found himself down-sized from the new position.

"The company I was at was having a lot of financial problems so with the advent of having our second baby coming along the risk was too great of me suddenly becoming out of work so I had to find something else....I was there a total of six months when they re-structured and terminated me. And that was brutal.. it was what I was trying to avoid and it was probably one of the worst points in my life that I can remember. Here I was in a new house that cost me twice what it cost me to live in Wisconsin, didn't know anybody, I had a new baby, a two year old, a stay-at-home wife, and no job. It was horrible. I just remember holing up and crying." - *Mark, age 31, center*

Mark had promised to keep his family within a few hours of where they were living when he had first looked for a new job. After losing the new job, he was much more practical saying:

"During that time period I was throwing the net out elsewhere and possibly preparing for another move. At that point you have to think about first dealing with the need to earn an income. You need to do whatever you can to take care of your family. Thank God it worked out, we were able to stay." - *Mark, age 31, center*

Megan's recollection of the story was similar but less dramatic. Her emphasis was on the job change that led to the actual move, with a brief mention of the subsequent job loss that had caused Mark so much angst. Megan fell into the category of women who created a Move Frame that included a positive supplement. Mark mentioned only his concern for earning a living as a sole bread winner, but Megan recounted that the move was also motivated by the desire to get closer to family.

"The company that moved us here he actually no longer works for. They down-sized about 8 months after hiring him. It was sort of, it was bad at the time but looking back it ended up being a good thing because it was a company paid move. They paid for us to move here and

even though the job didn't work out it brought us closer to my family and he was able to find another job so....We made the move here because we knew there was going to be a shake up in the company and we wanted to you know, we also wanted to get closer to our families." -

Megan, age 31, trailer

Mark admitted freely that he linked his role of provider very closely to his identity as a husband and father, an identity he was proud of and took seriously. His views are consistent with the findings of Townsend (2002) and with Family Development Theory. Family Development Theory emphasizes changes in role expectations for singles compared with marrieds and those with dependent children compared to those without, emphasizing that there are differences in behavioral expectations and decision making contingencies for husbands versus wives and fathers versus mothers (Chaulk, Johnson and Bulcroft 2003). Within a marriage both men and women in our society are expected to have increased accountability to the long term viability of an economic unit compared with those outside of marriage, and both mothers and fathers are expected to provide security and proper socialization for children. However, within marriage and within parenthood further differences are present by gender. The role of provider is more fundamental to the identities of husband and father than to wife or mother (Townsend 2002). While none of the women in this study jeopardized their families' economic well-being, they were less likely to emphasize economics or think of economics alone when creating Move Frames. Looking across husband-centered moves and wife-centered moves, this finding holds. While primary bread-winning wives did acknowledge economics when it played a role in the move, their male partners were likely to give the economic considerations equal weight, compared with female tied-movers who often found alternative

emphases. One example would be Sam and Christie. In explaining his Move Frame Sam noted only economic considerations.

"The grant I was working on was ending so I was looking for jobs and Christie being (in healthcare), we decided my job would be the one we would look for since she could find a job more easily after I found a job." - *Sam, age 30, center*

Christie remembers the circumstances a bit differently, thinking also about caring for her new baby and her desire to stay at home with her children.

"Everything just kind of happened fast. We knew the baby was coming. We knew Jim's job was sort of coming to an end. He was working on a grant and the grant was finished. So we knew that was coming to an end so we had this baby and we put the house on the market....That's kind of where it was, he was going to be kind of our primary bread winner, and well technically I could support our family and I could continue working but I was ready to stop." - *Christie, age 28, trailer*

Informants perceived the relocation experience and created their Move Frames based on primary gender identities of man, women, father, mother. Husband's primary Frame centered on the topic of breadwinning, even if they were not the sole or primary breadwinner. Women's Frames always incorporated implications for family happiness and well-being, even if they were the sole or co-breadwinner.

Wife-Centered Moves

The wife-centered moves in this research fell into two basic categories - couples where the wives had high levels of human capital and couples where husbands' career interests were in non-traditional fields or led to non-traditional employment. In the latter circumstance, the decision to prioritize the wife's career in a move situation often related to economic rationality

related to the need for benefits such as health care and retirement programs. One trailing husband Mitch was a self-employed entrepreneur who worked at home. He stated unequivocally that he valued his wife's job for the income but also the benefits it provided, and in the case of the move, for the relocation expenses it paid to move the family to a location where they wanted to go.

The economic motivations behind participating in employee relocation in the new millennium are very different than those found by Margolis (1979) in her study of corporate managers in the early 1970's. Margolis describes relocating managers as first and foremost male, but also as first-generation members of the professional middle class taken away by the big corporation from "mining towns, farms and urban ghettos...and the stultifying narrowness (of) small towns" (144). In 1971, first-generation students represented 38.5 percent of all first-time, full-time college freshman; by 2005, the proportion declined to 15.9 percent. (Engle 2007). Margolis' informants were presumably willing to sacrifice geographic stability to pursue the American Dream after they had "broken away from the proletariat from which they sprang" (145). My informants, on the other hand, were more likely clinging to the American Dream that nearly all had taken for granted.

Duty/ Preeminence of Spouse's Productive Endeavors

For some informants there was a sentiment that their spouse's career advancement is so important that it supersedes other considerations. For husband-centered moves this position tended to surround circumstances where women were not in the labor force or were part of self-described traditional marriages. With wife-centered moves this position was exclusively present for cases where women had a high level of human capital, that is, were physicians, lawyers or held doctorates. Six of the ten wife-centered moves in this research fell into this category where

the wives had post-graduate training. Husbands in these cases, whether they themselves worked, recognized their spouses' careers as important. Andy and Ricky both mentioned the time their wives had invested in training as physicians, using this concept of the investment of time as a way of explaining the need for prioritizing their wives' career-related activities.

The Duty/Preeminence Frame does not refer to the desirability of economic advancement for the family, but the preeminence of the spouse's professional endeavors over other family members' endeavors. For women deferring to men, this was often because the spouse was 'accepting male privilege' or demonstrating 'belief in gendered separate spheres', two of the six categories in Davis and Greenstein's (2009) schema for measuring adherence to traditional gender ideology. Men who deferred to women did not do so with denouncement of traditional gender ideology. Rather they communicated how the making their wife's market endeavors preeminent was temporary; it did not subjugate their own activities, or they benefitted from it. Specifically, they described either how 1) their own career needs could be met while following their wife geographically, 2) their own career needs could be put on hold, or 3) their own career field was not profitable enough to supersede their wife's career.

Melissa exemplified the perception of a couple as differing in their home/work orientations when she described following her husband's career as the obvious choice and her duty as a wife.

"We just knew that ...we just clicked, we knew we wanted to be together and we agreed on things right away and one of the things we agreed on was that we wanted to have children and when we had children, I wanted to be the one to stay home with the children. We're just gonna follow his career and when we had kids I would stay home with them. We talked about it. We're both really kind of traditional and have kind of traditional roles which is fine with me and

everything else...He really wanted that because he wanted to be the first regional manager who was under 30 in the company. That was his goal. So he did pursue that I think. I was supportive of that. Nick is young. He's gonna be like 34 on his next birthday. So even though I was really sad to leave, my husband wasn't stopping what he was doing anytime soon, so none of that was gonna change." - *Mellisa, age 32, trailer*

Phyllis agreed to multiple moves away from where she had grown up, and continued to defer to her husband's career goals even after her teenage son from a previous marriage struggled and ultimately moved back to live with grandparents. She explained, "Well I knew it was really good for (my husband)". Phyllis's husband Harry agreed that it was personally advantageous by saying,

"It was optional, it was a good move for me and it wasn't that big of a deal for me because I've moved quite a bit. Although, I said that after I've lived in a lot of places and gone to a lot of schools, I was going to settle down and wouldn't move all over the place when the kids were fairly stable. It was a move I wanted to make". - *Harry, age 44, center*

Adventure as a Silver Lining

In most cases this was a supplemental Frame, one that added a positive spin to an otherwise difficult situation. It was likely to be used by women rather than men.

Phyllis who I just discussed as having a sense of duty to follow her husband also frames her move as one of adventure. She spent some time describing how no one in her family had ever moved away and that her parents and siblings did not really believe she would leave until the car pulled away. She said,

"I'm a little bit more adventurous than my family and I thought it would be an adventure, and it has been. Not to mention moving here. We've gotten to see so much more of the country

and as long as I thought it was going to be an adventure, so I wanted to do it." - *Phyllis, age 42, trailer*

Evan and Lisa took a transfer for Lisa's job. Evan emphasized the economic rationality of the move by saying that Lisa's resume now is "bullet-proof" and she can "write her own ticket". Lisa spoke more about the effect of her choice on her children and talked about the move as an adventure and chance for her kids to see another part of the country. She thought it was "silly not to take advantage of the opportunity to see an interesting city and the kids were the perfect age for it. It's an adventure". Certainly she recognized the career advantages, but she framed the move such that her children were advantaged as well.

Opportunity

The next Frame speaks to James Jasper's (2000) idea of "restlessness" in U.S. culture, both currently and historically. This restlessness, as Jasper calls it, began at the genesis of our country and with its role as the "land of opportunity", the place for people *to go* for a better life. Our society was formed by immigrants, those who moved to seek a better life. Our history and the glorification of the stories of the past, our tight grip on our image of the United States as a place where anyone can make it, have lead to our underlying beliefs in both the importance of social mobility and the glamour of physical mobility as a means to it.

There is a general sentiment that opportunity is good and that moving on is desirable. Jasper explains that "Americans have come to believe that migration and starting over are normal" (Jasper 2000: 11), which implies that not doing so is abnormal. There is a cultural norm telling us that it is unnatural or irrational to resist "progress". This sentiment plays a supporting role for many people, even those who want to resist. I am including here the outlook that

material advancement for the family is valued even above social connectedness, stability and place identity.

Stories I have placed within the frame of "adventure" were more often than not rationalizations or supplementary frames to positively spin a situation one is found in or puts others in. Stories I have categorized as falling within the frame of "structural concerns/economic rationality" relate to the perception of moving as part of meeting needs and economic obligations. "Opportunity" as I have defined it is very different. The move frame of "Opportunity" involves enthusiasm for new challenges as does "Adventure", but it is less the silver lining and more the end unto itself. It also implies moving on to "bigger and better" things, moving up socioeconomically and/or professionally. It takes as a given the desire for growth and change, whereas "structural concerns/economic rationality" is concerned with maintaining one's situation or one's path.

Amanda articulated perfectly the concept of "Opportunity" as a move frame as I am using it here. She articulated the following sentiment about a move she made when she was single and moved to the east coast from the mid-west almost 8 years ago.

"When I moved to Boston, it was because it was a great promotion and I was ready for something new. It was time for me to move on and I felt like there was something bigger out there. It was a new adventure but I moved not knowing anybody. By then I was a little older, 25 or 26, so it was all about a big professional challenge moving there." - *Amanda, age 33, center*

In an earlier phase of research (Whitaker 2005), "Opportunity" as a motivator to employee relocation seemed more prevalent. Data for the current project were collected on the dawn of a major national recession, and concerns for maintaining one's status seemed to overtake concerns for improving one's status and pursuing change and excitement. Downsizing and de-

layering efforts within corporations, supposedly driven by attempts by organizations to manage themselves more efficiently, changed the opportunity structure such that both job security and upward mobility are increasingly scarce (Spell and Blum 2000). Yet, a subgroup of informants still revealed that they were motivated by the desire to move up and on and by an underlying restlessness. Donna's family moved for an "Opportunity", as described below but then moved back again within a year when it was required for job security after a corporate reorganization. Prior to the first leg of this journey, Donna spoke of her family's move away from what she described as a wonderful and happy community as inevitable. She explained that even in the absence of the need to relocate, her family was planning to move to a bigger home in a more affluent location near her current home.

"It was very hard to leave that group and we're still very close to that group but we were planning on leaving that house anyways. It was smaller than our family had become and we were planning on moving anyways. So we would've had to leave that street and that elementary school and that group regardless. We wouldn't have had to but we would've. I had been looking for about 2 years anyways. But this opportunity came up and we both had the itch to do something different". - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

Donna's husband John corroborated in his move frame.

"It wasn't a need to move or anything. It was more I'd been in my job for about 3 and a half years previously so I was looking for other opportunities and it was presented as a move up the chain, so to speak. The allure of the (new city) was quite appealing as well." - *John, age 40, center*

Marion followed her husband's career through four moves with one of the nation's largest corporations, and until her most recent move she had maintained an enthusiastic attitude as described in this quote.

"I thought you know as you go through life, these problems, you have that problem, you have this neighbor that you can't stand, this neighbor that is a pain in the butt, and maybe somebody at the school system that you don't get along with or somebody at your church that I don't want to stop going to church but this person is making me crazy. The way I looked at it was if I get transferred over and over again, every time we move I get a bigger house and a whole clean slate. What an opportunity. I looked forward to it." - *Marion, age 45, trailer*

Kelly and Glenn agreed that the move for Kelly's job was a great opportunity - an opportunity to get great experience that would be marketable and translatable to better income in the future, an opportunity for a new challenge, and finally an opportunity to get away from the politics at her current job. Kelly characterized Glenn as "very supportive" and said "we figured we could go back if we didn't like it".

Extended Family or the Prodigal Move

The last of the Frames, Extended Family, was mentioned as a factor involved in the move for a third of couples. This was not an expected finding and not something identified in preliminary research (Whitaker 2005). The Prodigal Move involves a move closer to or near to one or both spouse's family of origin. In several cases, pursuing or seeking out relocations to get closer to extended family was the instigation behind the *Prodigal Move*. In other cases, getting closer to extended family was a supplemental circumstance, by-product or strategy to deal with difficulties of a move initiated for other reasons. For example, several families where the primary earner was out of work decided to conduct their job search nearer to extended family.

The vulnerability families felt when they faced threats of unemployment or actual unemployment elevated the appeal of intergenerational family social support. This suggests that the prevalence of *prodigal moves* may be cyclical with the economy, or it may be a permanent fixture in our society characterized by job insecurity. Silverstein and Bengston (1997) found that even among families whose intergenerational relations are not tight-knit, latent supplies of support from extended family are activated as needed. Further, geographic proximity will facilitate access to latent resources. Thus, *Prodigal Moves* can be an example of activation.

Other families who did not experience employment problems initiated job searches with the goal of getting back to extended family. Bengston (2001) discussed major changes in family demography, most specifically increased longevity and smaller family sizes, that lead to a vastly changed multi-generational age distribution in families. He argued that these changes portend a significant but overlooked transition in family life - the increasing importance of multi-generational bonds. Even while the majority of residences still include the nuclear family, across households, parents and grandparents serve as an important network of social support (Bonvalet and Andreyev 2003).

Further, more years of "shared lives" across generations have consequences for how individuals organize their lives and pursue their goals. One component of intergeneration relations that speaks to the increased relevance of multigenerational relations is the presence of "structural solidarity" or the opportunity for cross-generational interaction through geographic proximity (Roberts, Richards and Bengston 1991). Findings from this study support the hypothesis that multigenerational bonds are relevant to people's behavior and to employee relocation specifically.

Two life-course factors were identified as contributing to a *prodigal move* - 1) having children and 2) concern for aging parents. The first of these is consistent with findings of Bucx et al. (2008) who found that adult children with children of their own have more frequent contact with their parents. Many informants in this study discussed the importance of being near extended family, including both parents and siblings, to get support in caring for their children. Two of the informant couples were also concerned with offering help to their parents.

One of these was Louise who went to medical school in the western U.S. and started her career as a physician there. After her children were born, she engaged in a job search to get back to the mid-west, saying:

"I liked being away and starting my own little thing, but now I need to be back near my family. As my parents and in-laws age, I want to be near them to help them so I think it would be extremely difficult to be away during that time. They've been very, very helpful in my life and I want to be there to help them." - *Louise, age 32, center*

Sandra's father and grandmother on the east coast were both diagnosed with cancer. She spent most of 2007 traveling back and forth from Michigan to the east coast to assist. Both died within 2 days of one another. Sandra said:

"I never really thought I wanted to come back. I never thought the middle class environment back here would be good for my kids. I'm African American and it's not diverse and accepting enough. But after my father died leaving just my mother, it really opened both mine and my husband's eyes to the fact that our mothers were aging and they needed us". - *Sandra, age 40, center*

Other informants focused on the help they would receive from parents and the relationships with grandparents that they wanted for their children. Amanda summed up the sentiments of many when she said,

"It was stressful for me being away from my family. We had a baby and we had no support. If we wanted to go out for a night, we had to find a babysitter and then being new parents, we were uncertain about whom to leave the baby with. We felt like we needed family, we needed support". - *Amanda, age 33, center*

To engage in a *prodigal move*, to *return* is necessarily preceded at some point in time by the act of leaving. The family life cycle model identifies that migration is more likely for unmarrieds (Smits, Mulder and Hooimeijer 2003) and younger marrieds with no children or young children who have not yet entered school (Nivalainen 2004), because in the earlier years of one's career and one's family "individuals are less tied to a specific geographic area due to family concerns and are typically more oriented toward developing new skills" (Eby and Russell 2000: 46). This concept is borne out in this study data, but it is complemented by the revelation of the likelihood of return migration for a subset of those who left in the young adult/pre-child period of their lives.

The concept of "restlessness" was more prevalent in stories of informants' pasts than in stories of informants' present, reinforcing the family life cycle model. "Restlessness" was expressed by a large group of these now-parents as motivation for decisions made prior to having children. For example, Allie and Chris moved from the mid-west to the south after graduating from college looking for nice weather since they "didn't feel bound to any particular area". Similarly, Anna said they took lots of moves in their early marriage when both she and Butch

worked for a major corporation, including several international assignments. As explanation, she says:,

"Well, it was just the two of us and we wanted to see as much as we could and climb the ladder as fast as we could. But now that we have kids...". - *Anna, age 35, trailer*

Butch agreed with Anna offering,

"We were very adventurous in our youth and we said 'why would anyone ever want to stay near home?' and then we had kids and we were like 'oh this is why people would want to live near home'." - *Butch, age 38, center*

Brad and Cassie also moved repeatedly for career advancement, individually before being married and together after being married. The relocation Brad took recently from the southern east coast to Michigan was specifically motivated by the desire to get closer to family and put the brakes on his moving. Brad said the following,

"Actually, coming here was based on the fact that it was a (more stable) job. And also that we were close to family. Her family is from (Ohio) and my family is from (Wisconsin) so we are kind of in the middle....Her and I are good at moving because we are both kind of outgoing, don't have trouble meeting people or whatever. But we want to keep, because, you know, both of us grew up in stable families where we didn't move and we have a lot of good, you know, solid friendships, and so we want our kids to have that." - *Brad, age 30, center*

The gender patterns revealed by prodigal moves offer a first glimpse into gender issues in adaptation for relocation. All of the families who expressed a desire to move closer to extended family were going nearer to either *both* spouses' families or just the *wife's* family. None were moving to be near a husband's extended family if the wife's extended family wasn't also nearby. In fact, in the past, two couples had moved to be near a husband's parents only to find that the

experience was disappointing and little support and interaction was forthcoming from the older generation.

The gender-related pattern of prodigal moves may be a result of the gendered nature of kin-keeping activities. As the major kinkeepers in the family, women, on average, maintain stronger ties to relatives than do men (e.g. Di Leonardo 1998, Fingerman 2004, Hagestad 1986). Monserud (2008) has even found young adults more likely to have better affectual relationships with their maternal grandparents than their paternal grandparents due at least in part to the stronger bonds a family tends to hold cross-generationally with maternal relatives.

Summary

In a relocation, developing an understanding of the circumstances and decision process was one of the first forms of adaptation each person engaged in, and it was also instrumental in creating a context for the family's new reality. Family and economy both emerged as primary considerations in the decision and interpretation of the move experience. The perception of these two dimensions of life as discrete and unrelated was exposed as false through the emergence of both themes in a study of a *prima facie* employment topic - taking a new job. Though the concepts emerge as intertwined, they also emerge as gendered - even when women act as primary bread winners or with women's careers as the impetus for a family's physical move. Regardless of which gender served as move-center, men were on average more likely to emphasize rationality and economics. Also, they were less likely to embellish or re-frame a move experience with either compensating favorable symbols like adventure, opportunity and family, or to emphasize or recognize non-economic implications. Women acknowledged the relevance of economic considerations, but they were also more likely, on average, to incorporate implications for family happiness, experience and support into their frames. This difference

could be explained in several ways and the data do not offer enough insight to distinguish the causal mechanism. Women's disproportionate emphasis on family issues could be explained as 'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman 1987), or active definition of gender through symbolic action. Alternatively, the need to consider family issues in formulating a definition of circumstances may reflect women's disproportionate responsibility for the emotion work that is part of adaptation work. That is, they think of it because they must.

Both men and women commonly indicated a predilection for pursuing advancement and opportunity in young adulthood. For many the tendency was tempered after movement into a new stage of the lifecourse with the addition of children, that sometimes triggered a return migration. Some couples used the possibility of getting closer to extended family as a compensatory way of dealing with economic challenges like job loss. Others used corporations' willingness to subsidize relocations as a means to fund moves to get closer to extended family.

Chapter VI

THE MECHANICS OF PHYSICAL RELOCATION

The *mechanics of physical relocation* includes many and varied activities that are the more practical realities of a change of place for a group of individuals. As opposed to social, relational or perceptual adaptations, this category would be the equivalent of the 'housekeeping' of a move, or the 'to-do list'. The majority of this work is carried out in the second temporal phase, the "Planning and Transitioning for Final Residence Phase". In all sub-categories, analysis of the allocation of this form of adaptation work reveals that in our society household labor continues to be divided by gender disproportionately by amount and type of task.

As I liken *the mechanics of physical relocation* to activities thought of as 'household labor', it is important to stipulate that I refer to a broader and more inclusive definition of household labor than is often used in social science research. Lee and Waite (2005) explain that household labor most frequently is defined as unpaid work that contributes to the well-being of the family and the maintenance of the home. They argue, however, that child care, emotional labor, and mental labor such as planning and management should be included as well, and I concur. The *mechanics of physical relocation* would include the incremental activities in these categories that must be accomplished to facilitate the physical move. For example, families, whether moving or not, must clean their residence periodically. Adaptation work in the category of *mechanics of physical relocation* would not include all basic cleaning that goes on once a relocation is being planned. Rather, in the area of house cleaning it would include such things as extra cleaning efforts undertaken to be prepared for home showings to potential buyers or

cleaning out belongings and storage areas to determine what should be taken and what should be discarded.

As informants discussed the process of executing the physical move itself, multiple tasks were mentioned, and I outline the main categories of tasks that were consistent across families. Certainly the list is not comprehensive of all tasks a family may encounter when carrying out the *mechanics of physical relocation*. Different categories and tasks are emphasized differently by different families depending on the degree to which the work was particularly arduous or particularly pleasant. External factors significantly affected the level of difficulty families experienced in carrying out this work. Economic structural realities particularly the state of the real estate markets in the origin and destination communities and the types and levels of corporate move benefits were important external factors. Families able to sell their homes more quickly and individuals with more generous employer-provided relocation benefits performed less adaptation work in this category and experienced less frustration.

Because the components of *mechanics of physical relocation* are more likely to be time-limited, definable, task-oriented and/or quantifiable, this is the category of adaptation work that lends itself best to being outsourced to market-based suppliers or alleviated through financial assistance. For example, firms can pay for packers, movers, house cleaners, or painters. They can provide loss-on-sale assistance or purchase a family's home.

Family and friends also assist more with *mechanics* work than the other more ambiguous, or 'softer' forms of adaptation work (framing the move, defining one's new family work role, re-establishing social connections). If employers or family/friends ask, 'How can I help?', these mechanical tasks are the easiest and most likely to be assigned. Employers are motivated to alleviate burdens of moving to avoid failed relocations, which are estimated to cost a company

an average of \$115,000 (Lachnit 2002). Family and friends presumably have more altruistic motives, but the outcome is the same: a desire to assist.

Ironically, the recessionary state of the economy has had a downward effect on the generosity of employer-provided move benefits just when they are most needed (Lamech 2010). In lieu of employer-provided benefits that are flowing less freely, family/friend contributions may be more valuable than ever. As seen in the analysis of move decision making and framing the move where economic challenges elevated the appeal of living near extended family, the role of extended family and friends increases when the market is less able to meet family needs.

For some informants the employer's relocation assistance benefits includes an allowance for incidental expenses. Incidental expenses can accumulate easily for such things as cleaning supplies, gas, deposits, paint, blinds, hotel rooms, phone calls, car rental, babysitters, restaurant meals, etc. Informants who had employer-provided allowance for these expenses still carried out the tasks of relocation, but they did not have the stress associated with constant outlays of their own money during the process. Some even translated the allowance into profit (making this work a form of productive labor). Amber describes her generous move benefits like this:

"The company's relocation program is very beneficial. They pay for the all the costs of the move. They give you a percentage of your salary in order to help with moving costs like changing your license plates or stuff like that. The cost of living differential was based on the geographic wage in different areas, so they would give me a certain stipend if my salary wasn't quite as high as what most people in this area would make. It's a 3 year thing. It's very generous. If my house had not sold for the amount I bought it at, they would've compensated me a certain amount. So when we move again and if the economy's down so that our house value is down, they'll still be able to help us out." - Amber, age 29, center

Mark also had a generous relocation package that he appreciated for how it reduced the stress of making the move. His company outsourced oversight of the relocation assistance to a firm that specializes in that service.

"Part of the allure when the corporations go through it is they take care of a lot of the little things so a lot of the stresses are taken out of the equation as far as what they do and what they cover so you don't have to worry about every nickel and dime. So as far as moving and taking care of that and closing on the house, a lot of the major stress points are handled by the relocation company.... (The Relocation Company) was called (Company Name), and they're one of the big professional service firms. They contact you very early on and you go to the website and download all the benefits that are associated with it; it's a lot of stuff...There's no negotiation, but they give you some allowances up front so they actually give you a fairly decent sized check early on basically right after you've said you'll do it. They fund you the costs that you'd start incurring as far as traveling back and forth and temporary living and the relocation company consultants are with you. You go through a lengthy interview process with your spouse and they're in constant communication so it's very helpful." - *Mark, age 31, center*

Mellisa told a similar story about the benefit of employer-provided assistance.

"The company helped us because they'd give us, like my husband would negotiate like an extra month's salary. So that helps. Money helps as far as when you are moving. Like I would buy my mom a plane ticket so she could fly in, things like that. I would hire extra babysitters to help me around the house so I could clean the house, things like that. Just to help pay for things. Everything is expensed, like all your mileage in the move, and of course they pay somebody to come in here and pack up every single thing. So what I do when I'm getting ready to move, what I know now when the move is coming, I start cleaning everything out. Someone will come break

down our play set and things like that. So the extra money is helpful. I think that's the best thing they can give you really is the extra money and then all the sudden it becomes your money and you're not going to waste it and you're going to do what you're supposed to with it." - *Mellisa, age 32, trailer*

Ken and Wren are an example of how assistance from external sources can backfire. In their case, the workplace provided referral to a realtor and work colleagues provided advice on the best places to live. This story was unique but it is a cautionary tale. Ken and Wren had one daughter, Marcy, who was beginning college and would be left behind in the mid west as the rest of the family ventured out to the Pacific Northwest. They also had another daughter, Mindy, who was beginning high school. Both parents said that their younger daughter's transition was the highest priority guiding their decision on where to live. They did not subscribe to the adage that 'children are adaptable', but rather saw the early teen years as a particularly difficult time to move a child. They described Mindy as happy, involved and well-liked in her current school, and they did expect her to ultimately find friends and thrive. Unfortunately, the couple found that the styles, culture, drug use, and parent involvement at the new location were very different than in the mid west. They suspected that company involvement in their home search ended up being problematic. The realtor recommended by the company was also a close friend to Ken's boss, and Ken had not felt it was an option to use someone else. The realtor focused the home search on two very affluent communities. Also, during dinners with co-workers and their wives both Ken and Wren were told that these two communities were the 'only viable options'. Wren was interested in finding good schools but also community pools and recreation centers. When she mentioned towns she thought had these attributes, they were disparaged by Ken's co-workers wives and the realtor. As their daughter Mindy struggled mightily to adapt, Wren decided:

"Using the realtor who was Ken's boss's friend ended up being a problem because we ended up limited in where we looked. This place ended up being a bad fit for us, and its frankly very snobby. We hardly realized there were other options at the time. I wish we had looked in towns with a Y or a good rec center, flat lots. More reasonable prices would have helped too. The schools here are billed as the best and like private, but I'm not impressed with the schools or the school culture." - *Wren, age 46, trailer*

Tasks in *mechanics of physical relocation* category were experienced differently depending on external circumstances, but they were also experienced differently by gender. The gender difference existed on two levels in this sample. First, in many cases, the burden of this work fell onto the trailing spouse who was more available for the work. Often, the transferred employee was required to report to work before other family members could leave the origin community. Timing of home disposal and the preferred exit times for other family members' work and educational activities often did not align with the employee's required start date. This placed each spouse in physical proximity to different aspects of the *mechanical* adaptation work. The majority of *mechanical* work took place in the origin community or it required free time. Trailing spouses were perceived to be in a better position to negotiate free time because they were, in most cases, not working or they were leaving a job. They were most often the person caring for children, and this responsibility was not perceived as a barrier to their availability. Therefore, trailers performed a disproportionate amount of the 'mechanics' work. The structurally gendered nature of employee relocation where the majority of move centers are men and the majority of trailing spouses are women thus imposed a gendered distribution of many *mechanics* tasks. As Stacy explains:

"Lots of times they just have the husbands fly to the new location and just jump right into the job. The wife is left behind to sell the house, sell the cars, oversee all the organization and getting packed, yes, (Peter's Company) does pay for someone to come in and do it. While they do the busy work, there is an incredible amount of organization that needs to be done ahead of time and during. It's huge, it's just huge." - *Stacy, age 48, trailer*

Anna's and Butch's experience exemplified the disproportionate burden on a female trailing spouse and the importance of assistance by family members. Butch acknowledged his relatively small contribution to the effort.

"I was traveling so much with the new job...So the house hunting, most of the time I was gone. Anna looked at like 50 houses in three weekends and narrowed it down to like five. I flew in and met her here and looked at the one's she narrowed down. That's pretty much how it went. I wasn't even at our Michigan house when she had the movers there." - *Butch, age 38, center*

Anna remembers it similarly.

"I can't even think about moving again. That was such a rough move. I had to do everything on my own with pets and kids, you know my mom would come up on the train and stay at a hotel with the kids while I was house hunting, driving back and forth from Michigan by myself. It was really hard." - *Anna, age 35, trailer*

Beyond the structural gendering of *mechanics* work, the work was gendered in how different tasks were apportioned out within the family. Through this dynamic, women, regardless of status as move center or move trailer, were more likely to take on certain tasks. Work was allocated across gender following the patterns found in studies of household labor distributions. Studies show that women are more likely to be responsible for the mental labor of how and when tasks are completed (Lee and Waite 2005). Put simply, someone had to construct

the 'to-do list' and manage its execution. Women were more likely to bear the burden of the effect of the move on other family members, so they were compelled to manage the effective execution of the work. Orrange et al. (2003) point out that family management seems to be an essential component to reconciling the demands of market work and the cultural requirement of good mothering in the middle-class, especially in a society characterized by formal organizations.

Todd was very aware of Akira as the planner, as evidenced by this comment.

"She does that all, she takes care of all that. So I'm just trying to be the worker bee. She's the planner so she's the one who would say OK tomorrow we're going to do this or get that done. I'm like OK honey and I do it." - *Todd, age 29, center*

Mike also expected Janet to be the planner behind household tasks as we see when Janet explains their unpacking experience.

"Mike was unpacking and he was no help. I was so frustrated. He was just unpacking stuff and there was stuff everywhere. I need to figure out where things go. He was just shoving stuff into closets and said I could go back and organize in a few months." - *Janet, age 43, trailer*

Work/Family studies also show that with household labor women are more likely to do the mundane, on-going, and child and community-related tasks, while men are more likely to do the project-oriented, one-time or occasional tasks (e.g. Greenstein 2000, Kroska 2003). This tendency is a product of and further produces the devaluation of women's contributions, and the pattern was present with the *mechanics of physical relocation*. Cleaning, packing, helping children process the move and arranging farewells were predominantly taken care of by women, while repairs and outdoor work fell to men.

Informants' stories show an emphasis on disposal of the previous residence and selection of new residence as the most important 'mechanics' tasks. Preparation of the new residence (e.g. unpacking, decorating) and satisfaction of basic needs (e.g. connecting utilities, obtaining drivers licenses, selecting and transferring records to new physicians) were in most cases not focal in the experience, and they were usually addressed in the interview only after probing. Transportation of family members and possessions to the destination community were fairly uneventful aspects of the move for individuals with comprehensive move benefit plans, but individuals who handled these arrangements themselves and/or had a fixed move allowance encountered these tasks as highly stressful and central to their move stories. Another category of *mechanics of the physical move* was ending ties with a previous community or "saying goodbye". Where this activity landed on the 'to-do' list it was usually accomplished by women, often geared toward assisting children with achieving positive closure, and often assisted by friends/extended family.

Disposal of Residence

In the U.S., home ownership is an important symbol of membership in the middle class. As such, almost all informants in this study were homeowners at the time of their most recent relocation. Ironically, by tying relocating families to a geographic location, home-ownership can confound the pursuit of stable employment and upward mobility that facilitate the homeownership itself. Also, in the current economy, loss aversion, negative equity, declining loan-to-value ratios that affect credit worthiness, and lengthening of average time-on-market for homes are important reasons for relocation offer declines (Ferreira et al. 2010). About half of all transferees are homeowners and half are renters, with new hires and younger employees more likely to be renters (Lamech 2010).

To engage in the relocation, home-owning employees must dispose of their current residence. As discussed in Chapter 4, this process has been complicated by the depressed housing market. The majority of home-owning relocaters sell or try to sell their property, and others consciously choose to rent out their homes or become what *Time Magazine* has coined 'accidental landlords' if their homes fail to sell (Kiviat 2009). Tasks involved in the disposal of the residence include preparing the house for sale (or rent) by cleaning, making repairs, and staging spaces to look more desirable; contacting, selecting and listing the house with a realtor; making the home clean and available for viewing by potential buyers/renters; responding to offers, attending a closing and paying transaction fees. Those who rent out homes take on the on-going work of serving as landlord. Many informants in this sample had relocation packages that paid transaction costs on home sale and home purchase, and a few were offered buy-outs where the employer purchased the home. Only one was offered loss-on-sale assistance, and many did experience serious challenges in the home disposal process.

The work of preparing a home for sale followed closely with current literature of gender distributions of labor. Cleaning, de-cluttering and staging are all on-going efforts, and they were most often performed by women regardless of work role. Also, where packers were not provided, women were most likely to do the packing work. Repair and re-touching projects were most often handled by men. Cassie and Brad were an example of this gendered work distribution, as shown in Cassie's description of her work on making the house salable.

"With three little kids and not knowing when showings were, we'd have three showings in a week and then go a month with nothing so it wasn't fair to expect them or me to keep the house spotless the entire time....I packed up over half of their toys and put them in the attic, I took pictures off the walls packed them up and put them in the attic. I made it easier to clean by

getting rid of a lot of stuff, not literally, just packing it. Which also made it easier come moving time too, it was just an ongoing process and it got easier and easier to clean and plus once you do a major cleaning you know if it's a couple days later, well, I just mopped the floor, all I need to do is sweep it...The windows are still relatively clean you know I didn't have to, it wasn't like every single time I was scouring the house from top to bottom. That was mainly me that did that....He did all the repairs, like the touch up painting and there was tile that had cracked, he took care of that, he's very handy around the house. We didn't have to call anybody to come replace, he's very handy." - *Cassie, age 30, trailer*

Ashley and Zach also distributed the work of preparing their house for sale in a way that followed normative and unequal gendered patterns. Zach credits Ashley with taking on the work, but mentions his projects that assisted the process.

"Ashley basically, she basically did all the work. I didn't do much, I was so stressed out with work at that time and everything else. She did most of the packing and everything else and just moved it all over to her parent's house and we basically got our house ready to go. We watched the shows on how to sell your house, did what they said to do. She got all the clutter out, took every picture of everyone out, we left only a few around. Trying to get it sold. Pretty much we put it on the market I think before I had my second interview, we threw it on the market...I spray painted every hinge on every door to make it silver, I updated all the fixtures, and got everything looking so it's not the construction gold." - *Zach, age 32, center*

Ashley recalled the stress of having the house for sale, and the work that fell on her shoulders. Her family ended up moving before the house was sold, and her family rented in their new community temporarily. In addition to the work of selling, she recalls the stress and then the welcome assistance of extended family.

"[After we left Idaho], because my parents were there they checked on the house. I mean it was winter and it was kind of stressful just to be paying the bills for this house that we don't even live in. Worrying that the pipes don't freeze, you know. That was hard but we had to do it. And it was almost easier when we didn't live there because when we lived there it was just so, it was more stressful when we lived there because I had to keep the house in order all the time and the kids and I had to be ready to go somewhere if there was a showing. When you're sitting in the house and going oh this house isn't selling it just seemed a lot more stressful." - *Ashley, age 32, trailer*

Ethan and Mary distributed packing work this way, although Mary was working part-time and was 8 months pregnant.

"She did most of the packing and I would move the boxes to the garage." - *Ethan, age 31, center*

Only two of the ten wife-centered moves did not have a full employee relocation package. In each of these two instances, both husbands were beginning new employment as well, compliments of their wives' new employers. Both spouses in these couples left the origin community at the same time, and in both cases the division of work followed a pattern like that described above with wives handling packing and cleaning work while husbands handled more project-oriented tasks.

For families who had difficulty selling homes, the work of disposing of the residence expanded to additional tasks, especially identifying alternative options such as renting out the property, leaving the property vacant, modifying sale-price expectations, and considering renting in the destination community. In this sample four families accepted corporate buyouts where their employers, usually facilitated by a relocation service company, purchased the homes at a

price just below market value as determined by multiple appraisers. One family rented their home out, and then rented in the destination community. Two left their properties vacant, rented a home in the destination community and hoped for a sale to materialize. One other family left their home vacant and purchased a home in the destination community by borrowing funds from a family member. One more family left their home vacant after living apart from the relocated spouse for over a year, and purchased a new home in the destination community. Ultimately, another 6 months later that family allowed the bank to foreclose on the previous home due to the extreme negative equity position they were in after repeatedly reducing the home's sale price.

The Employee Relocation Council reports that 67 percent of member organizations noted an increase in transferees choosing to rent rather than buy at their new location due to the problematic housing market (Lamech 2010). It is unclear how this trend may affect relocaters' perceptions of homeownership as the defining signal of membership in the middle class or their perceptions of their own personal and social identities.

Townsend (2002) argues that in the U.S. homeownership is seen as a sign not only of social position and economic success, but also of moral superiority. Relocaters are only one subgroup whose experiences with the housing market may serve to shift our cultural adherence to the primacy of homeownership. Adams (2009) argues that America's view of homeownership as the American Dream is an illusion that itself created or at least exacerbated the current housing crisis. Certainly, for corporations who value a mobile workforce, homeownership contributes contradictory incentives. Home ownership hampers geographic mobility at the same time that it serves as a goal and thus motivator to pursue upward mobility through geographic mobility.

Ending or Modifying Ties to Previous Community

As relocated families move out of one community to join another, there are usually individuals left behind with whom they interacted on a consistent basis. Examples might include extended family members, friends, neighbors, classmates, teachers, team mates or work colleagues. Commonly, efforts are expended to somehow acknowledge the end of a relationship or revise/plan for new dynamics to continue the relationship. Upon inquiry, both male and female informants indicated that *ending or modifying ties to the previous community* was most often informally handled through such actions as simple goodbyes, hugs, or e-mail and address exchanges. Female informants generally expressed hope that certain relationships would persist, especially their own adult relationships. They also acknowledged the importance of young children's farewells.

Informants recounted many formal attempts to create closure for themselves or their children through farewell events or other symbolic actions. The work of formally *ending or modifying ties to the previous community* was often shared by relocating wives and their female friends or family members. Fathers in this sample, regardless of whether they were move centers or move trailers, participated in events but took on none of the work. The only exception was Brad who made a videotape of the house for his daughter, as described here:

"She was crying and she says, like, I'm not going to be able to remember this place someday. It was really sad, actually. So, she, based on that, I videotaped, like, every room, even though we had video of the kids in various places, we actually went through and specifically videotaped each room." - Brad, age 30, center

Donna was very purposeful in her actions to create a situation where her own and her children's relationships would continue when she moved from Michigan to the Chicago area. She

did not repeat those actions when she was moved back to Michigan about a year later. The family's community in the Chicago area seemed to be a common destination for relocation families, and when leaving there her friends took on the work of *ending or modifying ties to the previous community* for her. When asked directly, Donna noted that it was women, the 'neighborhood ladies', who took the initiative to do the work for her in Chicago. She describes the efforts during both moves like this.

"I did something that I thought was really weird but I'm really glad I did it. I invited all of my support people to my house for tea and dessert and whatever and I wrote little notes to everyone about what they had meant to me because I didn't want to lose touch with these people and I wanted them to know how important they were in my life. It was a tearful day but it was neat. I read somewhere, in Oprah or something, that we never take the time to thank the people who have come through our lives and helped us in different situations. I was thanking people and telling them that I still wanted to stay connected and please come visit and we had an endless stream of visitors. We made sure that we came back for the 4th of July and did those types of things with our old neighbors for our kids because I wanted to make sure that they knew that their friends will always be their friends. It was a neat thing and I'm glad I did it. I didn't do that in (Chicago town); they threw us a goodbye party. They gave us a picture of (town) and a snow globe, but they're so used to goodbye parties. Literally, maybe it was just our subdivision, but people are coming and going and they knew the gifts and knew the stuff you give to people that leave. (Michigan town) people weren't really leaving yet, now they are." - Donna, age 40, trailer

When the family did move back to Michigan the following year, Donna took an action to appease her son and give him something to look forward too. This was an action that certainly created work for her.

"I promised my little son a dog because he wanted a dog, again back to the emotional stuff." - Donna, age 40, trailer

The puppy had been in the family only a few weeks when I interviewed Donna at her home and she took him outdoors several times during our interview. Housebreaking the puppy was particularly challenging because their newly built house had no grass yet and the property was surrounded by dirt and mud.

Janet held going-away parties for each of her two younger children ages 8 and 11 and another for she and her husband, but she didn't have parties for her two older boys, ages 14 and 16. The older boys got together on their own with close friends to say goodbye. However, Janet did arrange for her high-school-aged son to return to visit his old friends three times in the next two years. Each time, the sixteen year old flew on his own for the visit.

Trish had parties for her two older kids aged 7 and 9 before they moved from the east coast to the Chicago area, and her best friend, a woman, held a going-away party for adult friends of Trish and Dan. Also, the family has committed to an annual summer trip with families from the east coast, and for the past three years they have followed through on that promise. The trip requires Trish and Dan's family to travel from Chicago to New England and use a full week of Dan's time off from work.

Evan was left behind with his two boys when Lisa moved ahead of the family to get started in her new job. Family and friends stepped in to assist with formal efforts to *end or modify ties to the previous community*, and Evan simply participated.

"I was doing the wrap up back home and it was crazy. My sister did a big open house to say farewell and the mom next door held a neighborhood party to say goodbye." - *Evan, age 48, trailer*

Cassie put together an event for her six-year old daughter as a way of seeing her friends before the move. Though she didn't overtly call it a going-away party, it was intended to serve that purpose. Cassie had proactively planned for what she saw as her daughter's birthday and farewell needs, knowing there would be no potential birthday party guests after the move.

"A farewell for the kids, we did with Riley, and it wasn't a farewell party. A friend and I, Riley really didn't have a birthday party last year because Brad was leaving for (work out of town)....So her birthday, we had a family party but she didn't have friends over or anything, and she still is like 'can I have a birthday party this year?'. Another friend of mine whose daughter's birthday is in March, she didn't have a birthday party either for the same reason. So, at the end of the school year we had a princess tea party that was, Riley & Laura were the host princesses. It was not a birthday party. There were no presents, but we had all the little girls together. They all wore their princess dresses". - *Cassie, age 30, trailer*

Going-away parties emerged as the predominant activity used for ending or changing relationship dynamics with people that relocators were leaving behind. During good-bye's, future plans for the relationship were discussed and sometimes formally put in place including plans for visits, trips, emails, or video-conferencing (e.g 'Skyping").

The activities discussed as efforts to *end or modify ties to the previous community* fall into the category of *emotion work*. Emotion work is defined by Erickson (2005) as people's efforts to effectively manage the emotional climate within a relationship, or the warm, caring aspects of the construction and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Emotion work has

long been an invisible component of household labor. Women have been held accountable for this work in ways that men have not (e.g. Kroska 1997, Di Leonardo 1998). The notion that women have not achieved equality in the arena of household labor is supported by the invariable allocation to women of relationship work between relocating family members and their friends and family left behind. Further, the association of women with emotion work like *ending or modifying ties to the previous community* contributes to the work's devaluation. Farewell events, planned and executed by wives or female friends/extended family members, were only spontaneously mentioned by one male informant in this sample - Evan, discussed above. Women, regardless of role as move center or move trailer, did regularly enumerate these efforts as relevant occurrences in the move experience. Ironically, as Putnam (2000) argues vehemently that the decline in community connectedness is detrimental to American life, efforts to maintain connectedness such as those described here are consistently unrecognized and devalued.

Movement of Goods

Each family's belongings from clothes to cars to pets somehow had to be transported to the new residence. In some cases this was done in stages, as when the relocated employee moved in advance of other family members and brought some of his or her things or when families placed a majority of belongings in storage while they occupied temporary housing. Decisions about how the process would proceed and specifically who would transport what items had to be determined by each family. Packing for this sample was primarily done by contracted packers or by wives. The actual transportation of goods for this sample was executed either by contracted movers or by husbands along with friends/extended family. Contracted movers were usually paid directly and in-full by employers, but there were some cases where informants hired and paid the movers themselves. When employers paid for full-service moving companies to

pack, load and move goods, families were generally satisfied with this process. Finding, selecting and contracting with a moving company was somewhat more challenging and for the small number of families in this sample who fell in that category, husbands led that effort.

Even when a moving company executes the move, work on the part of the relocaters is still required. The process requires an adult family representative at the origin to oversee the movers as they label and load all goods. The overseer must initial an inventory form as each item is taken onto the truck. At the destination, an adult family representative must oversee the unloading; initial to confirm receipt of each item; direct the movers to where the item should be taken; and then attest to each item's condition. Problems may arise if movers are late in picking up or delivering goods. This could jeopardize the timing of a home closing or leave families without needed items for extended periods. Other problems include home or property damage during loading or unloading and goods becoming damaged or stolen in transit. If logistical arrangements are not accurately and professionally planned and executed, a family's belongings may be stored mid-move at a storage facility or transferred to a different truck. Each of these transfers elevates stress and increases the risk of loss and damage. Adaptation work associated with the legal wranglings of dealing with a problematic 'movement of goods' experience is infrequent. However, it is especially time consuming and frustrating when encountered. Time and frustration are givens, and ultimately families may experience financial loss if they can't recover items or be compensated with funds to cover repairs or incidental expenses incurred as a result of problems.

Mitch found the fully-paid, event-free move of his family's goods satisfying:

"The movers even unpacked for us. They literally just unpacked everything and left it on the counter for us and then we cleaned it and put it away. Clothes and that stuff they just left and

we just put it away. These movers were unbelievable. They moved 30 cases of wine and probably another 40 bottles of liquor and they hand packed every single one of those bottles. It was the most wonderful moving experience of my life." - *Mitch, age 34, trailer*

It is interesting to note that Mitch, a move-trailer, perceived the unpacking differently than did his wife Amanda who was 6 months pregnant at the time of the move. Mitch was a self-employed entrepreneur working from home. Amanda disclosed:

"He doesn't have as much interest in that kind of stuff . He doesn't have the patience for it...So I did a lot of the unpacking while I was on maternity leave." - *Amanda, age 33, center*

Ethan hired his moving company using the internet and he described the experience as 'horrible'. The movers would only take boxes directly from the garage; they were late in delivering the goods to the final address; and mid-process they increased the cost above their initial bid. The experience with the movers was the most negative aspect of the whole move experience for Ethan. When asked what single piece of advice he would give others considering a relocation, he offered the following commentary. Ethan's experience underscores the value of a reputable mover that is fully-paid by the employer.

"Be a lot more careful in picking across-state movers. It was a horrible thing and apparently a difficult one to avoid. We tried to go cheap on the movers. We now know that it costs a lot, like \$10,000.....If there was a next time we would anticipate that it's not going to be cheap. We're going to stay in a hotel; we're going to rent a car, whatever it takes to make it as bearable as possible. Fly, drive, ship the cars, do it right." - *Ethan, age 31, center*

Janet was frustrated when her car did not arrive as scheduled and she couldn't get around. It took time and work for her to investigate and try to reconcile the problem after the contractor failed to arrive.

"Mike was sick with the stomach flu when the truck came so it was just me and the kids and things just kept coming in and we weren't sure where things should go. Danny [Son age 14] was a lot of help and he helped me get the kids rooms organized. We had no cable or internet for like a week and I had no car. They said it would be here by Monday and it never showed up. I told them, the kids are starting school, I'll need my car. I had to contact these people who were in charge of our whole move and they had to contact a contractor who had another contractor, so I've been on the phone with all these people, and I'm not happy. Then they didn't want to bring their truck onto the street and wanted to know if there was a parking lot nearby they could leave it at. I was like, I'm not walking to some parking lot to get my car. It ended up being about a week late." - *Janet, age 43, trailer*

For the two families in this sample who executed the movement of goods on their own, the experience was top-of-mind and it was recalled as stressful, hard-work. In these instances, friends and extended family participated in the adaptation work. Brad explains:

"We usually have two options [with my employer]...Either they will subcontract a company to move you, like, they will pay for that and they will give you some money for hotels and all that. Or, they will give you more money and you can do it yourself. So, it had to do with, um, a couple times ago, when we moved, some stuff was damaged. We wanted to take our stuff, we wanted to take care of it. And, you get more money for it. So, we chose to move ourselves. And, it was pretty exhausting. When we left (Southern State), I had, you know, 8 or 9 guys over that I knew, and we loaded up the truck. Then when we got up here, all we had was, obviously, us, and then, her family. Her parents and her brother came up to help us unload. But, it was pretty intense. So, within a 5 day period, we loaded everything and then got up here and

then unloaded everything. And, then, um, plus driving with the kid's, you know." - Brad, age 30, center

Isaac also drove a rented truck full of his family's belongings from the East Coast to Michigan after former graduate school classmates assisted with loading the truck. Claudia followed behind with their five children in the family van. The couple were reimbursed for the costs by submitting receipts for rental, gas and hotel stays. Upon arrival at the destination, most of the family's things went into storage for four months until the family purchased and settled into a final home. Claudia had pre-identified the clothes, toys, few kitchen items and books they would need in the interim. This family's frustrations derived from the need to physically load and unload their belongings multiple times and from finding that they did not have everything they wanted or needed while a portion of their things were in storage.

The *movement of goods* work ranges from easy to arduous, and it has a relatively set beginning and end point. This work lags on only on the infrequent occasions when serious loss or damage necessitates remediation, or when a family's belongings are placed in storage due to extenuating housing circumstances. Packing and unpacking goods is usually completed by women or by contractors, while actually moving the goods is usually done by men or contractors. This division of labor follows traditional gender norms with allocation of continuous, mundane work as the purview of women and project and business oriented work as the purview of men.

Selection of New Residence

Along with re-establishing networks of support and friendship, selection of the new residence is one of the most commonly mentioned aspects of adaptation work. Extensive thought, research and effort is expended in selecting both a community and a specific home

within a community. Many informants list the selection of a community or a neighborhood as one of the most important factors in determining the success of a move because it is perceived as integral to success in establishing networks. While men are interested and involved in the selection of the new residence, women, regardless of their role as move center or move trailer usually take the lead on the work of researching and investigating options.

Margolis (1979) described the house hunting process of married transferred managers in the early 1970's. Based on the comparison of my small sample, qualitative study with the small sample, qualitative study conducted by Margolis, it is apparent that many things have changed yet some things have remained the same.

The most important difference was the invariable position of men as move centers and women as move trailers in the Margolis study. The relationship of home to the feminine and work to the masculine was without exception. Those relationships were, and to some extent continue to be, long-standing by-products of a gender ideology that grew from industrialization. McDowell (2002) quotes a 1906 speech by Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, as saying "The wife will, apart from performing her natural duties, perform that work which is most pleasurable to her, contributing to the beautifying of her home and surroundings". So as early as 1906 and as recently as 1979 in the Margolis study ("He gets higher status; they lose home and community. True the house is generally replaced by a bigger and better one made possible by the manager's greater income, and that goes far to compensate the family for its loss" (148) one can find references to the expected role of women in appointing and valuing the home.

Workplaces, communities and homes are still highly gendered in our society. However, as women enter the workplace in greater numbers and expanded capacities compared with the

early 1970's, the absolute association of paid work with men has blurred somewhat. The data on current employee relocation and the sample for my study demonstrate that, while employee relocation is still predominantly husband-centered, it is no longer exclusively so. The analysis of the housing selection processes, however, suggests that the linkage between home and the feminine has held steadfastly as a by-product of the perpetuating ideology of motherhood. The message communicated by my informants was that home as the site of family life is the responsibility of women to construct in a way that will meet the needs of the family. Thus women in my sample, regardless of work status, had substantially more responsibility for researching and selecting the new home, and they had more opinions about which factors and characteristics were important to consider. This was a noteworthy example of women's higher level of recognition of the emotional aspects of seemingly functional tasks.

Husbands frequently referenced the home as more important to their wife or as her domain. While I expected the ideological construct of man/work, woman/home to persist, I did not expect its pervasiveness regardless of circumstance. Interestingly, in the Margolis study, the house was described as explicitly "for" the wife and children, yet the husband lead the search and selection process. Husbands in that study determined appropriate areas to live through contacts and then selected a narrowed down set of choices for their wives to assess. The opposite was the case in my study. Women had and were assumed to have more interest in the home and community, and they generally led the process. This held even for wives who were in the role of move-center. Some couples appeared to share the task, but no husbands took the lead.

Zach's sentiment was representative of the thoughts of other husbands.

"When it came to looking at houses she was the one that went around and looked at them and then she would say it's off the list and we're not looking at it again or not. Pretty much I'd rather

have her pick out the house and decide where she wanted to live, because it was more important to me that she was happy with that part." - *Zach, age 32, center*

Lisa and Amber, both move centers, did the house hunting when they moved ahead of their families. Lisa described her process:

"I knew so much of the experience would hinge on if the kids were happy, Happiness would hinge on the school and the school would determine the house...I spent time with the relocation agent and picked two houses and described them to Evan. One stood out for us because it had a pool as a bonus." - *Lisa, age 42, center*

Both move-trailer Mellisa and move-center Sandra described the importance of the internet in their searches. Mellisa started with research:

"For some reason I just got really good at really studying it through I don't know what. I would look up the cities and I would look up the schools. Online, I would look at like the parks and rec department, would look at the neighborhoods. I would look at what houses were for sale in that neighborhood to get like an idea from it. Like I would look up the name of a subdivision, and you could just tell. Things like oh, "Up and Coming", "highly sought after" or whatever... You could just tell. I knew where I wanted to be....I did like 70%. ... What I would do is I would jump in the car and I would go by myself, My mother would come and babysit the kids or something and I would go around and I would eliminate things to save time, things that I knew weren't going to work. And I'd pick out the house. He'd come with me for the final look. Usually we go and buy a house on Saturday, we wake up in the morning and I have researched it all and Nick would go with me and we go and buy a house". - *Mellisa, age 32, trailer*

Sandra explained that she was very concerned with diversity because she was African-American, so she did her homework.

"There were a lot of things that needed to be done. Identify an area to live in – schools, scores, the commute, diversity. I didn't want my kids growing up in a totally homogenous place. I used some internet searches, real estate agents, I did lots of research very quickly...I looked for diversity through math and reading scores, the make-up of the school, economic status. A good source to compare areas was schoolmatters.com....I did this. I guess he assisted. We looked for demographics similar to where we lived in Michigan" - *Sandra, age 40, center*

When asked the most important factors in choosing a home/community in the new destination, women's most mentioned factors were, in order: the schools, family friendliness, the commute, affordability/property values, and safety. Characteristics of the specific home came into play after community-related needs were perceived to be met. Husbands noted these factors, listed in order of frequency of mentions: commute, affordability/property values, schools, and miscellaneous home attributes. For example, Megan enumerated many considerations.

"We just lucked out. Because Oakfield ... We, obviously, schools were important to us and Oakfield is top or near the top. Other than that I wanted family friendly, interstate access for the commute, so it just kind of.. Well it had to be in our budget. We ended up spending more than we initially thought....The only information I had about things down here was through my sister and um my girlfriend from college who lived south of here and we needed something that would be the most doable commute for Mark possible. At the time he was near midway. So I just worked with a realtor referred to us by my college friend. She just showed us communities that were between here and midway. We started looking closer to the city and I just, it was just too city for me. In [Wisconsin town] we had a decent sized yard and a decent sized house. So

we kept looking. Driving around. It was just sort of, we just figured it out." - *Megan, age 31, trailer*

Donna was interested in recreating the circumstances she had in Michigan.

"We came from where we were in Bentley Woods; it was a string of 4 stay-at-home moms who all had kids the same age and they grew up in the backyard together like the Backyardigans or whatever we call them. I wanted to create that experience at least that for them, better if possible, but at least that... I talked to someone who told me this is a huge development and there's like 4 different neighborhoods within the island community. They said this is the one with all the kids; my bus stop has 25 kids on it. I walked up to people's houses and said, I wasn't shy, how many kids? Any 10 or 8 year olds, boys or girls? I probably looked like a fool. We looked at one house over here and we really liked it and 2 people were sitting in the backyard talking and I said I hope you don't mind, I have a question." - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

Donna made an interesting statement while ruminating about possible future moves. The statement suggests that her husband is more concerned with the home, the stereotypically female domain, than she is. Yet, the reasons she cites relate to his adherence to his role as provider.

"I guess, to me it's more I don't care about the house, I care about who my neighbors are, what the schools are like. This is a beautiful house, I love this house, but if I lost this house tomorrow, I guess, because I did move a lot as a kid, I realized your home is where your family is. My husband's more into the house, a little more materialistic, I don't know. He has more pride and joy in what he's financially accomplished so maybe the house is more important to him. I've always said I'd be happy in a bungalow as long as I have my family, but to him, the house is important. I love having a nice house but it's not what's most important. I'll stress out

about painting things, but honestly, I don't want to put a lot of money into this house because we don't know how long we're going to be here." - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

John's interest in a visible manifestation of his success as provider suggests his motivation comes from 'doing gender' or actively displaying what he believes to be appropriate actions for your gender in society.

Chantelle identified through research and networking a community that she believed would best serve the needs of her two high school age children and her college-age daughter. She noted that the ages of her children made the selection process critical, and their situations were unique because the high school kids had always and would continue to attend private school with religious affiliation. Chantelle wanted her older daughter to be motivated to come visit during college breaks and after graduation despite the fact that she would not know anyone in the area. When Chantelle was unable to find a suitable home for sale in the preferred town, she committed to overseeing a tear-down and re-build. Her husband Fred was willing to look elsewhere for a home, but supported Chantelle's choice if she would do the majority of the work with contractors. Chantelle explained:

"At this stage of the kids lives, I have to do everything I can to get things to fall into place for them". - *Chantelle, age 50, trailer*

Ethan described a somewhat more analytic and quantitative process than his wife Mary who also recalled some qualitative factors in the decision process. Ethan talks about factors such as price, square footage, and distance from work. Ethan's emphases are reflective of the emphases across male informants, but Ethan's descriptions (shown below) are more detailed and engaged than most of the other husbands' comments on the topic. Ethan was notably among the more active husbands in the search process

Mary is clearly aware of price as a consideration but she also recalls the challenge of the experience; competing concerns about family issues going on at the time; and her feelings of "loving" a house, and being "scared" about the process. Although Ethan's tendency toward the quantitative and Mary's *inclusion* of the qualitative appear to follow gender stereotypes of men as logic-centered and women as emotion-centered, the findings do not serve to support the accuracy of gender stereotypes. Rather, they reflect the level of overall investment each spouse has in the selection process. With women in most couples leading the process, they take on more responsibility for a comprehensive decision making paradigm that incorporates the easily measurable aspects *and* the intangibles. Women, by leading the process, take on the responsibility of considering the needs of all family members. This higher level of engagement with the process would certainly lead to a more memorable and vivid experience.

Ethan's description of the community and home search was as follows;

"We initially started with a much higher price point which we lowered as we looked. We got preapproved for a \$400,000 mortgage and the payments would've been difficult to handle and the taxes on top of that are ridiculous. We didn't take into account the taxes; the monthly property taxes are as much as I paid in rent. So that really broke the deal... There were 3 or 4 competing continuums; it was the best trade-off in the end. It was driving distance to work, not further than half an hour, which was my outside limit. There was price and square footage and finish. Those were the 4, trying to find the sweet point, the compromise. We looked at Yonkers Township and there were houses that were 2400 square feet for \$130,000, which was less than we bought our townhome for and it was really tempting but in the end, the backyard really won us over. It was mostly practical; it was trying to find what worked for our space. We started off with more restrictive space requirements, an adult area that we could screen off from the kids

that would be a home study; we carved out a home study here. In the end, we decided we could be more adaptable and less restrictive. We just looked within a radius basically. We looked at several different houses in the area. We sat down one day, drove from each one to my office one day, back and forth, back and forth, rather than let Google Maps guesstimate how long it would take." - *Ethan, age 31, center*

Mary tells a similar story, but as mentioned, speaks also about her sensory reactions to the search process.

"We had a realtor. We started in February, I think because I knew I'd have the baby in April and I knew I'd be out of commission for a few weeks in April. My sister died in March, so we started a little bit in February and then March, my sister died so I went back home for the funeral....So there were a lot of things going on, so we started looking for a house and working with a realtor and my husband was doing a lot of internet searches. Then it became our weekend full-time job to go to open houses and to look at things. When I was really pregnant, we had the 1-year-old, so we'd drive to houses and then I had the baby. When he was a couple weeks old, we really started looking because our lease was going to be up and we had to find something. We started in Ten Oaks because of what we wanted to pay and what we wanted and there's so much on the market and then we started doing the surrounding areas. When we first came to Sandberg, we weren't very impressed with the neighborhood we went in. It wasn't very personal and we didn't really like what we were looking at. Then the realtor took us to a house that we loved....He gave us a map with good school districts. He knows that we weren't from here so we talked a little about what happens if it doesn't work out and we have to sell. Because of the way the housing market is, we kept our eye on that because we don't know what's going to happen and my husband still wants to move to Portland, maybe in 5 years we're thinking. So we didn't

want to get into a house that we wouldn't be able to get out of. Seeing what was going on in the housing market was a scary time. We had our eye on resale, and we looked at school districts and things that we might not have cared much about before but that someone might look at. We made a list because when we were looking at internet searches, there are so many houses available; we had to start with some criteria. Is a yard important, is a deck important, because you're paying for that if you're getting it. One house we looked at, the inside was perfect, and we tried to buy that one. Inside is where we spend a lot of time, then we found this house and bought this one. Here there are baby deer and baby bunnies that come out, too." - Mary, age 31, trailer

One big difference in the *selection of new residence* process compared with the 1970's process described by Margolis is the use of the internet for research. A similarity is that Margolis notes that families looked for neighborhoods with other children, as my informants frequently did. One other notable difference I believe derives from economic structural issues. During the period of time when Margolis conducted her research, relocating managers were predominantly seeking upward mobility through a process of lifelong commitment to a stable corporation. As such, increasingly larger homes were an assumed benefit of each employee relocation. In the current economic era characterized by high unemployment, outsourcing and frequent corporate reorganizations that affect even professional, managerial jobs, the larger house was not commonly mentioned. Rather, there were multiple mentions of a conservative approach to the home purchase or even the rent-instead-of-purchase decision due to concerns about the ability to build equity.

Preparation of New Residence

With this category of work there were many different tasks mentioned - cleaning, unpacking, setting up rooms, decorating, etc. The data from this study suggest that most of this work is taken care of by women, but it is not as clear whether that is a product of gendered divisions of household labor, the persistent association of women with home and family, or the availability of time based on paid work role. For many couples, the initial set-up is a joint effort, but on-going projects may be allocated based on gender, time, or interest level.

Many of the families that had overtly traditional gender roles revealed a further expression of those roles through the division of household set-up labor in their new home. Mellisa and Nick, Marion and Jay, and Todd and Akira are examples. In each of their moves, Mellisa and Nick have been committed to getting the set-up and decorating completed immediately. At the time of the interview, the family had been in their home for two months but everything was in its place with decorating completed down to the last detail. Mellisa described it as a shared effort, though she defined Nick's work as "help" for her and something he does "for her".

"Nick is very helpful. He would usually take off the week that we would move or a couple of days. He's just one of these people that's just really organized. He can really get things done. I'll admit that when we've moved sometimes, he's just very helpful. Getting everything put away, getting things fixed up for me so that I like it." - *Mellisa, age 32, trailer*

Marion was equally committed to getting things done immediately, but she did the work on her own.

"We would have a semi and a half and literally in a week it's done because I don't, I can't let it sit there because it will drive me out of my mind....I'm painting before the furniture is

in. So, that's what happened here with this room, both of these rooms before the furniture was even here, I was painting because I knew what I was going to do. I'm mission driven." -

Marion, age 45, trailer

When asked if Jay helped with this work, Marion replied like this.

"No. Not a chance. He's busy, but he doesn't want to. He doesn't like it, he doesn't care, he's doing his own thing. He's trying to get in his job and get reacquainted with what he has to do everyday. Me, just move, get out of my way and let me go and that's what I do.... I make decisions and I think my thoughts through and I do everything that I can to make moves easier, like the very first room that gets settled when you move in is the kid's bedroom, it's not the kitchen." - *Marion, age 45, trailer*

Todd seemed interested in assisting but seemed to withdraw based on the experience of being corrected or not feeling respected. Interestingly though, he described participation in setting up household as a way of 'supporting' his wife rather than as a way of fulfilling his own responsibilities.

"She's just so proactive and such a planner that would always beat me to the punch so I'm trying to do that. I'm trying to think about things but she's ultimately very opinionated and wants things a certain way so I'm trying to be supportive of what she wants and trying to make her feel cared for. So if I get too distracted in trying to do my things and I'm not saying like honey, you look great today and let's sit down for a few minutes....and that's hard for me because I've got a lot on my mind and I'm not always present, so sometimes that's hard. I helped a lot, she did a lot. But she would say where she wanted things and let's put this over here...I tried to take the initiative and I unpacked all the books and she just reorganized them." - *Todd, age 29, center*

The previously offered examples were all from husband-centered moves. In the wife-centered moves, several of the husband's took on more of the set-up responsibilities than husbands in husband-centered moves. For example, Ricky, Evan and Glenn took the lead on home set-up. Ricky felt the need to justify that work, however, and he cites Eva's intense schedule at the hospital as the reason. Glenn and Evan also mention their wives lack of availability to assist. Drew spoke this way of his work on getting things organized.

"Unpack, organize the house to get things functional. I did a lot of that because my wife came with a job and she had more demands. I had time to unpack and organize to get a sense of stability and normalcy. We did the kitchen together. I did a lot of the other things like hanging pictures, installing fixtures. We had to buy toilets and sinks and things like that. The builder, they just walked away from the house. He was already underwater with it and was like take it like it is. I was home about a month doing all that, getting things together. It gave me enough time to straighten things out before the demands of a job." - Drew, age 40, trailer

The division of labor regarding *preparation of new residence* was split more traditionally in some families and by time availability in others. There remained, however, an underlying sense that men's work on these tasks was an action of support for wives or needed to be justified. Once again, the review of adaptation work revealed that traditional gender expectations are still highly relevant in today's families.

Satisfaction of Basic Needs

(e.g. utilities, documentation, healthcare, education)

This is the final category of *mechanics of physical relocation*. Within this category, families appeared to allocate work based on interest and time availability, with move-center verses move-trailer status factoring into the time availability. Two exceptions stood out where

the work was invariably gendered regardless of role in the move. Women in all instances led the process of selecting doctors and researching pre-schools. Both of these tasks relate to the care and nurturance of family members, and that 'caring' aspect is presumably the variable that lands this work with women.

Amanda's experience exemplifies the findings.

"Originally when we were first moving here, Mitch did a lot because I was working so he signed up the electrical, gas, phone and all that kind of stuff and made contact with the movers. I think once we were moved in here, finding a doctor and all that kind of stuff was me, I'm better at that kind of stuff." - *Amanda, age 33, center*

Cassie was discussing Brad's contributions with regard to picture hanging, setting up checking accounts and registering cars when I asked her specifically about doctors and pre-schools.

"That was me, but that's just something if I were ill and just couldn't do it, Brad would. He'd be conferring with me constantly like okay, I looked at this pre-school, this is what they do, this is how much it costs. So, that was me but that's just how I am and how Brad is. I looked at a bunch of pre-schools for Logan and I couldn't find what I wanted. Everything was too expensive...then I finally found one and I said I really like this. I just want to go home and talk to my husband. I knew he'd say yes, he won't care. But I still want him to know what I'm doing in the event that he said 'no, I really don't want him to go there'. So, yes I picked out doctors for us, I said do you care if I pick a male or a female for our doctor. He said whatever you think. Pediatricians, he completely left that up to me. So yes, I did that, but that's just how it is." - *Cassie, age 30, trailer*

When asked what the first thing she did after moving was, Christie mentioned selecting a doctor as *one* of her first concerns, but not her first.

"Go to Target! That was the first place I mapquested. Good to know. That was the first thing - to get there and get diapers and babyfood and stuff. The doctor thing I guess came next because I knew Eileen was due for her six month check up and I got Sam to get a referral from somebody he works with. That was the first place I went. I'm a nurse, so I'm picky, so I'm still with it but I'm not wild about it." - *Christie, age 28, trailer*

Todd was a move center, and he also agreed that his wife Akira handled research on preschools and doctors. He credited the allocation of that work to Akira's involvement with her children, and as a way of empowering her in the move.

"She did it all pretty much. I wanted her to be comfortable and I knew it was a gift [that we were moving] so I was willing to do whatever. So this was the house she wanted to rent. I did scope out some houses during the week when I was teaching but it took us coming out on the weekend and tour around, yeah, but schools are still really gonna be like, it'll be a joint decision but I'm gonna give her a lot of weight for the decision because she's the primary caregiver as far as the kids go and she's a very attachment parent." - *Todd, age 29, center*

Stacy, who at 48 was one of my older informants, saw this work as her purview and her husband concurred. She describes the dynamic as very traditional.

"My husband wanted to know everything I did to make the decisions that I made and every night at dinner he wanted to know what decision have you made and why and what's that going to mean to us. But he didn't want any part in doing, he just wanted to be informed." - *Stacy, age 48, trailer*

Evan offered the perspective of a trailing husband, and then was specifically asked about getting doctors.

"The working spouse and non-working spouse go off in different directions. The working spouse is busy and challenged, has accomplishments. The non-working spouse has to try to find his way around, learn the streets, install the cable, the phone, grocery shop. And it's not smooth.....Oh, doctors, my wife did do that." - *Evan, age 48, trailer*

Drew, also a trailing spouse answered similarly

"My wife takes care of doctors, does that research, She asks neighbors, gets recommendations." -*Drew, age 40, trailer*

Summary

The analysis of the *mechanics of physical relocation* reveals that household divisions of labor still benefit men over women. In particular, work on and responsibility for tasks that relate to the emotional well-being of other family members continue to be the burden of women. And in relocation situations this burden is high. The fact that relocation itself is a gendered phenomenon is both a function of and a contributor to this division of labor.

It is through the ideology of motherhood and the need to live up to current notions of a 'good mother' that women hold themselves exclusively responsible for the qualitative outcomes of functional tasks. Men concur as they do not take on the caring aspects of this work. Women manage the work and also ask, "Were things done in the way that was ultimately best for the children and family?" Even the practical tasks of *mechanics of physical relocation* are more likely to be approached by women from the vantage point of their impact on family members' happiness and successful adaptation.

The ideology of motherhood among middle class mothers in the U.S. is powerful and long-standing, and it was adhered to by relocating mothers in this sample be they move centers or move trailers. The ideology of motherhood yokes women through the beliefs that they as mothers are always best suited to meeting the needs of their children, and further, those needs should be met completely and selflessly. Finally, the ideology purports that the act of meeting the needs of children, even if it requires denying one's own needs, interests and desires, should be entirely fulfilling if one is a 'normal' woman. (Nakano Glenn 1993).

Women's actions continue to be guided by this false ideology, even in this era of supposed changing gender norms. For example, the continued subjugation of women's endeavors to their families' needs is exemplified in data regarding relocation decision making. Eighty-one percent of male employees compared to 66% of female employees accept U.S. domestic permanent moves, and women decline moves most often due to the potentially disruptive effect on children's lives (Collie 2006). The top reason for men to decline a move is the high cost of living in the new location (Ibid). Douglas and Micheals (2004) describe how the ideology of motherhood that they call 'the new momism' on the surface has evolved to incorporate acceptance of paid work as an option for women, when in actuality it still rebuts feminist advances for women by necessitating care for children as the best and first work of women.

"The new momism is a set of ideals, norms and practices, most frequently and powerfully represented in the media, that seem on the surface to celebrate motherhood, but which in reality promulgate standards that are beyond your reach. The new momism is a direct descendant of the latest version of what Betty Friedan famously labeled the feminine mystique back in the 1960's. The new momism *seems* to be much more hip and progressive than the feminine mystique

because now, of course, mothers can and do work outside the home, have their own ambitions and money, raise kids on their own, or freely choose to stay at home with their kids rather than being forced to. And unlike the feminine mystique, the notion that women should be subservient to men is not an accepted tenet to the new momism. Central to the new momism is the feminist insistence that women have choices, that they are active agents in control of their own destiny, that they have autonomy. But here's where the distortion of feminism occurs. The only truly enlightened choice to make as a woman, the one that proves first that you are a 'real' woman, and second that you are a decent, worthy one, is to become a 'mom' and to bring to child rearing a combination of selflessness and professionalism that would involve the cross cloning of Mother Teresa with Donna Shalala. Thus the new momism is deeply contradictory: it both draws from and repudiates feminism." (Douglas and Michaels 2004: 5)

As women internalize this heavy burden of ultimate responsibility for children's well-being and thus ultimate management of family labor with a view of the holistic effect of each task, the disproportionate impact of adaptation work on women's minds and time becomes apparent. Discussions of *mechanics of physical relocation* exemplify this point. This analysis reveals that emotion work is a component of functional tasks, especially when those tasks are carried out by women. Decisions such as what to discard during clean out, when to clean or assign chores, whether to move or rent, which home or neighborhood to occupy etc. involve thought processes that consider what is important to each family member and what they are going through at a point in time. Work on and responsibility for tasks that relate to the emotional well-being of other family members continue to be the burden of women. The exclusive role of women in planning farewell events, considering the holistic effect of home selection on each family member, and the selection of doctors and schools support those findings. The holistic

approach brought to decision-making by women is shown especially in the work of selecting a new residence and setting up a new residence. Donna fully accepted the ideology that says the success of the move hinged on her, as shown here:;

"As the role of the mom, that was my role to keep everybody happy and keep the family together, I had to put on a happy face that this was going to be fun because if I didn't, they would've been more nervous and scared. So my job was to keep everybody positive about it." -

Donna, age 40, trailer

Mechanics of physical relocation was the type of adaptation work where entities external to the family could and did make the largest contribution. Employer policies were important to disposal of residences, and to packing and moving goods. However, economic structural issues affect housing markets and the availability of employer-provided move benefits. As the economy struggles and middle class families have a reduced sense of their options for finding and maintaining paid work, individual families members are expected to and more willing to bear the costs and the stresses of the tasks. Family and friends often step in to assist with tasks in this category, and that assistance is increasingly needed in challenging economies.

Chapter VII

DEFINING SPOUSE'S LABOR ROLE

Modifying one's career or work trajectory as a result of a 'turning point', or event that redirects a person's life, can be stressful and affect an individual's sense of self (Wethington et al. 2003). For relocated spouses, the move is often experienced as a turning point when a paid job and/or family role is altered. The decisions that create a turning point and the job/role adaptations that follow are central to understanding the unique form of work, 'adaptation work', being defined in this research. This study uses a combination of deductive and inductive processes for developing a specific theory of families' and trailing spouses' adaptations to household roles in productive and reproductive labor after a move. Existing concepts were partnered with immersion in the data, identification of new themes, and a feminist lens to advance understanding of implications and actions relating to the gendered topic of work.

Existing research on trailing spouses' work-related adaptations revolves primarily around willingness of employees in partnered relationships to move for a job (e.g. Brett, Stroh and Reilly 1993, Eby et al. 2002, Zvonkovic et al. 1996, Swain and Garasky 2007). Additionally, a few works touch upon the opposite effect, that is, the consequences of the move on work roles (e.g. Shihadeh 1991, Jacobsen and Levin 2000, Cooke 2003). The decision process has been looked at mainly within the business disciplines of economics and organizational studies. Although this chapter is interested in the less-studied topic of spouses' work-related adaptations *after* a move, and not with decisions *to* move, it is important to inform the former with the latter to benefit from past research and empirical findings on relevant concepts. Post-move work role

adaptations are products of move decisions, and partners' identities, desires and expectations for work and family roles are to some degree factored into decisions. Human capital theory, power-balance theory and gender role theory emerge from past research as relevant frameworks, and they should thus be incorporated into this analysis. Eliminating any one from consideration would introduce immediate challenge, as debates surrounding women and work are long-standing and often contentious. Each theory will be briefly outlined to substantiate the use of certain variables and factors in the analysis that follows.

The human-capital theory of family migration says that family migration decisions will apply neoclassical economic rationality to pooled information on the income producing capacity of each family member. Thus, interests of the higher-producing member (assumed to be the one with the most human capital) will be weighted more highly in the accounting. The theory differentiates between general human capital and location-specific human capital. General human capital, or education, is an advantage when relocating because it is transportable and can be translated into resources. Location-specific human capital, or job experience, does not translate well to other venues and encourages staying put (Nivalainen 2004). The human-capital model continues to be the dominant explanatory theory behind dyadic migration decisions, though it has not stood up to empirical challenges (Cooke 2003). For purposes of this chapter, relative educational level will be considered. The human capital model is said to be theoretically gender-neutral because it is based on the relative earning potential of both spouses regardless of gender. Though it may be gender neutral in theory, it is gendered in practice given the disadvantaged position women occupy in the paid labor force.

The power-balance theory argues that the distribution of power in a family disproportionately places greater weight in a decision on the preferences of the more powerful

spouse, and that the balance of power lies with the spouse who has comparatively greater resources (Shihadeh 1991). Age, education and gender are also relevant. They are all discussed in reviews of power-balance theory as factors that in practice potentially relate to differences in resources and earning potential (Nivalainen 2004). I will therefore consider these variables as well.

Power-balance and human capital theories can look identical in their manifestations. Both show the individual with the most resources or earnings in a dyad as the favored party. Human capital theory argues that the favoritism derives from rationality whereas power-balance says the favoritism derives from one's power position within the couple. It may be difficult to tease out the distinctions between the two theories, and qualitative reports of adaptation rationales will be important. It bears reiterating that as a result of the reorganization of work over the past two decades and the tenuous economy during the project period, both spouses in a couple may have been powerless in the decision process. Greenhouse (2009) argues that even for middle-class workers economic and social forces array against the American worker such that corporations wield all of the power. The adaptations of relocated workers and their spouses may simply be reactions. While looking for signs of the balance of power in a dyad, it is also necessary here to look for signs of a sense of powerlessness.

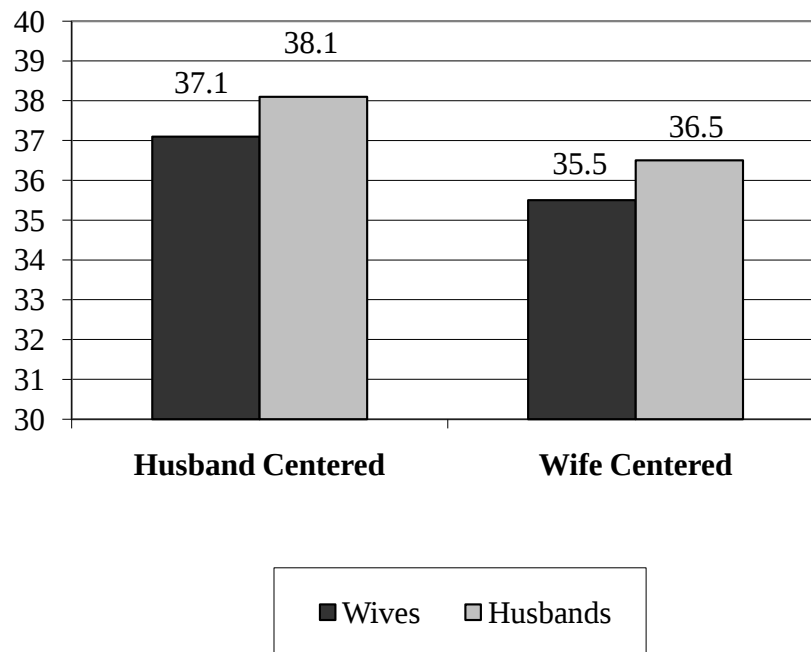
Gender-role theory emphasizes gender roles and gender identities as the basis of family migration decisions, and assumes decision making is not gender neutral and not egalitarian. Traditional gender norms assign certain activities and traits to husbands and other traits and activities to wives (Collins et al. 1993). Women are expected to place family ahead of personal goals and have ultimate responsibility for reproductive activities. Men are expected to act as primary breadwinners and emphasize economic and career success. Kimmel and Ferber (2006)

write, “Since the early nineteenth century American manhood has pivoted around the status of breadwinner—the self-made man who supports his family by his own labor” (132). Gender-role theory argues that men's interests in productive labor are favored over women's, given the assumed preeminence of men in that domain. (e.g. Bielby and Bielby 1992, Lichter 1983, Shihadeh 1991). This model remains the less dominant paradigm although it has been empirically supported (Cooke 2003).

As Rank and LeCroy (1983) suggest, utilizing more than one theory in interpreting family research may lead to a fuller understanding of behavior. Therefore, this research will consider informants' qualitative discussions of rational thought processes, costs and benefits to different family members of losing or changing jobs, and levels of human capital in each dyad. Also, concepts that differentiate between different forms of human capital like portability of skills, social prestige and the work-from-home phenomenon must be considered. Age, education and gender will be included as factors that relate to differences in resources through their effect on human capital development (Nivalainen 2004), and I will look for qualitative reports of adaptation decisions that result from power differentials in the dyad or a sense of powerlessness. Finally, gender role theory will be applied through review of gender roles and gender identities within accounts of adaptation to work roles post-move.

To evaluate gender dynamics it is especially important to make comparisons across the strata of move centers and move trailers. Of course, the data on age and education are not projectable to the population since the sample was neither randomly selected nor large enough to provide representativeness. They do, however, provide the characteristics of the couples we spoke with, and they suggest trends. Figure 7.1 shows the comparative ages of husbands and wives in each strata.

Figure 7.1 - Ages of Husbands and Wives by Move Role Strata



The mean ages of both men and women involved in husband-centered moves was slightly higher than the mean ages of men and women involved in wife-centered moves. This suggests that the non-traditional approach of following a wife's career is becoming more likely with younger cohorts as gender role norms evolve and as women are more prevalent in higher education and higher-earning careers. However, 6 of the 21 husband-centered couples explicitly brought up their desire to divide family work by traditional gender norms, and the mean age of that group was 35 years for women and 35.5 years for men. The ages of that 'explicitly traditional' group is then, on average, the same as the wife-centered group and lower than the total husband-centered group. This casts uncertainty on the directional trend suggesting evolving

gender roles among younger cohorts. Alternatively, it may be that younger cohorts are more explicit about their gender role choices rather than taking them as a given.

The human capital framework offers that differences in human capital across men and women and thus findings of preferential outcomes for men from migration, may be attributable to the normative age difference between husbands and wives. That is, men, on average, would have a human capital advantage over their wives because they are further along in their careers due to their age, not because of gender inequality. The characteristics of the study sample do not bear that out. Couples in the wife-centered stratum have a similar age differential to couples in the husband centered sample. Women in both the wife-centered and husband-centered samples are an average of 1year younger than their husbands. So, being older does not correlate to being the move center in this group.

A comparison of the relative educational differences between partners across strata does reveal interesting differences that need to be examined more closely through the qualitative explanations. To create an easy summary of comparative education level for couples in the study, I assigned different levels of education different numeric values (High School=1, College=2, Masters=3, JD, MD or PhD=4) and calculated a difference for each couple. The differences are calculated by subtracting the education level of the move-trailer from the education of the move-center (be it husband or wife). Tables 7.1 and 7.2 present mean and relative educational scores.

Table 7.1 - Mean Educational Scores

Husband-Centered			Wife-Centered		
Centers	Trailers	Difference	Centers	Trailers	Difference
2.47	2.12	.35+	3.4	2.5	.9+

Table 7.2 - Distribution of Relative Scores

Center's score relative to Trailer's score	Husband- Centered (n)	Wife- Centered (n)
-2	2	0
-1	1	0
0	8	3
1	9	5
2	1	2
Total	21	10

In this non-representative sample, on average, women who led a move had much higher human capital than wives who followed husbands (3.4 v. 2.12). The average differential between wives and their trailers was more than 2.5 times as great as the average differential between husbands and their trailers. But both move-centers and move-trailers in the wife-centered group were, on average more educated than their counterparts in the husband-centered groups. According to the premise of portability of general education, trailers in the wife centered group would likely enjoy more options in the destination community than trailers in the husband-centered group.

Also, the overall higher level of educational attainment in the wife-centered group signifies a trend of more egalitarian gender roles among more educated couples. Yet, both center husbands and trailing husbands have nearly identical average educational score (2.47 v. 2.5). In the husband-centered stratum about half of the move-centers had greater educational attainment than their spouses, while in the wife-centered stratum seven in ten had greater educational attainment and none had lower educational attainment. These summary numbers suggest that, while women do lead moves, this non-traditional phenomenon is more likely when women have very high educational attainment and when their educational attainment exceeds that of their

spouse. For husbands to lead a move, these summary numbers suggest that educational differentials are less of a factor, though still present. It appears that the human capital theory is not only practically but also theoretically gendered. Women's human capital is weighted less strongly than men's or only certain types of prestigious human capital are considered when held by women. Differential weighting of resources contradicts the premise of rationality that is behind human capital theory.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that high-status forms of human capital likely translate into power within the dyad, and a power-balance approach as the causal mechanism is probable. Men's interests seem to prevail unless women's resources are very high, too high to be disregarded. For the three female physicians (two of whom were in narrow specialties), none of the husbands or wives specifically mentioned income or resources as a motivating force to the move or the prioritization of their wives jobs. However, they did mention time and money invested in developing the medical career and a long-time understanding that getting situated in the medical career would likely entail a move. Two husbands spoke proudly of the prestige of their wife's accomplishments.

When jobs for trailing spouses come as part of employer-provided benefit packages, costs to the trailing spouses become much lower. This phenomenon was more likely for women-centered moves. One of the physician's husbands, Troy, had his own job interests looked after as part of the relocation when the hiring hospital provided him with a job as well. Another, Andy, continued in his role as primary care giver to the couple's two pre-school age girls while he did consulting part-time from home. He kept an open mind about going back to work away from the house full-time when the children were in school. The other trailing husband of a physician, Ricky, continued as stay-at-home parent to the couple's infant. This was a role he had only

recently taken on prior to the move, and one he viewed as short-term. He was the only trailing husband to acknowledge the unique concerns of child-bearing age women in high-status jobs. He did not mention her power in the dyad, but her did refer to her position of power with the employer.

"Our hard work really paid off. Eva had a lot of great options coming out of her residency. This group went after her hard and she was able to negotiate a great deal. I have no doubt that she's gonna be running that place down the road....Thank God our planning with Maria worked out so that Eva wasn't pregnant when she was starting in this new job. I can stay home with her for a little while until she is a little older and ready for day care and Eva can focus on the new job without showing up and announcing she's pregnant like two days after getting there". - *Ricky, age 35, trailer*

Sandra and Drew were the only African-American couple in the study, and one of five couples to directly mention income level in decision making and choosing family roles. They were both professionals holding advanced degrees - Sandra had an executive MBA and a JD while Drew had an MBA. For this couple, who were both full-time workers at the time of the move, a power-balance approach to decision making seemed to be in play. Sandra wanted to move back to the east coast for family reasons and though Drew agreed in theory, he resisted until his wife's earnings became a factor. It was then that her preferences prevailed. Rather than concluding that her earnings were favored through simple rationality, I detect power in the dyad through Sandra's lead in taking action. Sandra made the move with her boys, and it took Drew a while to follow through and join them. Throughout the process, he was committed to working after the move. His role adaptation required he find new employment, which he did. He explains:,

"In the past couple of years there were a couple of deaths in the extended family and my wife, we, began thinking of going back to (city) area in case something else happened. Things changed at Sandra's job around the same time. My wife passed me in earnings and they dissolved her division and she was going to be unemployed. Someone from the company contacted her about an opportunity in New England and said she could put her name in the hat. We thought there was no better time....I had a few prospects but I didn't have a job offer yet. I knew I'd get something eventually. We based it on my wife's income." - *Drew, age 40, trailer*

Drew did get a job fairly quickly after moving, but he struggles with the loss of his old job. Drew's story is the only one of the 10 wife-centered moves where the trailing spouse seemed to feel somewhat powerless and disadvantaged by the situation he was in. That powerlessness appeared to be in the face of both his more powerful wife and the economic threats of downsizing and reorganization. He needed to find new paid job, but also replace a portion of his identity which he derived from relationships at his workplace. He initiated a job search in New England immediately, starting the search before he left Michigan. He did not take on more of the child-care even though he was the trailing spouse.

"Sometimes I miss my former job. The camaraderie with old people. I'm at a new job and I don't really know anyone. That's one of the downish parts. That and the huge housing expense" - *Drew, age 40, trailer*

It was Sandra who disclosed Drew's reluctance to move, and she described it as related to his career.

"I was also concerned with (Drew's company), even though Drew was at a plant I believed to be safe. Drew was still stuck on (The Company), he didn't really want to go. But I saw the state going down, even the healthcare industry was struggling so I was concerned about

my own career. I thought we needed to go where there was more diverse industry....My entire division was displaced and I was laid off along with my staff....So someone I had worked with offered me a position over all of Northern New England. My husband wanted to come back to (New England City) but was petrified to leave (The Company). So I asked him, What should I do? We want to have kids who would know their grandmothers, so he said yes, let's do it.....Because of the timing me and the kids left right away for New England while Drew stayed behind. My mother instinct kicked in. It was August and they needed to get into school. We stayed in temporary housing and my mother watched the kids while I was at work....It was me dictating how things would go. The driving force was getting my boys settled. My husband called me the Mommy Nazi because I was so focused and driven to get them settled....Drew just couldn't let go but I had to get the boys settled...I knew he'd come eventually. He missed his boys and my husband does love me (laughs).” - *Sandra, age 40, center*

Of the four husband-centered move couples who mentioned income as a factor in decision making and family role choices, only one was specific and told a story consistent with the power-balance model. Two mentioned relative income in brief, as if it somehow made them appear more rational. But ultimately those couples were following a gender-role model. The last of the four, Katie, reported her husband's higher salary from the relocation as a factor in her post-move adaptation choice, staying home with her son. She did, however, say she would rather have continued working but felt that was unfair to her son after putting him through a move. She was following gender role expectations and the ideology of motherhood that placed the burden of her son's happiness on her at the expense of her own desires

Anna's story was the most consistent with human capital theory and she was the most troubled with the adaptations she had tried to make for years regarding her family role. When asked how the couple negotiated the balance between their jobs, Anna replied:

"That's the thing, we didn't. We just followed his career path. We wanted someone to stay home so whoever was making the most money was gonna work. I was heartbroken honestly about my career". - *Anna, age 35, trailer*

Anna had attempted a business that she could run and still be around for her children, but the business failed and cost the family a lot of money. She is currently pursuing a teaching certificate because teaching hours are family friendly. She is taking her courses online, and explained that she was interested in this path for a long time but could not negotiate it logistically until the online option became available. Butch was supportive of all of Anna's attempts to find professional satisfaction. With only the data from the interviews, the couple did not appear to have a power differential.

Rational choice as grounds for following Butch's career appears defensible. The couple had put their home as collateral so that Anna could pursue her career interests, and they had eventually lost the home to bankruptcy. The couple had no choice but to follow Butch's more developed career to regain their financial stability. The choice did not appear to derive from Butch's greater power, but rather the powerlessness that resulted from Michigan's challenged economy. Anna's role adaptation from primary care giver and business owner to primary care giver and education student involved the psychological aspects of coming to terms with her business failure, but also commitment to finding a new strategy for reaching her ideal of having a professional outlet. She remained proactive, and did not give way to the underlying sense of powerlessness she seemed to feel.

Mark talked about traditional gender roles and then added relative income as a factor in decision making, perhaps to appear less sexist and more respectful of his wife's past work as a teacher. Mark and Megan clearly followed a gender role paradigm for determining each partner's family/work role. I asked Mark if they had deliberately put one person's career ahead of the other even before their children were born, and he agreed they had.

"Probably putting mine a little bit in front of hers probably realizing that we were going to start a family sometime in the near future and I was going to be the breadwinner...We knew she wanted to stay home if she could with kids and the value of that is immeasurable. It's not a dollar amount. It's not a figure you can grasp and say yes this cost me X . Because you can't, the upside is so much greater, the devotion, educationally. It's just that there's so much she's got to offer, so a lot of that comes into play in the decision process....It was more of a traditional thing, It wasn't like let's compare paychecks or anything. It was more like I was in a different career path that would pay more. It wasn't like so I'll stay home because you make more than me. It was just kind of implied. I don't know if it's just a fault of our society that teachers make a lot less than other professionals do so even though they do extra work and work a lot harder than some other professionals do. It's just a fact of our reality." - *Mark, age 31, center*

Post-move work participation differed across husband-centered moves and wife-centered moves. Of the 21 couples who experienced husband-centered moves, about half or 11 of the trailing wives were working for pay in some capacity prior to the move but only one-third or 7 were working after the move. Nine of 21 women continued in their role as stay-at-home parent, 3 continued their role working from home and 9 underwent a role/job change. Four of the adapters started a new job (1 was formerly an at-home parent) and *five or one-quarter of the*

sample transitioned to stay-at-home parent. (These data are based on the most recent move for families that have undergone more than 1 work-related relocation.)

Among the 10 wife-centered moves, 7 of 10 trailing husbands were working for pay in some capacity prior to the move (6 full-time and 1 part-time) and 6 in 10 were able to continue working after (4 full-time and 2 part-time). Three of the paid workers continued in the same work-from-home job although one of the three scaled back from full-time to part-time hours; two were provided positions in the relocating employer's organization; and one, Drew who was discussed above, found a new full-time job through his own efforts. Overall, half of the trailing husbands experienced an adaptation - *one who went from full-time work to at-home-parent*, one who scaled back his work from full to part-time, and three who began new full-time jobs. About equal proportions of trailing men and women underwent a formal role adaptation, but the nature of those changes and the motivations behind them were substantively different as seen in the informant narratives. Many more trailing women (one-quarter) gave up paid work after a move than did trailing men (One-tenth).

As discussed, in this sample and perhaps among wife-centered movers in general, the wives have very high educational attainment. Six of the ten have a professional degree or PhD that places them in the top 3% of adults over age 25 (U.S. Census Population Survey 2009). As such, their leverage with their employers who are invested in getting or maintaining their unique skills within the organization, was high. Only 3 of the 21 husbands in the husband-centered moves had a professional degree or PhD. Three of the six highly educated wives negotiated employment for their husbands as part of the relocation package, making the adaptation process easier for their trailing spouses - one at a university, one at a hospital and one at a global corporation. None of the 21 husbands who led a move negotiated work for their wives. Two

trailing husbands took the offered job, and one, Glenn, did not. Glenn had left a job under unpleasant circumstances about a month before Kelly was offered her relocation. Quite by accident he had begun to appreciate the advantages of being at home, and he chose to continue that way. The job offer from Kelly's company allowed Glenn's job/role adaptation decision to feel like a choice rather than an imperative.

"I was offered a job where Kelly works, but it just didn't make sense. Then I'd be gone all day. What would I do about Cooper? I would have to hire a nanny from 3:15 to 6:00. I had to ask, was it worth the loss of flexibility? We go home to Wisconsin for 2 months every summer. Our family has a lake house there. Cooper has all his cousins there and they have a ball. And it's not just after school, they have breaks from school. When we did it in (Northwestern City) it was very stressful. If he was sick we had to figure out who had the least important appointment that day and usually we both had important appointments. Plus, we don't want someone else raising our son. He remembers the things we do together. Once that time is gone you can't get it back...I've considered doing some part-time work where they pay you under the table. I talked to a guy and we'll see where that goes." - *Glen, age 40, trailer*

Kelly thought the dimension of choice was important to Glenn's adaptation, and she was also mindful of his relationships and social connections. This is another example of a woman's holistic view of the effects of actions on family members. She said:

"It would have been a different decision if he hadn't had the choice. Knowing it was an option was critical. Working gives you that connection with other adults." - *Kelly, age 40, center*

As a result of technological innovation, the trend of spreading paid work beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of the employing organization's physical space has emerged

over the past couple of decades (Richardson 2010). Ironically, the increase in prevalence of work-from-home situations offers a potential counter-balance to the disruptive spatial requirements being imposed by a relocation. Six of the 31 couples were able to minimize the job/role adaptation requirements imposed on the trailing spouse because that spouse's work-from-home job was portable to the new home. Tietze and Musson (2010) argue that the work-from-home phenomenon is not entirely utopian, especially for managerial and office workers. Rather, they contend that it introduces conflict and contradiction to the formation of identities related to both home and work. Identity, this argument suggests, is constructed as an ongoing social process, achieved by a subtle interweaving of the many aspects of social and occupational interactions that enable individuals to locate and define themselves in their social environment. Because at-home work, or telework, is less or differently interactive and situated in the contradictory location of home, identity development becomes complicated.

This study contests their assertion, and trailing informant narratives reveal that the portability of at-home work allows trailers to retain rather than lose aspects of their identity during a move. Adaptation in job/role is minimized or simplified by being able to retain paid work. Also, several stories suggest that the continuity of work and work-contacts offers a sense of security that frees trailing spouses up in the short-term to attend to other adaptive activities. As an example, Evan worked in a art-related field. By combining one part-time job in his field with part-time freelance work from home he was working full-time before his wife was relocated. Upon moving, he made some important adaptations, leaving his part-time work and passing on an opportunity that was just emerging. He still had his freelance work, however.

"At the time of the move, I was part-time a couple of nights a week plus Saturday and I did freelance work at home. I had a home-studio set up. I was fine with giving up the (part-time

job). The freelance work, I still do that. You can do it from anywhere, you just need an email address. There was a new (business) opening up that was perfect for me. I had been doing (style of work), which really wasn't me. That almost hurt the timing, but I felt strongly about Lisa's opportunity. I had been the primary caregiver for the kids so nothing much changed for the kids there." - *Evan, age 48, trailer*

Because Evan had the continuing work he could do at home, he did not need to focus on his job situation. He was able to look for some personal opportunities in the move. He explained the decisions he made in his adaptation as follows.

"I needed to get the kids settled. And I just wanted to use the extra time to be useful, involved in the community. I went online..I'm a little scared about it, its outside my comfort zone. I always considered doing volunteer work and didn't get to do it back home. So now's my chance. For now I am focused on helping the boys and trying new things. My business connections are strong and I can keep them up doing freelance so I'm not concerned about that".
- *Evan, age 48, trailer*

Similarly, Akira was running a business out of her home. With that as an established starting point, she took the move as an opportunity to grow the business.

"I'm a stay at home mom but I do have a business that takes a fair amount of time. I manufacture (baby products) for a few local stores and one in New York. I was really busy and embedded in (previous community) and we were a part of a community with a church and also close neighbors. It was a really hard decision to make. The business translated really well though. We got more space and it turns out here in town its actually less expensive here for help. We had this great revelation that we could devote a whole room to the business". - *Akira, age 28, trailer*

Donna used her work-from-home situation much like Evan did, as a way to maintain contacts for another time in her life when she is more interested in paid work. At the time of the move, she wanted to assist her kids and not worry about a job. Interestingly, even though Donna did work for pay on a part-time basis, she did not define herself as a worker.

"I was not working. I stopped working after the birth of my first child. He took a long time coming and I was pretty stressed out. I did consulting work and I still do for the company I used to work for. Not a ton, but enough to keep my foot in the door... I was able to keep doing that even after we moved to Chicago because it was a national account...I picked and chose what I wanted to do. My goal was establishing the kids and not myself, well myself too, but not my career." - Donna, age 40, trailer

After looking at age, education, work status, type and portability of work, all variables included in the human capital and power-balance models, many trailing spouses' situations vis à vis post-move job/role adaptation remain unexplained. The profiles of educational data and post-move job/role outcomes look very different for trailing spouses by gender, and the differences are not explainable in a gender neutral way. Why must move centers who are women be so much more highly educated than move centers who are men? Why must the difference in education across spouses be greater for wife-centered couples than for husband-centered couples? Why are so many trailing spouses who are women stay-at-home parents when most trailing spouses who are men participate in paid work? Through analysis of the narratives offered in this research it is clear that gender role ideology is alive and well, and it is a central determining factor in family job/role decisions and post-move job/role adaptation.

Marion and Stacy both talked about their role of stay-at-home parent, and how through multiple moves for their husbands' jobs they used volunteering at the children's schools as their

professional outlet. They also talked about participation in the schools as their responsibility as mothers, to know what was going on in their children's lives and to champion their children's interests. This role choice was directly shaped by gender, as shown in Marion's discussion.

"I don't have a career. I've been home raising the children and yes I've had jobs here and there, you know part time jobs and things like that, but I feel my primary place is in the home and taking care of everything. You're a mom, you understand all that kind of stuff.... I think my husband told me when we first got married that I would stay home. He specifically asked me do you want kids, when do you want kids and when we have kids I would like you to stay home. I had no problem with that. I said not a problem. And that's kind of the way it was and I wanted to be here when they were home from school, before they left for school, if they got sick, if whatever and then what I ended up doing is working in the schools. So, I was here after school every day. So, I made my way in the school." - *Marion, age 45, trailer*

Like Stacy and Marion, when her family was relocated Cassie retained her role as stay-at-home mom to her three kids. This is a choice she made consciously and agreed on with her husband. She played the role of primary breadwinner for a several years while her husband finished college, but both spouses were eager for the switch to traditional roles. Cassie discussed the process as follows.

"It was always very important for me to stay home with my kids, but we really just wanted to have a kid and didn't want to wait any longer.... Brad spent three months of summer break just playing daddy. He's glad he got to do that. Now when I say I've had a rough day, he's like even taking care of six month old baby is a lot different than taking care of three kids all day, but he is glad to have had that experience of just staying home and being daddy...We were both from families where our mom's stayed home. My mom went back to work when I was in

high school, she was a teacher's aide at my brother's elementary school so, she was still home when we were home. His mom worked a few small jobs, but nothing again that her kids were ever in daycare. She was always home when they were home. She only worked during the hours they were at school. I think it was even brought up before we got married that I just wanted to be a stay at home mom and he was fine with that...He's very much your typical male, I don't think he's a typical male, because he's not. But, he enjoys being the bread winner, he felt a little strange those first four years, me making most of the money and him not." - *Cassie, age 30, trailer*

Many of the other trailing wives in this project shared similar sentiments, where they deliberately choose to be mothers and stay out of the paid labor force. They did not have to redefine their roles after the relocation. Other women did make role adaptations post-move and gender ideology was a factor. Janet had a great job in her chosen field when her husband was downsized from his job. She was making a meaningful contribution to the family income and felt her husband Mike could find a job locally that would pay enough to combine with her income to make ends meet. To fulfill Janet's wishes Mike would have to take a pay cut and a job much lower in prestige than the one he lost. Mike ended up finding a job comparable to the one he lost, but the family of six had to move. Janet launched a job search in their new locale and ended up with a position that was much less prestigious and satisfying, and it paid significantly less. She was not happy about the situation but explained her willingness to make the adaptation this way:

"Mike needs to be the breadwinner. It's important to how he sees himself as a husband and a father. I can make anything work but men are different, so what are you gonna do." - *Janet, age 43, trailer*

Mary also gave up a favorable and satisfying work situation. She had a part-time position as an attorney prior to her move, and she transitioned to staying home full-time with her children.

"As a starting out attorney, you don't get offers for part-time employment, that's what a lot of women in the field complain about. New attorneys, they want you to work sun up to sun down and women who want kids can't do that; it's a huge problem. It was a good opportunity and I would have stayed. ...Part of it is that I was licensed there and I'm not licensed here so for me to work here, I'd have to take the bar exam again. I think if I wait 3 years, I can apply to be waived in, once I've been licensed in (other state) for 3 years. I'm sort of waiting that out, trying to see if I can apply for that or see what I can do. I was also pregnant with him at the time so we didn't know how that would change things. So I probably would've taken at least a couple months off, but then looked for part-time work. He's just so much more driven professionally, even though it seems like I made a huge investment going to law school. To me, it's fulfilling to be with my kids, it's something that wouldn't be for him." - *Mary, age 31, trailer*

Katie left a satisfying full-time job because she felt it was important to put her son's needs ahead of her own.

"It just didn't seem right to me to just move Jared here in a new place, figure everything out and find a day care. Like, it just was that we weren't used to that. It's just I would have continued to work, but I couldn't bear that" - *Katie, age 30, trailer*

For both trailing wives and trailing husband's the post-move adaptation can be an opportunity to make a switch and try something different. Glenn, Evan and Akira saw the need for adaptation as an opportunity rather than a hardship to modify their job/roles. Christie fell into that category as well. She was working before her move and she wanted to stay at home with her kids for a time while she re-thought her career interests. The move was precipitated by

the end of her husband Sam's work contract, and it was Sam who was looking to share the breadwinning role. The two had not communicated well and were therefore struggling with the adaptation as Christie describes:

"I think I was feeling pretty burned out at work. It is prestigious but there is only so much you can do...I don't know I just was ready for a change. I guess we're not only making major transitions in terms of moving but in terms of a career choice. So I think a lot of different things are happening....And I'm not really, really motivated or loving my career choice at this point in my life, so right now I'm just kind of like eeh! I care for people all day long I just really don't want to go to work and do the same thing. I was really ready for a break, but I do think I need more in my life than just taking care of kids. So yeah, Some other outlet for me, some other dimension to my life. So there is a little piece of you that leaves when you stop working." -

Christie, age 28, trailer

Sam was not comfortable with Christie's 'break' from work. He had expected her to find work in their new community, and he expected that to happen pretty easily given Christie's field. Sam communicated his worry, trying to be sympathetic to Christie's wishes. It was Sam whose job precipitated the move, that seemed to feel most powerless in the face of his new role as single breadwinner and in response to his trailing wife's role adaptation from paid worker to at-home parent.

"The cost of living is much higher here and we went from two incomes to one so it's been a challenge trying to make ends meet. I think there's, we both thought she would get a job once she was ready, once things get settled that she would get a job. But at the same time she's not quite sure of what she wants to do as far as a job is concerned...I think it's a strain on both of us. But it's a strain on me." - *Sam, age 30, center*

Women's Work Identity

Garey (1999) described and systematically offered evidence to refute the orientation model as the basis of work and family decision-making for women. She explained that this ahistorical and homogenizing model rests on the concepts of 'choice' and 'orientation' (Ibid:5). Women's labor force participation is mistakenly perceived by many Americans to be a function of personal choice and that choice is perceived to derive from a woman's embodiment of either a 'work orientation' or a 'family orientation', discrete orientations falsely perceived as incompatible. Garey argues that the dimension of choice is a fallacy based on white, middle class experiences in the 1950's, and she effectively demonstrates its inaccuracy. She also shows that interests and activities in work and family are compatible, but the false ideology creates guilt and stress for women trying to blend the two.

In the predominantly middle and upper middle class communities where relocators often live, belief in the orientation model persists. Several women offered stories where their labor force participation choices were differently perceived and judged when they crossed communities. Katie was adapting to a new role as stay-at-home mother. She felt that her choice to engage in paid work or to stay at home was more respected in the Chicago area than it had been in Michigan. Her transition was to a more favorable situation, where her peers were less committed to the orientation model. She described the differences this way.

"Another thing is that in Michigan when I went back to work some of the neighbors were like, Oh you're not going to last, you're going to stop it, you're going to miss him too much And another thing I felt there was that people were very judgmental. On you're either a stay at home mom or a working mom. Here, a lot of women who are stay at home now were professionals

and they've stopped permanently or temporarily whatever, but there's not that judgment like one is better than the other." - *Katie, age 30, trailer*

Amanda described the converse experience. She came from an area that accepted the integration of family and working as compatible in a woman's life. When she relocated as a move center, she found herself in a community she described as filled with stay-at-home mothers that were judgmental of her situation.

"When we lived (on the east coast), there were a ton of working moms, everybody there was having kids and going back to work. So we had a ton in common and we'd see each other on weekends and evenings and whatever. Out here, there aren't a lot of working moms; it's mostly stay-at-home moms or people who work part time from home 2 days a week. I did hear a few comments, oh you work. I'm sensitive to it too so I was maybe being more focused on it but comments like 'well I've got a friend who has 3 kids and a nanny and she's got someone else raising her kids. Why would she want someone else to raise her kids?' Those kinds of things, people would say it in front of me and I was very sensitive to it because it was such a different environment. I didn't know anyone here who was doing what I was doing; getting on the train everyday and going downtown to work and putting their kids in daycare. There was a daycare so other people were doing it, but nobody that we had met at that point was doing that." - *Amanda, age 33, center*

These stories reveal that women may be subject to an adaptation period even if they are not changing their work role. As different communities, groups and individuals hold different normative expectations for women's reproductive and productive labor, they may find themselves feeling the need to internally or externally reconcile themselves with their choices. Epstein (2004) argues that one of the greatest problems facing men and women who cross

boundaries of cultural gender norms is the effect of social disapproval on their identity. "Their very stake in the 'who' of 'who they are' is called into question" (Ibid: 320).

Pursuant to that theoretical position, I expected stay-at-home fathers to exhibit similar needs to defend or justify their decisions to new sets of community members upon moving. Interestingly, none expressed that there was a difference in the attitudes that surrounded them, and none discussed concern over adapting in the face of social norms that tend to run counter to their labor choice.

Summary

For most trailing spouses a change in job/role occurs following a relocation. No single explanatory model exists to inform how the need for a job/role change is justified or approached. The existing literature on outcomes of relocation on spousal earnings and career incorrectly trichotomize the explanation into three distinct and supposedly competing models. Human capital and rational decision making, power-balance based on resources, and gender ideology have been compared and contrasted. This project suggests that all of these offer worthwhile concepts and the true dynamic, while not identical for every couple and every decision, is a synthesis of the three with gender operating as the main organizing principle. The trends regarding the importance of each concept and the way that trailing spouse's choose to adapt differ by gender. Inequality across gender shapes the decisions, though not consciously or maliciously. Women are more likely to make a substantive change to their job/role than are men, and they are more likely to do so in a way that disadvantages their career and earnings potential. Further, women must do more or be more to have their job/role prioritized. This is not a small finding given that sacrifices made in the present may still impact income earning 10 or even 20

years from now (Casey 2010). It is the unrecognized nature of gender inequality that makes it so dangerous to women and so hard to combat.

In husband-centered moves, men usually held the role of breadwinner regardless of whether their wives worked. They did so simply because they were men. In wife-centered moves, women were equally as likely to share the role of breadwinner as to hold it on their own. When women were the breadwinners, it was usually because they were accomplished in high-status fields and/or far more accomplished than their husbands. Therefore, this research argues that the power-balance model is not gender-neutral. Resources translate into dyadic power for women only when their resources exceeded their husbands' resources more than incrementally or are based in high-status careers. Otherwise, the gender role model prevailed.

Trailing husbands were offered more assistance by their wives' employers, though this may have been the result of the women's power positions in the hiring process through their educational and career specializations. Trailing husbands were more likely to work both before and after a move, and their post-move adaptation was usually to find some form of new employment. Many trailing wives did not need to redefine their roles or their paid work lives because they were and continued to be stay-at-home mothers. Social and logistical adaptations by stay-at-home parents were necessary, and those changes will be discussed in a later chapter. Trailing wives who had been in the paid labor force often gave up their paid work or had their work down-graded.

Few trailing spouses expressed a sense of powerless to redefine their own role in the face of structurally derived imperatives to move. Even where those forces were at play, informants remained pro-active in efforts to find and fill a new role.

Two new concepts emerged from the data that applied to both genders. The increasing prevalence of work-at-home situations offered trailing spouses some protection from job/role identity changes. Spouses who worked from home had portable jobs and greater flexibility. Also, there was a small group of individuals who used the 'turning point' of their husband's or wife's relocation as the impetus to modify a job/role situation they were not satisfied with.

Chapter VIII

BUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

An overwhelming theme across the relocation stories is that social connection to the community and social support networks are a primary focus of adaptation work. The topic of social capital emerged as an area of primacy in the relocation experience during the preliminary study conducted in the early 2000's (Whitaker 2010) and then again in this research. During the in-depth-interviews, a majority of informants, especially women regardless of work role, naturally steered to the topic of forming social connection as the first and most important work of relocating. "How would you define a successful move?" was the last question I asked, but perhaps it was the most important. In response I heard answers like:

"To have friends. It is important to have someone I can call when I need help. It's important."

"Probably getting entrenched and meeting people was the biggest thing."

"Having good friends, not just the hi, how are you type, but the ones you can share holidays and special occasions with."

The idea of friends came up throughout the interviews as critically important, and informants indicated that friends were even more important in their new places of residence than they were where family or long-term connections were available. Friends, when you are apart from family, take on the role of the pseudo-family or the people you can go to for companionship, help or support. Thus, transient families are more in need of deeper, reliable

friendships than are families located near parents, grandparents, siblings, or even long-term acquaintances.

Relocaters who moved closer to extended family had some building blocks for their support structure. But, even families that engaged in prodigal moves communicated that friendships and the development of other social networks were priorities. Most 'prodigal movers' did not situate themselves immediately beside extended family members, but rather within proximity to visit or call upon those family members with more regularity than they had before. Some prodigal moves placed relocaters within 5-8 hour drives of extended family rather than plane rides away. Other prodigal moves placed family within 1 to 2 hour drives. Others put families in the same metro area, but not where daily or even weekly contact was likely or easy to negotiate. Even where extended family was fairly accessible, most relocaters were insistent on forming their own friendships to supplement family connections.

Consistent with past research, informants' positive sense of well-being was associated with forming friendships, and the inability to form friendships was associated with a sense of stress and unhappiness. Informants recognized directly that friends were more than a "nice-to-have" commodity. They were a necessity. There were gender differences in the work of cultivating friendships and in the importance placed on individuals' friendships, though most informants of both genders offered that friendships and connections were critical for the family as a whole. Women were more likely to do the adaptation work of developing friendships for themselves, their children, and even their spouses. But both men and women enumerated the many resources and benefits friends provided to the family overall.

Contrary to Wuthnow's proposition that proximity is not important to the creation of social networks, relocaters lamented that when a family moves to a new area, most of their social

resources are forfeited. Though relationships may persist long distance, the ability for families to garner day-to-day resources from those relationships is severely limited. McAllister, Butler and Kaiser (1973) argued that mobility leads to integration-disruption, that is, it is “disruptive of social relationships and inherently damaging to the woman who changes her place of residence” (202). A related project by the same researchers (Butler et al. 1973) found adverse effects only among women and not among men.

My research confirms the proposition that relocaters lose important social relations when close proximity is relinquished, but gender effects are mixed. While men were less likely to focus on building social connections for their own individual needs than were women, they did recognize their need for such connections. Relocaters, especially women, do exhibit concern over loss of support resources and can have their sense of well-being “damaged” until new relationships are developed. For the majority of relocaters that I spoke with, newly developed friends ultimately provided the on-going and readily accessible social capital.

Informant stories provided examples of the types of resources derived from social capital: advice on selecting new doctors/dentists; someone to baby-sit during doctor's appointments, school conferences and field trips; someone to get kids off the bus when they were running late; a place to go when they were locked out; more sets of eyes to watch kids playing outside; and someone to watch kids while they were at the hospital having a baby. Resources like companionship, a listening ear, and emotional support were critical as well. Even families with stable and plentiful financial resources experienced strain and stress if they could only rely on their immediate family or market providers for all of these types of needs. Mellisa describes a situation that made her realize she needed a support system.

"One of my reasons for finding anybody here was one day Nick was gone, maybe he was working like really close to the city, and we're like an hour outside the city. I'm coming in the house with Keegan, and I fell backwards and I hit my head on the laundry room sink. I cut my head open and I was starting to feel dizzy and we didn't know anybody. And so I was like, oh, I didn't want to pass out because at the time Keegan was little. She was like one and a half. So I was like oh my God, I don't know what to do. So Nick called this the guy who worked for him [in the local office]. (laughing) He sent Joe over to my house to sit with me. So this guy came over and sat on the couch until Nick came home and took me to the hospital and then I was like, this is crazy! I *have* to know people." - *Mellisa, age 32, trailer*

All family members are beneficiaries of these forms of family support. A minority of male move-centers didn't recognize the breadth of support and resources that social networks offer and how they themselves benefitted. They only acknowledged the importance of the networks for *their wives*. These men made comments such as:

"As long as she makes friends and is happy, you know." *Brad, age 30, center*

"Part of what I wanted to have was to make sure Megan re-planted herself, she was involved, she made friends. That she would feel like she's part of the community. It's tough to be a stay-at-home mom. We should appreciate them more. It's hard. So I really wanted that for her, you know, to have support outside of staying home with the kids and talking baby talk all day long. You know, to have other moms and people who can relate to what you're going through and what you're feeling. Stuff that husbands or a guy can't necessarily understand Guys can talk about sports and we'll know what you're talking about but if you want to talk emotional, you know, we're not that way. Guys just aren't that way." *Mark, age 31, center*

"When Ashley moved out (west) she really didn't have any friends for two years too. That was a hard thing of leaving. She wasn't going to have her friends she had just gotten to be really good friends with...She was leaving behind and had to start up a new set, which was really stressing me out because, I don't have a lot of friends. I never have. I've always hung out with my family so I've never been a real friend guy, but Ashley is and that stressed me big time. That she was going to have to go through that...Then (our realtor) set her up with people to meet. Now Ashley in the short time we've been here, almost a year now, she has better friends almost than she did (out west) almost. It relieves some of the stress on me." *Zach, age 32, center*

Just as some male move centers saw social connections in a gendered way, some female move trailers concurred with this traditional take. Both groups failed to recognize relationships as capital or resources, and chose instead to see them only as leisure pursuits based on preference rather than need. A closer look at the experiences of men and women, both trailers and centers, will later show that while gender differences exist, they are not as absolute or traditional as these informants suggest. Stacy held to a highly traditional view.

"Women need other women because their husbands or their significant other is never enough because they don't get it. Women get women. We just do and so I think we need that on so many levels, regardless of what's going on in your life at any point in time...It's sad that the men don't make more effort in the evenings and on the weekends to reach out and to develop their life, to make themselves like, you're not supposed to be your job. Your job is supposed to be what you do, not who you are." - *Stacy, age 48, trailer*

The views represented above begin to speak to the role of gender in *building social connections and support networks*. Generalizations of women as relationship-oriented and men as accomplishment-oriented are gender constructs that impact daily life pervasively. Even when

gender constructs are held more loosely or less consciously than characterized in the above quotes, effects exist on many levels. This fact has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout this research.

Gender constructs and sex categorizations carry with them generalized stereotypes about gender-appropriate behaviors, dispositions and personality traits, and they have their origins in sex-segregated divisions of labor and status differences between men and women (Glick and Fiske 1999). Social psychologists emphasize the role of grouping people into social categories as a way of thinking about, interpreting and interacting with those with whom we come in contact (e.g. Langer 1978). Research indicates that of the countless potential categories that can be employed in a psychological classification system, gender is the primary category (e.g. Taylor 1981, Banaji, Hardin and Rothman 1993). Gender, paid labor force participation, and time are the relevant dimensions related to perceptions of social capital and the distribution of adaptation work for developing social capital after a move.

Gender

The research shows that women bear the disproportionate responsibility for building up friendship networks and the accompanying resources after a move. There is an imbalance between the genders. Regardless of whether the husband's or the wife's endeavors led to the move, it is usually the wife's efforts that must make up for what was lost. Because as Wellman argues, middle-class families utilize networks for reproductive resources, women bear the burden of recreating new networks when old networks are forfeited. While a relocation may allow a family to achieve its expected economic self-sufficiency, the resources to support reproductive labor are not maintained or improved with a move. As the stewards of the reproductive sphere, reproductive labor continues to be primarily women's responsibility. Recognition of the need for

reproductive support resources; proactive strategizing to develop these resources; and executing development strategies were viewed and enacted as part of women's family management work and reproductive labor.

In single-income, male breadwinner families only women were engaged in the work of *building social connections and support networks*. This is the largest category of relocated couples as population data show that most relocated families are led by male breadwinners. Also, in this sample about half of male-centered moves were single-earner families pre-move, and even more became single-earner families after the move. Ultimately, the gendered natures of productive labor and of employee relocation, result in a situation where women are formally responsible for reproductive labor and for the rebuilding of reproductive resources forfeited through a move. This distribution of labor becomes a direct function of gender (a.k.a. she who needs reproductive resources seeks resources), work engagement (a.k.a. she who does not have social interaction through work seeks external interaction), and time (a.k.a. she who is not spending time orienting to a new workplace and satisfying demands in the more-valued market sphere, is more available to carry out the adaptation work).

Anna provided a representative story.

"Just to meet people and see what they had there I join stuff if something works with my schedule. If they have something I like, I go. They had a moms night out a few weeks ago and I wanted to go so bad but I've been having health problems and having to go to the doctor so much so the boys were so upset. They didn't want me to go out. Babysitting can get expensive too. It hard when he's not here. The neighborhood has a Bunco group I was supposed to go to Tuesday and he was working. And there's a dinner club like once a month where you go a have big feast, a Bunco group for ladies. This woman who's on the PTA, she started all this.... We're

members of the Y so we went there first. Then the park district. I mean the catalog for the park district is amazing. We did a lot of things like that. And I joined the Women's Club and I joined moms and tots... I always dive into stuff so I had the kids in all kinds of activities, just finding our way around, finding a church. Trying to find the town pool." - *Anna, age 35, trailer*

Anna's husband Butch was not at all involved.

"You know, Anna knows everyone of the neighbors. We went trick-or-treating and she knew everyone's name. She's just like that." - *Butch, age 38, center*

When asked if she had made an effort to get to know people, Butch said, "I don't know, you have to ask her."

Female-centered moves are less likely to be single income families (30% pre-move, 40% post-move in this sample). Thus trailing husbands, unlike trailing wives, are not usually taking on stay-at-home parent roles whereby they formally co-opt reproductive labor. Women continue to play a central, sometimes shared role in reproductive labor. The majority of trailing husbands have their own work places through which to obtain adult social interaction, and they largely do not perceive an urgency to forming networks. Finally, trailing husbands' time, like their partners' time, is not fully available for *building social connections and support networks* because it is also taken up with their own paid work.

The unique, minority and most telling categories for understanding the interaction of gender and work role in the distribution of adaptation work are dual-income, male-centered moves and single-income, female centered moves (stay-at-home dads). In the former, women continue to have disproportionate responsibility for reproductive labor and for *building social connections and support networks*. In the latter category, some men initiated efforts for social contacts and others did not.

Seven of the twenty-one women who moved for husband-centered moves did engage in paid labor. Only three of those women worked full time and only two, Chantelle and Janet, worked full-time outside the home. All of these women were still the active leaders within their families of *building social connections and support networks*.

Chantelle had high school aged children, and she took a full-time job only after her children were situated, her new home was built, and she had met some friends. The job was her first foray into paid labor since she started raising her family almost 20 years ago. Her biggest concern about the job was its conflict with a new friendship.

"I finally made this good friend here and we've been walking together. It's not easy at my age getting in with new people. I'm really excited to see what I can do in this job but I'm worried what's gonna happen with (friend). I haven't been able to walk lately and that's sort of our thing we have in common". - Chantelle, age 50, trailer

Janet started a new full-time job outside the home only after first enrolling her four children in school, sports and religious education. She changed her work hours after the first month to better accommodate her husband's schedule, and to be sure she could attend her children's sports games where she hoped to meet other mothers. Chantelle's and Janet's stories aligned with other trailing wives who had paid work. The work was secondary to their husband's paid work and their children's needs.

Stay-at-home fathers provide another important comparative category to better understand the interaction of gender and work roles with the distribution of adaptation work. Their experiences did not mirror those of their stay-at-home mother counterparts. The sense of immediacy and the sense of importance about developing networks was lower in this group, though it was certainly not absent. Efforts were invariably shared with wives.

Importantly, the social networks typically available to stay-at-home mothers for procuring help with reproductive labor and for at-home companionship were not perceived as viable options for stay-at-home dads. Simply put, none of the stay-at-home fathers regularly socialized with neighborhood mothers or joined female-run play groups. Instead, they found their own strategies for dealing with their situations: joining stay-at-home dad's groups, befriending others online, volunteering, and waiting for their wives to make connections. Glenn's experiences were the closest reflection of the experiences of stay-at-home mothers, but he networked with a group dedicated to men. Glenn's wife, Lisa also made efforts to get to know other parents through children's school and children's activities. Glenn's described these experiences:

"We've met our friends through our son's school. They even have a stay-at-home dads group for guys like me, trailing spouses. We hit it off really well, travel together, golf together, our wives get along too. That was key to the transition, people in the same situation, sharing your concerns and frustrations, learning from each other, experiencing the same learning curve, helping each other through the transition." - *Glen, age 40, trailer*

Seth eventually got involved in a stay-at-home dads group too, but his journey was less direct and less deliberate than those described by at-home women. He also reporting sharing some of the networking processes with his wife.

"We did our thing for a while and got settled in. We started looking for a church, which was the main thing we tried to do to plug into the community. That's about it. We just went to a church every Sunday, we'd go to one or two or we'd split up and go to different ones until we found one. Our motivation was more spiritual than community but that's one of the easier ways to plug in and meet people is a church... Me and another guy started the group. His wife is a

doctor and they're from (distant state). He was more into it; we met on the athomedads.com website. We started to hang out and get out of the house and the (local paper) did a story about us and that's what started the group.

Just from being home all the time and surfing the net. I had a stay-at-home dads handbook so that had resources in there to lead me there and I just posted for people in (our city)... We meet twice a week, sometimes 3 times a week. A few people show up on Friday at different places. I've been doing the planning; up until last month, I was doing all of the planning for meeting places and stuff. I've got a group of friends that's all stay-at-home dads and we chat online and we have dad's night out once a month. We all have similar age kids so it helps the kids too." - *Seth, age 29, trailer*

Two other stay-at-home dads described circumstances where they kept to themselves and focused on caring for their children, reading, keeping up with hobbies that related to their professional careers, or contacting friends and family by email and telephone. Neither expressed concern or stress about the level of social connectedness they had. Both of their wives were in high prestige careers, and both noted that their wives had little time to get to know people "outside of work". Eva mentioned trying to take walks occasionally to 'see who was around', and Petra reported a sense of camaraderie with her co-workers. Stay-at-home father families encountered challenges in developing networks because each spouse was taking on non-normative work roles in the family. Adaptation work suffered when the most available spouse was resistant or disinterested in the work and when the surrounding environment did not offer that spouse the same resources it may have offered his wife.

Trailing wives who were paid workers still took on the work of *building social connections and support networks*. Trailing husbands did not follow in those footsteps

universally, but they did not neglect the work universally either. Evan was a part-time at-home worker who formally took on daily childcare needs. He had elementary aged children and was active setting up play dates and bringing his sons to activities. He was also making other efforts with little pay-off. Evan exemplifies the struggles of men who take on tasks our society attributes to women, and he exemplifies the fact that men need relationships and social support.

"There's nobody we've really, really clicked with. Lisa has been so busy and she has socialized at work. If it was switched around and she was dropping and picking up she probably would have been better at developing relationships. Women are anyhow. I'm in the minority so it's harder to meet people. I have passing conversations but no one to really have serious conversations with...We had the neighbors over for dinner. Friendships make your experience, they make your life experience. Its only fun doing things when you have someone to share it with...so we invited neighbors to dinner. But we just don't see them. One has reciprocated. You don't want to push yourself on someone. I'm starting to volunteer next weekend with an agency that mentors kids for not reaching their potential." - *Evan, age 48, trailer*

Evan also mentioned "Skyping" or videoconferencing as an important way to dialogue with friends and family who are not nearby. Lisa corroborated Evan's story of inviting neighbors for dinner, and she shared in the planning and work for this event. She also talks about proactively interacting with the school and helping to choose and plan her son's activities. She reported that she wasn't worried about Evan because "he is a homebody anyhow". She did not seem in tune with Evan's struggles, as he describes them here:

"The worst part is the feelings of being in a place where you have no history. No one knows you. You have no long term friends. No one knows you're real good at this or that. The

things that make up who you are. You are starting from scratch. I guess it's a good exercise to see how people react to you." - *Evan, age 48, trailer*

Andy and Mitch were both trailing husbands who worked from home, one part-time and one full-time. They exemplified spouses who were not actively involved in building networks. Andy was social with other parents at his daughters' sports events and he hosted play dates for the girls, but otherwise kept to himself. His wife Louise got to know some of her neighbors when she encountered them during her evening walks; she participated in neighborhood Bunco nights; and she regularly went to Ladies' night out with some professional women colleagues.

Mitch focused all his efforts on building his business after the move, and he made no unsolicited mention of friendships or support needs. His children attended day care, and he was not involved in facilitating their activities or friendships. When probed about social activities he noted that a neighbor invited him to golf, and that had become a regular event. His wife Amanda wanted to take on the adaptation work of *building social connections and support networks*, but she did not have time right away. She went on maternity leave 3 months after the move, and tried to use that time to get to know people. Interestingly, she characterized Mitch as 'the outgoing one'. She was uncomfortable trying to meet new people but she saw it as a necessity and did it anyhow. Amanda and Mitch did have family nearby, (her mother was an hour drive away and her sister was two towns away) but Amanda still saw the need for additional social networks.

"I was working full-time with 2 young kids and I didn't have much time for anything else. It wasn't great, we didn't really like that, and we were looking to make connections.... I've done some stuff, but I haven't been hugely involved because I've been working. I haven't had a ton of time but we definitely wanted to make some connections. We used to live in an

environment where the neighborhood was where you meet people in the community and we moved here and we have nobody across the street from us.... But getting to connect with other families and meeting friends here was probably the biggest challenge. But once we fell into our church community, that's really where we've gotten to know people through." - *Amanda, age 33, center*

Work and Time

Move-centers who are 84% male had social interaction at work. When men who were move-centers did make connections outside of the workplace, the informants reported that their husbands met people "through me", by getting to know the husband's of their wives' new acquaintances, or through luck with no effort. Some male move centers spoke generally about the family getting embedded, and did indirectly admit they appreciated social companionship. However, they cited that their own individual connections and camaraderie come from the work place, and they do not need or want to develop other relationships.

Work-family studies have effectively documented increases in work hours for many employees, especially highly educated managerial and professional workers like those in this study (e.g. Jacobs and Gerson 2004, Blair-Loy 2004). Time, or more accurately the lack of time, was a common theme used by male move centers to substantiate that additional friends outside work were not needed. Full-time workers often did not have the time to *develop* friendships even if they had the time to *spend* with established friends. Further, many expressed that between work and time with their spouse and children there was no time for additional relationships.

"I have a few buddies from work and I occasionally stop over their house on the way home from work for a quick beer or a glass of wine. But that's about all I have time for. I need to get home to the girls". *Ken, age 46, center*

"Its most stressful for Christie. I get to spend time with people at work". *Sam age 29, center*

"I'm very social in that sense and I feel like I really enjoy the people that I work with and I go out of my way to talk with them and so I'm building relationships or at least enjoying what they can tell me. I met several people at the college that I would consider going out for a beer with...It hasn't worked yet because we're so busy. You always think – next week, or next week, cause there's always so much going on." *Todd, age 29, center*

Butch was adamant that he did not have time to socialize outside of work, but he did recognize the benefits of connectedness for the whole family and not just for his wife and sons.

"I feel kind of bad because I'm not here enough to know everyone. So I'm kinda like the dad who just travels too much in the neighborhood. I've been so busy. That's not an ego comment. That's stark reality". - *Butch, age 38, center*

Butch then provided this appreciative comment for support the family receives from neighbors. Butch also acknowledged that the availability of support was a product of the time Anna had invested to get to know people.

"There was one time I had to take Anna to the ER because she was having some pains. We didn't know what it was, right? So I'm there 10 o'clock with the boys and they had school, right? So I wanted to take the boys home then go back and see her. I first called my brother. He couldn't come so (the neighbor) sat here til 2 in the morning with her book while the kids were asleep up stairs while we were at the hospital. That's great! I mean not even, I mean a periphery

neighbor, not someone we've spent a lot of time with. And we'd do it for them and we trust them. We did not have that in Michigan. Our next-door neighbors, yeah. But it took us two years to cultivate that. We'd been here six months and I'd already had four different people to call on."

- Butch, age 38, center

Trailing wives recognize the time issues and their husbands' ability to get social interaction at work. The following quotes are examples of these sentiments.

"He's really sort of an introverted guy, a family man, dad, husband kind of guy. And a lot of time we talk about this stage of our life and how its conducive to having some really good couple friends, which is kind of a sad feeling, but you know, he hangs out, well he doesn't hang out, he chats with the folks at work and that's sort of his social network. Which isn't really much, although he hasn't expressed interest in doing anything outside of work or home."

Christie, age 29, trailer

When asked if her husband was looking for relationships, Mary answered:

"No, work's primarily his peer group. There's somebody from work that he jogs with and he goes with the guys from work to get a drink and that kind of thing so that's his peer group." - *Mary, age 31, trailer*

"He don't care, he don't want to make any new friends. He's got enough at work he don't want to do anything outside the home. Once in a while he will if I beg, plead and pull teeth, other than that, no." *Marion, age 45, trailer*

Other male centers were grateful for the social connections they enjoyed as a result of 'luck' or their wives' efforts.

"I've never really been involved with a lot of activities outside of work and, obviously, when I was in school...But, I mean, Cassie got us into a lot of church stuff and we have functions

dealing with (our daughter's) school already. They start next week, so. But, they had, we had picnics for that and we meet people there." *Brad, age 30, center*

"The funny thing is the first couple weeks we were there, I went out, I was doing something with one of our play sets or structures moving something and the guy next door walked over and started talking to me and brought a beer. Next thing I know two other guys walked over so it was just right away a very active street." - *John age 40, center.*

Donna corroborated;

"He's a go with the flow kind of guy; he pretty much thought I would handle all of that. The street that we lived on, the guys had a poker night so he met a really good group of guys there and it was nice to see him do that. Luckily, we moved into areas for what we like socially, for men, women, and kids...(The guys), they smoked their turkeys on thanksgiving and drank bloody mary's. They had poker clubs and a golf league so I don't think that he was looking for anything in particular, but it's worked for him. He hasn't looked, it's just been there." - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

Female move centers, like Amanda who was quoted above, also have difficulty finding time for *building social connections and support networks* after paid work. They too derive some personal benefits from social interactions in the paid workplace. In spite of those interactions, female centers were interested in developing networks for their family. Male trailers with paid work were more likely to work fulltime, to do their paid work outside the home, and to fulfill their own social needs through work than female trailers with paid work. They were also less likely to engage in work to build family connections and networks.

The research uncovered some common themes on how relocaters go about developing new connections. There are a number of proactive ways informants in the study went about

establishing their families within new communities, but the most successful way by far was simply to relocate into a community or neighborhood that made social capital available to them. By design or by accident, relocaters, especially women, who found themselves in places where social capital was readily available felt the most satisfied, that is, the happiest. Despite other differences – their feelings about the move, how outgoing they were, the stage in their family life – people who had the most success creating social capital were the ones who settled in a place where close networks exist; the investment time to be part of a close network is short; and, where the “cultural tool kit” of the relocater is effective at gaining access to networks. Some of the families knew what to look for in order to find such a place, and others happened into it by accident. Some families did not settle in places that offered them the social capital they needed, and they were the least happy.

Informants said in this research that the type of social capital relocaters need is most available from other relocaters. There are pockets I call ‘relocation enclaves’ where many relocation families live. These enclaves can be neighborhoods, subdivisions, or entire towns. They are not formal or defined as such, but they exist nonetheless. While this finding may appear to speak to the community level analysis of social capital as introduced by Putnam, the primary study variable is still how the individual finds the capital, rather than how social capital affects the community. Portes’ discussions of ‘civicness’ as a community characteristic that facilitates individuals’ networks and his attention to the presence of ‘bounded solidarity’ apply. The research demonstrates that gravitation toward relocation enclaves in the form of whole towns or neighborhoods creates bounded solidarity, which in turn is a source of social capital. As Portes explains “By being thrown together in a common situation [people] identify with each other and support each other’s initiatives.” (Portes 1998: 7) Of interest to Putnam’s discussion is

how the presence of relocation enclaves, which are pockets with high levels of social capital, affect the overall community in which they are found. This will be addressed later.

Mellissa found relocation enclaves in several of her moves.

"The other thing that I have found is that if you move into a new subdivision it always easier to meet people. My recommendation to everybody is if you are moving, move into a new subdivision.....There are new people who are moving in.. They're as new to that area as you are. Everybody is new together. In my last neighborhood and the one before that my subdivision was new." - *Mellisa, age 32, trailer*

Donna and John were born and raised in Michigan. They were transferred to Chicago and then transferred back to Michigan 18 months later. Instead of moving back into an established community they were familiar with, they looked for a more transient community to try and mimic the experience that had in the Chicago Suburb of "Spring Park".

"I know that area better but a lot of people that I've met in Bluebell have come from a lot of different places, so I thought Bluebell might be an area for new people. I don't think anything could compare to Spring Park though. I glorify Spring Park...I'm sure the realtor would've shown me other areas had I asked, but I said no, we pretty much want to see a version of Spring Park." - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

Other transient families were in need of the same friendship and support networks that informant families needed. Because of the reciprocal nature of social capital development and because of the relatively equal degree of need between two transient families, social capital can begin to develop fairly quickly with little initial investment. Movers may start calling on people they just met for favors they would have once reserved only for family or the closest friends. Those other families may call in the favor, and rather quickly they can become interdependent.

These efforts are a form of work similar to work described by in studies of low-income mothers who garner resources for daily survival through their participation in reciprocal networks of support (e.g. Stack 1974, Edin and Lein 1997, Nelson 2002). Gaining entree into networks and maintaining balance in the give and take of assistance involve deliberate and on-going work.

For example, when Mary and Ethan were moving from temporary housing to their permanent residence, Mary was pregnant and had another small child. She ended up calling on a new friend because she was not sure how she could be productive in the move with her toddler around.

"There is one woman I am friendly with who moved here within a month of us. And she told me she knew how hard it was, so if you need to bring her over here, that's fine. So the day we moved, I did bring her over there for the day. That's nice and I think if I had to, I could call other people. It's hard because I'm so used to having my family so it's not that easy for me to make close friends or to call people that I don't know that well and ask for things because I'm so used to having a number of people who I know really well to call." - Mary, age 31, trailer

Megan noted that even in her Newcomers Club, an organization for people who are new to the area or are experiencing new transitions in their lives like having a first child, it was the new-to-the-area members who were most amenable to making close new friends.

"I was new to the area, likely truly new to the area, so that was my main goal. Not necessarily getting playmates for my kids but for *me* to meet new people, and eventually my husband has met people through the group and I put a lot into it because I wanted to get that social out of it. I think that people who maybe are from the area are looking for something different like maybe they just want a book club or bunco or something like that. So everybody's in it for different reasons.... Like a perfect example is Catherine.... She moved from a distance and didn't know anyone, and we've really clicked." - Megan, age 31, trailer

Relocaters, especially wives, share cultural knowledge about a stressful experience, namely moving, that allows them to share understandings. Also, it makes the types of behaviors they engage in understandable and effective at penetrating a network. Other movers speak the same language, so to speak. Several of the relocated wives discussed having had the common experience of mourning their lost lives and lost identities. Other relocaters may be more understanding or tolerant of a difficult initial transition to a new area or even a negative attitude toward the new residence from a fellow mover. In fact, the chance to commiserate about lost ties may serve to strengthen the bond between the new acquaintances.

Another activity pulled from the mover's "tool kit", whether you live in a relocation enclave or not, is simply joining groups. Past research has suggested deliberate frequent interactions with neighbors as a strategy (McAllister et al. 1973), but my research emphasizes the role of formal groups in addition to heightened efforts in informal venues. Most female informants, especially trailing wives, joined multiple social or civic groups. Some tried one club at a time, and others joined everything they heard about. Cassie called to make plans for joining even before she arrived in her new community.

"I made contacts before we even got up here. I was in the mom's club international, I was in one in (the south), I got the contact for the one in (community) before we even moved up here. I think I was a little more prepared to move in and not wait for everyone to come to me and say 'hi welcome to neighborhood'. I'm the type of person if someone moved in next door the next day I would be over there with a plate of cookies saying 'hi welcome to the neighborhood' and I thought everyone would be like that and so far nobody has [in other places we've moved]. Except here, people have. But in all our other moves, nobody ever did that. I guess I assumed

when we moved up here, I'm going to have to be the one going and saying 'hi, I'm new here. I want to be your friend.'" - *Cassie, age 30, trailer*

Mellisa joined playgroups, Kindermusik, her neighborhood Bunco group, and a church right away. Marion joined a newcomers group, the neighborhood homeowners association, a church, a book group and the school's parent-teacher group. The drive to join is associated with the need to connect and not necessarily to a woman's personality. Stacy says,:

"I have a personality where I'm not comfortable reaching out, but I do it. I join newcomers. If you buy a home in a sub you can get into the home owners. I like to do arts and crafts so I can try to get into that. It doesn't just happen". - *Stacy, age 48, trailer*

According to the study participants, communities can differ in the degree to which they have formal groups to join and the ease with which newcomers can find out about the groups. This may be particularly true for men looking to make connections during the traditional work day, as described by Evan earlier. Glenn experienced greater success being in an area with a group just for stay-at-home fathers.

Gerstel (2002) calls care-work outside the home the 'third-shift', and she demonstrates women's disproportionate burden for this labor. She includes in this work informal caregiving to friends and family and formal caregiving to neighbors and community through clubs and volunteer efforts. As relocaters engage in reciprocal networks of support and join community organizations to develop social capital, adaptation work evolves to include third-shift work.

Relocaters, mostly women, seeking social capital also follow the strategy of actively initiating informal interactions with others. They extend frequent invitations to adults and to potential friends for their children, and they sometimes "formalize" the interactions into "clubs" or "groups" with regular meeting times to solidify their endurance. Christie was having trouble

connecting even though she had joined several existing groups, and she was now attempting to form a book club in her neighborhood by going door to door, introducing herself and inviting neighbors to join.

If a family finds themselves in a town or neighborhood where everyone is fully established or has lived there all their lives, they find social capital can be very hard to develop and their “cultural tool-kit” can be ineffective at opening doors to networks. There may be few groups in which to participate that are open to outsiders, and community members who are not in need of additional resources for themselves are not forthcoming with resources for others. Relocaters’ attempts to connect may be seen as aggressive, busy-bodyish, or pushy. People are already well situated with friends, families and resources. Some would rather not know their neighbors’ names as that implies some relationship or obligation they want to avoid.

Wren did not feel that she had a lot in common with people who had lived in the community for a long time. She had attempted to befriend one neighbor. But when Wren spoke to the neighbor about the difficulties she was having with her high-school aged daughter's transition, the neighbor could not relate. The neighbor lectured Wren about appropriate parenting and having a positive attitude. Wren also asked a different neighbor about joining a book club the person mentioned, but was told the club was full. Wren was admittedly unhappy, and she felt isolated, unsupported and out-of-place.

Putnam (2007) has discussed a phenomenon of “hunkering down” in the face of newcomers and increasing diversity in a community, that is, a situation when a variable of difference (in this case, tenure in the community) leads to mistrust and deliberate avoidance between groups. However, relocated wives in this study did not perceive the lack of easy connection with long-term residents to be the product of long-term residents’ perceptions of

them as different. Instead, they felt the long-term residents simply had no need or desire for new ties.

Wuthnow (1998) talks about loose connections, saying people have networks but the networks have a different character today than networks in the past. Both Putnam (2000) and Wuthnow (1998) talk about how people's lives are more dispersed than they used to be. They work in one place, live in another and shop in yet another. They have ties from different stages in their lives - some old friends from school, maybe some from college, one or two from different jobs they have held. They are busy and volunteer on a temporary basis, now and again. The theory argues that the town or immediate neighborhood as a source of connection and support is waning. The active, almost frantic, efforts many people make to establish friendships and networks belie Wuthnow's proposition that distant and widespread connections are adequate for meeting families daily needs.

Summary

This qualitative data supports past research findings that social connections are important resources for reproductive labor in U.S. society, and that social connections are positively related to happiness and a sense of well-being. Once in new communities, relocated wives, whether they are move centers or move trailers, are usually responsible for *building social connections and support networks*. They become proactive members of those new communities and often bond together to provide one another with the social capital displaced families need. Relationships with fellow relocaters, a form of bonding social capital where tenure in the community is the common characteristic, were found to be easier to achieve through a sense of solidarity and common need.

There was no indication that a high level of bonding social capital among relocaters caused friction, mistrust or “hunkering down” on the part of others in the community or that it precluded the development of bridging social capital as well. Bridging social capital was, however, more difficult to establish. The common assumption that bridging and bonding social capital may be inversely correlated as part of a zero-sum game is neither supported nor refuted. Indirectly, the opposite would seem likely as informants who found close friendships with other movers were more inclined to become a connected part of the overall community.

Taking a community-level view of the relationship between relocaters and social capital, theorists have contended that increased mobility is a cause of lower levels of community engagement and commitment. The findings from this project contradict that proposition for this unique brand of mobility – the movement of families by employers. Almost unanimously, at least one member of each informant family took proactive steps to integrate themselves and their families in the new residential area, thus providing a counterbalancing effect against the trend toward loose connections and disengagement. They sought and created strong mutually dependent connections within their new communities, neighborhoods and local social organizations, and they participated and held leadership positions in many community and school projects as a means to integrating.

The existence of ‘relocation enclaves’, or pockets of high concentrations of relocated families, is an important finding that suggests workforce mobility can shape the look and character of communities around the nation. Families undergoing employee relocation in the United States do not necessarily, or even likely, choose to live in the city or town where the new job is situated. When selecting between alternative towns and neighborhoods to settle within commuting distance of a new job, some relocaters have identified the existence of relocation

enclaves and have deliberately sought them out. Ultimately, relocation enclaves serve to attract a particular segment of the mobile population - home-owning families that have moved for a job. This population has been shown to lift a community's level of "civicness" and feed its organizations with new ideas and willing joiners. The findings described here directly refute Putnam's (2000) proposition that mobility undermines community. Communities that are themselves havens for relocated families, or that contain subdivisions with these dynamics, may consistently maintain higher levels of volunteerism and participation in local organizations than more mature or established areas. Awareness of particular areas as relocation enclaves and the dynamics of such enclaves may be important for community planning and development and for families planning to move.

It is important to note that for a meaningful proportion of the sample (1/3), their mobility facilitated increased participation in family networks. This fact suggests that various forms of mobility can be positively related to increases in community and connectedness. Further, even families whose mobility was related to family ties were consciously pursuing additional networks.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

My hope in completing this project was to develop a theory of employee relocation grounded in the concept of adaptation work. What I found is that adaptation work, or work taken on as a direct result of an employee relocation with the purpose of recreating the daily lives of a family, is very real, very protracted, and very multi-faceted. Further, I have determined that gender plays a prominent role in the definition and distribution of adaptation work such that employee relocation is a phenomenon rife with gender inequality and contributing to gender inequality.

Comparisons between Margolis's mid-1970's look at relocation, my own earlier research with relocated wives in the early 2000's, and this dissertation work show differences in the relocation process over time. At each point in history, the confluence of gender norms, economic structure and professional middle class ideology shape employee relocation and the adaptation work that accompanies it. Extended family, community characteristics and level of employer benefits shape the process as well, although for most families these are secondary factors.

Understanding gender effects in adaptation work can be enhanced by looking at the social location of the population of interest. Normative gender roles in the U.S. are rooted in white, middle class history and dualistic divisions between work and home, public and private (Kinser 2010). Beginning in the 1990's feminism has paid attention to diversity among women and families recognizing the intersection of axes of oppression like gender, race, class, and sexual orientation to create unique social statuses. White, middle class conceptions of family, gender

and parenthood have long oppressed families in other social locations that did not possess the ability or (or desire) to comply with normative family expectations (Kinser 2010). At the same time that unachievable expectations oppressed lower and working class families and families of color, these families fought back against the expectations. Coontz (2011b) argues that many women of color rejected idealized notions of traditional gender roles as far back as the 1950's and 1960's. She says " In the 1950s and 1960s, even black women who could afford to be fulltime homemakers tended to work outside the home and to resist becoming completely dependent upon a man. Black leaders, not white feminists, were the first to advocate that men and women should be equal co-providers in marriage."

The population under investigation in this research is middle-class and, due to long-standing inequality in education and employment, predominantly white. Further, the population fits into the traditional family model of two-parents with children. This population, like other Americans, is subject to white, middle-class expectations of womanhood, manhood, motherhood and fatherhood. But, unlike many other Americans, informants in the study are in the social location most likely to believe in the achievability and ideal character of the norms. Data from the project show that middle-class parents believe they should be self-sufficient, even upwardly mobile, and offer their children opportunities to flourish and succeed. But many have had their confidence dashed in their ability to achieve what they always took for granted that they could achieve.

The tenuous nature of middle-class professional employment in an era of globalization and deindustrialization places their economic stability at continued risk. And the recent economic recession has exacerbated the instability. Informants in this research use their agency to respond to challenges and aspirations, yet they seek to align their realities with normative

expectations so that their identities as workers, family members, women, men, husbands, wives, mothers and fathers can remain intact. The forms of adaptation work described by husbands and wives reinforce the continued existence and influence of traditional gender norms, even among families engaged in wife-centered moves.

Even before initiating the research, secondary data showed that employee relocation is structurally gendered. Due to persistent occupational segregation in the U.S. (a long-standing by-product of gender ideology) women tend to hold jobs in service roles that are geographically ubiquitous and thus easier to replace if lost. Also, women are less likely to hold jobs with extended occupational ladders that would lead to relocation offers (Shauman 2010). Due to traditional gender ideology, men continue to be identified as household heads and to be perceived as most appropriate to hold the primary breadwinning role (Shauman 2010). Where relocations are offered, women are nearly 25% less likely to accept the offer, most often due to consideration of family members needs (Collie 2006). Women's disproportionate likelihood compared to men to prioritize family member's needs is yet another manifestation of traditional gender ideology. As the effects of gender ideology compound through both social structural and social psychological effects, employee relocation becomes highly skewed as a male phenomenon. As discussed, industry data show that more than eighty percent of domestic relocations are male-centered (Marshall & Greenwood 2002) .

But do gender effects end there? Are there further implications of gender ideology within the relocation experience? This research answers those questions with a resounding "Yes!". Davis and Greenstein (2009) provide a categorical schema of 6 concepts embedded in traditional gender ideology, and this research finds each concept present in the construction, distribution and execution of adaptation work. By including families with wife-centered moves in the

sample, I ensured that the findings were truly products of gender and not just position as move-trailer verses move-center. Gender effects do not end with the occupational structure that favors men. They persist into adaptation work regardless of whether a move is undertaken for a wife's or a husband's job.

The 6 categories of beliefs that make-up traditional gender ideology and permeate all aspects of U.S. society are as follows (Davis and Greenstein 2009):

1. Primacy of men as breadwinners
2. Belief in gendered separate spheres
3. Paid work as detrimental to women's family relationship quality
4. Motherhood as the natural desire and purpose of the feminine self
5. Household labor as primarily the purview of women
6. Acceptance of male privilege

Gender implications uncovered in the study are not black and white findings of intentionally oppressive husbands and submissive wives. Instead, gender belief systems and inequality seep into daily life as the way they shape our economy, our communities, our families, our expectations, and our very identities. There were families in the sample that openly and deliberately subscribed to traditional family roles in productive and reproductive labor. But many did not. Informants believed that they chose their family roles, and those roles were not imposed upon them. Families with less traditional configurations (mothers working either full or part time, fathers as primary care givers) reported their situations as existing under an umbrella of personal choice, and not as a repudiation of tradition.

However, actions and presentations of self demonstrated a need to align actions with normative expectations of gender consistent with traditional gender ideology. For example, men

(working or not) emphasized concern for family economics and women (working or not) emphasized concern for family happiness as they explained their move circumstances. These emphases show the continuing influence of Concepts 1 and 4 from the Davis/Greenstein schema. Men who were not working explained their circumstances as reproductive laborers as temporary (influence of Category 1 in Davis/Greenstein schema) or they adamantly emphasized the rationality behind taking on the role (influence of Category 2 in Davis/Greenstein schema). Women who worked part-time from home sometimes defined themselves as non-workers (influence of Categories 3 and 4 in Davis/Greenstein schema). Women who worked full-time emphasized the ways that their work did not detract from their children's lives (influence of Category 3 in Davis/Greenstein schema).

The most compelling findings were revealed in the ways that non-traditional activities continued to be affected by traditional ideology. Concept number four, or the ideology of motherhood, created the strongest effects as women imposed the responsibility for all family members' happiness on themselves. Whether in a high prestige paid work position, a part-time job from home, or stay-at-home mother role, women's actions and identity displays emphasized family and care work in all adaptation tasks ranging from identity construction to cleaning out closets to joining clubs.

The taken-for-granted assumption that injecting nurturing and caring into defining and managing daily tasks is natural for women obscures that nurturing and caring *are* work. Feminists have fought hard to break down assumptions based on stereotypical dualisms of 'natural' tendencies for men and women (Kinser 2010). The stories offered in this research reinforce the fact that women *work* to be nurturing and caring rather than doing so effortlessly and naturally. In the case of adaptation work, approaching each adaptation task from a nurturing

and caring perspective requires women to balance the disparate needs of each different family member, always putting their own needs last.

Whether they are move centers or move trailers, working or not working, the actions of mothers in this project display characteristics of the 'new momism' (Douglas and Michaels 2004). The 'new momism' is a modified and souped-up version of Davis and Greenstein's (2009) concept 4 in traditional gender ideology - that motherhood is the natural desire and purpose of the feminine self. The 'new momism' pretends, however, to be a new choice and not an old imperative.

Hays (1998) calls it "the ideology of intensive mothering" and Coontz calls it the "supermom mystique" (Clark-Flory 2011). Looking at mothering historically Coontz says modern mothers spend more time with their children than moms did in the 1960s. Women today, she says, "feel driven to be constantly available to their kids, making every minute a 'teachable moment,' and they feel incredible guilt when they don't live up to ever-expanding standards for involved parenting." The parenthood efforts described in the interview data reflect efforts at 'concerted cultivation', a middle-class parenting strategy described by Lareau (2003) that exemplifies intensive parenting in action.

The cultural ideals of intensive mothering that have taken hold from the 1980's forward demand that women are liberated to make personal choices but still morally bound to meet all of their children's needs at all times (Douglas and Michaels 2004). These ideals are unattainable under normal circumstances, but they create an indescribable work load for women undergoing a relocation and thus the need to recreate daily life. Women bear a compounded work load in relocation adaptation compared to men who do not act under the imperative of perfection and responsibility for everyone in the family. Sandra (move-center) and Donna (move-trailer) provide ideal-type examples of the internalization of the 'new momism':

"My mother instinct kicked in...It was me dictating how things would go. The driving force was getting my boys settled. My husband called me the Mommy Nazi because I was so focused and driven to get them settled." - *Sandra, age 40, center*

"As the role of the mom, that was my role to keep everybody happy and keep the family together". - *Donna, age 40, trailer*

Research Question 1

What forms of adaptation work are necessary and/or undertaken following an employee relocation? Do definitions of 'adaptation work' differ across gender?

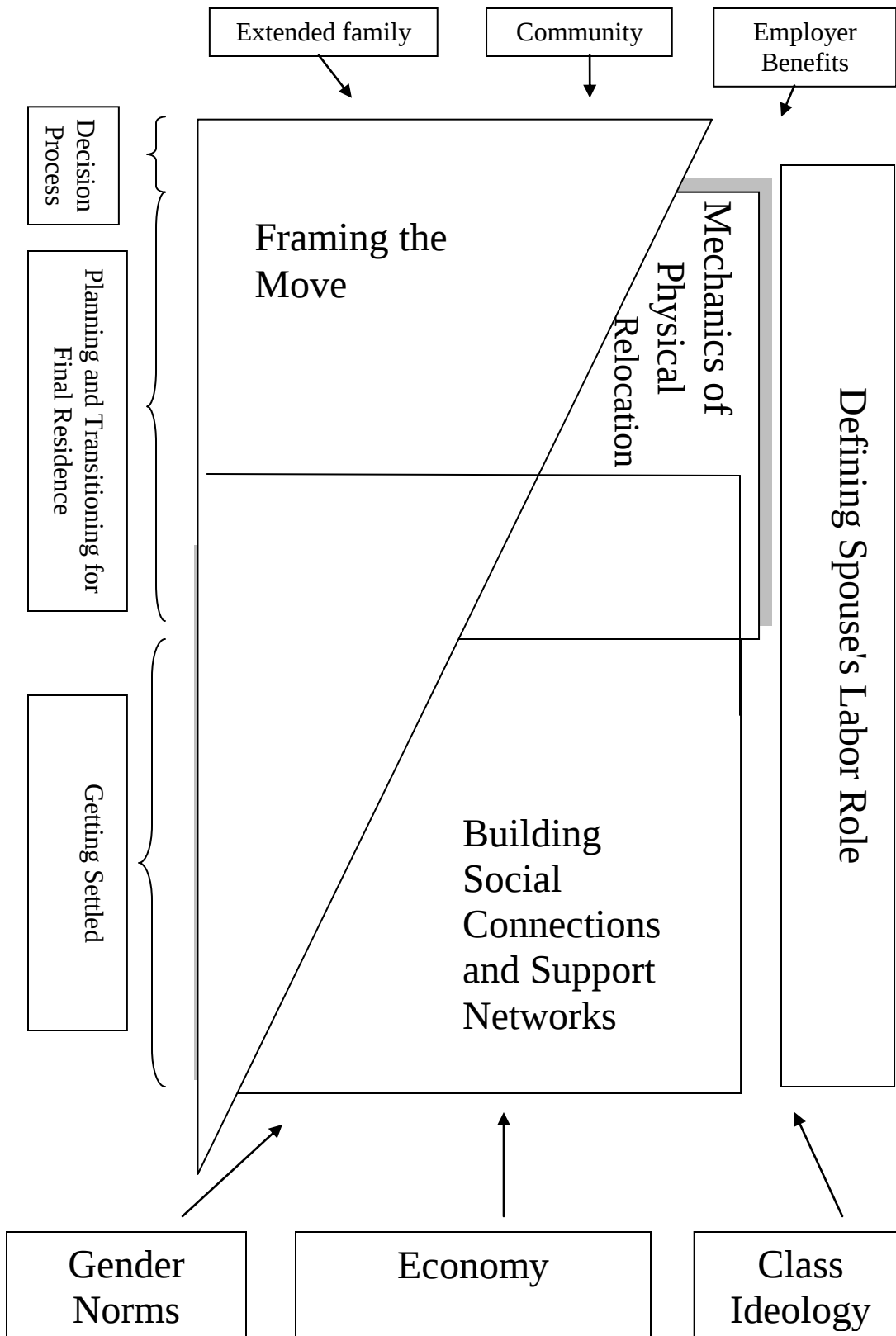
Adaptation work spans categories of productive and reproductive work. Productive work includes family members taking on activities to find new employment after the move or carrying out activities that maximize financial benefit to the family from move-related employer subsidies. Reproductive work makes up the majority of adaptation work, and it includes emotion work, kin work, household labor, child care, household management, and care work outside the home as a by-product of volunteerism and network building activities. Adaptation work also includes the important work of meaning making and identity formation.

Geographic relocation of a family to a location deemed to be outside of daily commute distance from the previous residence affects all major aspects of a family's life. Through informant narratives, I have identified 4 macro categories of adaptation work that relate to the following four important realms of social life - identity construction (*Framing the Move*), construction of home (*The mechanics of physical relocation*), construction of work (*Defining or Re-defining the spouse's labor role*), and construction of community (*Building social connections and support networks*). To re-establish each realm, myriad micro-level tasks must be accomplished, many of which require on-going effort over a long period of time.

Definitions of adaptation work differ across gender in three distinct areas that each reiterate the association of women with care work and the infiltration of the 'new momism' into this population's ideology. 1) Women are more likely than men to recognize the need for emotion work of renegotiating their own and their children's past relationships. 2) Women are more likely to recognize the need for development of new or replacement social capital as part of adaptation work. 3) Women are more likely to view each activity that comprises adaptation work from a holistic standpoint. That is, they are more likely to consider the totality of effects of each action on different family members and then define and manage work accordingly. Ultimately this creates a difference in the work each spouse sees as necessary.

Figure 9.1 shows the categories of adaption work along a temporal continuum with external influences.

Figure 9.1 - Model of Adaptation Work



Research Question 2

How is 'adaptation work' distributed across family members and why? What is the role of gender in the distribution of 'adaptation work'? Do perceptions of the distribution differ across gender?

Each individual relocater creates a 'Move Frame' or a framework for understanding what is happening or what has happened in their life with regard to the relocation. Work in the other 3 categories, *the mechanics of physical relocation, defining or re-defining the spouse's labor role, and building social connections and support networks*, is differently distributed by gender. In *mechanics* work and *social connections* building women do the majority of work, and they do the work with more thoughtfulness and depth. Men are less likely to recognize emotion work and less likely to incorporate a caring component into the processes they use to execute practical tasks. Men often see *mechanics* work and *social connections* building as short term undertakings. Relationship work (e.g. 'ending or modifying ties' which is part of *mechanics* work, *social connections* building) is often perceived by men as optional or as 'help' for their wives, or it is not recognized at all. Similarly, investing time in ensuring certain neighborhood characteristics are present in a new home and setting up the new residence frequently go unacknowledged by men or are considered support work done for wives. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to perceive relationship work and establishment of a new home with appropriate organization and traits as very important. Household labor in adaptation work is distributed like household labor in daily life - with women more likely to take on on-going and mundane tasks and men more likely to take on one-time, occasional and outdoor tasks.

Work on redefining the accompanying spouse's labor role looks different for trailing husband's verses trailing wives. Women are more likely than men to transition from having paid

work to not having paid work or to undergo no transition as they retain the role of stay-at-home parent. Men are more likely than women to transition to new full-time or part-time work, and they are more likely to have their new employment provided as part of their spouse's employment arrangement.

Research Question 3

What barriers or aids do relocated employees encounter in the performance of 'adaptation work'?

Economy

The research revealed many ways that the external environment impacts the execution of adaptation work. The most notable is the state of the economy and its effect on the housing markets, credit availability, the generosity of employer move assistance programs, and employment markets for accompanying spouses. Depressed housing markets and limited credit availability both make home sales more difficult. As home sales processes extend in time, adaptation work is protracted. Families may become separated and stress is likely compounded. If homes cannot be sold, additional adaptation work becomes necessary if families opt to use temporary housing and thus move homes multiple times or if they opt to act as landlords.

Mechanics of physical relocation is impacted and *defining spouses' work role* and *getting settled* can be delayed. The timing of this research captured the significant expansion of stress and work that derives from an unfavorable climate for home sales.

From personal experience but not from this research, I can attest that different but real problems can also result when the economy includes a housing market that is favorable for sellers and not buyers. Excessively high home prices and short market times can make it difficult for home buyers to afford and find the features they desire in a family home. For

example, during one of my own first moves, homes were selling in 1 or 2 days. We found ourselves in bidding wars over each house we pursued, and we finally purchased the fifth house we bid on, in large part because it had some flaws that made it less appealing to the general market. We did extensive remodel work on it to make it meet our needs.

Economic conditions also effect the level of subsidies companies provide for relocaters. The recessionary conditions during the field period for this research resulted in firms scaling back on relocation benefits (TrendSpotting: Policy Changes in the Past Two Years 2008). A significant change was in the percent of firms offering home buy-outs. A home buy-out puts a cap on the time relocaters must spend attempting to sell a home, and it eliminates the uncertainty of whether a home will eventually sell. OneSource, a relocation management and consulting services company in Atlanta Georgia, offered this advice to its clients regarding their relocation benefit policies in the current economy (OneSource 2011). They suggest that corporations:

- Have tiered policies to limit offering such benefits as home buy-outs to selected groups only (i.e. grade level; job type; hard to hire positions or locations; etc.)
- Reduce and manage the number of exceptions that are granted.
- Consider property management and renting vs. home sale and purchase.
- Require aggressive home selling strategies. e.g. Mandate agent selection and list price; require a comprehensive marketing plan with periodic price reductions.
- Provide pro-active, professional relocation counseling to ensure adherence to policy and budget restraints.

These suggestions demonstrate corporations concern with cost cutting in a time period when relocation costs can spiral much like adaptation work can spiral if momentum is halted by the housing market.

Economic conditions can also affect spouses' options for employment in destination communities. A strong job market will usually expand the choices and decrease the time, effort and stress a spouse encounters while seeking new paid work. A poor job market will usually result in the opposite effect.

Employer

The discussion of economy and its impact on employer benefits heralded the importance of employer assistance. Employer assistance in the form of generous relocation benefits can significantly reduce the stress of relocation and minimize the work involved in the *mechanics of relocation*. In this sample, three men had the work of redefining their work role facilitated by the employer through a spousal hire offer. Financial assistance and facilitation of important tasks can alleviate burden and help relocated employees and their spouses feel respected and cared for in the short term. Little is offered by companies to assist accompanying spouses and children with social and relational adaptation. The exception is when work colleagues choose to extend cordiality outside of the workplace. Work colleagues are important sources of social connection for the relocated spouse. However, the availability of satisfying social connection for the new employee is a function of office culture and the employees social preferences. Given the importance that workplace socialization plays in the new employee's life, individuals should consider office culture as they respond to relocation offers.

Even without providing social connection, the financial and functional benefits of a strong relocation benefits package are important. Employees' families lives cannot be replaced with money, but the availability of adequate funds assists in the process of acquiring that which a family needs to return to normalcy. This would include the ability to make the physical move more quickly rather than extending the transition time and the ability to situate the family in a

community believed to exhibit the family's preferred culture and provisions. Contracting out functional tasks of adaptation work reduces the workload and allows family members more time for relational tasks or resumption of normal activities.

Community

Community characteristics can present barriers or offer advantages in executing adaptation work. Communities with many organizations and opportunities for participation and communities with relocation enclaves or a noticeable subpopulation of mobile families will expedite the *getting settled* process. Easily accessible information on community parks and recreation programs, library programs, volunteer organizations and the like is advantageous. Conversely, a dearth of such programs and subpopulations can impede the timing and success of relocation adaptation work.

This research shows that stay-at-home father groups, networks or activities can be helpful to male primary caregivers. The prevalence of traditional gender ideology and gender roles skews children and family activities toward the feminine. Men are or feel excluded from participation and interaction through these means, which are reportedly critical for mothers in the fulltime caregiver role. Communities wishing to attract mobile populations and those with young families should proactively initiate, at the minimum, a well-advertised process that can connect stay-at-home fathers with others in their situation or with mixed gender or male-only groups.

Extended Family and Friends

The majority of informants received assistance in adaptation work from people outside the nuclear family. *Mechanics* work was the most common site of assistance as tasks within this category lend themselves to delegation.

Existing friends were most likely to assist with activities in the origin location, whereas extended family was commonly part of activities in both the origin and the destination locations. For example, informants commonly mentioned their own parents assisting with house hunting trips, unpacking, set-up of the new residence, or babysitting so the relocaters could more easily do the work upon arrival to the new community. Friends were more likely to throw going away parties and offer babysitting in the origin community while work was done.

Assistance from extended family members was both appreciated and expected. Several informants voiced frustration when extended family members did not contribute the level of assistance expected. The presence of expectations of support reinforce the relevance of multigenerational bonds as discussed by Bengston (2001). It is notable that the majority of practical support came from maternal relatives, a finding consistent with existing literature showing that multigenerational bonds through the maternal channel tend to be stronger as a by-product of women's higher level of kin-keeping work (e.g. Di Leonardo 1998, Fingerman 2004, Hagestad 1986). The preeminence of bonds with maternal relatives was also buttressed by characteristics of *prodigal moves*, or relocations that incorporate a deliberate strategy to get nearer to extended family.

Research Question 4

Does the research reveal any insights on how communities or employers may support relocated families in their efforts to re-settle and adapt to new daily lives?

The above information specifies several strategies that communities and employers can use to support relocated families. Those points will be reiterated here.

- Employers must continue to provide strong relocation benefits. Benefit packages should be modified to be responsive to the challenges unique to the social and economic climate.

- Communities should ensure for the well-being of newcomers and all citizens that the built environment does not promote isolation. Common areas like parks, nature centers, libraries and walk-only town centers, when safe, offer opportunities for informal interaction, physical activity and connection. All of these will be beneficial to relocaters who are experiencing a stressful life event and who are working at *building social connections*. Developing or maintaining such spaces should be priorities in city planning. Mounting evidence suggests that there are social, health, and economic consequences to isolated and sedentary lifestyles (Srinivasan et al. 2003). Unfortunately, the physical and social construct of many modern environments promotes isolation. Higher rates of television viewing, increased computer usage, concern about crime, and geographic isolation contribute to a lack of interconnection (Ibid). This isolation may result in a lack of social networks and diminished social capital which studies show can contribute to obesity, cardiovascular disease, mental health problems, and increased rates of mortality (e.g. Kawachi 1999, Fullilove 1998). Relocaters beginning new lives may be subject to these health effects in the short or long term if they are not able to satisfactorily establish the levels of social connection they need to garner functional and emotional support resources.
- Communities must continue to support, encourage and facilitate the presence of community groups and organizations that connect children and families. Information on existing activities should be readily available. For example, information could be included in a 'welcome packet' or as an attachment to the first utility bill. Fostering connection through formal organizations will offer some of the same benefits as connection-inducing built environments as discussed above.

- Communities should actively identify ways to engage, include and connect male primary care givers so that men taking on the caregiver role are not isolated or apt to give up the role. By excluding or alienating male caregivers from social interaction in such venues as play groups, newcomer groups and "moms groups", the ideology of separate spheres with women responsible for reproductive work is perpetuated. Ideally, caregiver interaction would be gender blind. Groups and activities should welcome men *and* women. A first step, however, would be the availability of social groups for men *or* women.
- A community culture should be fostered that welcomes newcomers and diverse families such as those with fathers in active parenting roles. Community public relations, marketing, websites etc. should depict a culture that supports and normalizes men as participants in care giving and that expressly includes in its mission the importance of new and/or diverse people and ideas.

Research Question 5

What is the role of emotion in the relocation experience and the execution of adaptation work?

Emotion work is a consistent thread that runs through adaptation work. The activities of 1) the determination of *what* needs to be done and 2) *how* tasks will be carried out are themselves products of emotion work. At the root of decisions about adaptation work are questions like:

"What will make my husband/children/self feel happy, excited, less stressed, supported, loved, still connected, less sad, etc?"

"How can I accomplish this in a ways that makes my husband/children/self feel happy, excited, less stressed, supported, loved, still connected, less sad, etc?"

The answers to these emotion-based questions shape the actions of relocaters in ways that make the lines between instrumental forms of adaptation work and emotional forms of adaptation work blurry at best.

As discussed earlier, it is primarily women who consider the emotional needs of each family member and the emotional effects of different activities and different manifestations of activities on each family member's feelings. Women, in their quest to live up to the societal belief that it is they who are ultimately responsible for holding the family together, are the leaders of adaptation work, a highly emotion-based process.

Limitations and Next Steps

This research offers important new theoretical concepts regarding the experience of employee relocation in families during an historical period when women's labor force participation is normative and when the post-industrial economy is injecting a sense of economic insecurity into the professional middle class. In addition, it shines a spot light on an irrefutable example of the true intersection of work and family life, hopefully helping to break down the mythical perception of separate spheres.

The study is limited by its small sample size, especially in the strata of wife-centered move families. Future studies using a larger sample with representative samples in each move-center strata and in different age and life-course category could build upon the work done here. The perceptions of children have not been included and could also offer more depth and understanding.

Next steps to advance this research would be to correct the limitations above and also to target specific types of relocating families such as minority families, same-sex parent families, or families moving internationally. Studies with these groups would identify their unique

challenges and be comparative to the predominantly white sample in the current study. Also, the model developed for adaptation work has the potential to be applied to adaptation to other types of moves (ie. military, following natural disaster, foreclosure, divorce-induced etc.).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT FLYER

Have you ever moved to a new community for your own or your partner's job?

Share your experiences in an important research project on how families get settled in new communities after a work-induced move!

I am a doctoral student in Sociology at Michigan State University doing a research project on the process of moving a family for a work-induced relocation. There is so much work force mobility these days in this global economy, and it is important that we learn more about how this mobility affects families and how families adapt. I would like to talk for a little while with both adult partners in families with children that have moved for a job in the past 4 years. The casual interview would be designed to find out about the kinds of things you have had to do or are currently doing to get your family resettled.

If you want to ask more questions about the project before you decide or if you would be willing to spend some time (maybe ½ an hour or an hour each) telling me about your experiences, please contact Beth Ann Whitaker at whitak39@msu.edu or at 517-339-5244. We would meet at your convenience at a place of your choosing like your home or a local coffee shop. (If you have any questions about the validity of my study you can contact my supervising professor, Dr. Steve Gold, at Michigan State at 517-355-6632 or at gold@msu.edu.)

In appreciation for your time I will provide each participating couple with a \$25 gift certificate to Applebees.

Contact Beth Ann Whitaker at 517-339-5244 or whitak39@msu.edu

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide for both spouses in relocated family

Background on Family:

Where raised
Siblings
Any moves as a child
How met spouse
Length of marriage
and ages of kids
education – both spouses
employment history – both spouse's
Number of corporate moves within marriage

Circumstances surrounding all corporate moves –

Move 1 – for which spouse?

From _____ To: _____

Length of time there: _____

Pursued, offered? New or existing co

For advancement only, reorg?, future reorg, establish
indispensability, other: _____

In hindsight: Were you glad you made this move?

Why/Why not? _____

Move 2 – for which spouse?

From: _____ To: _____

Length of Time there: _____

Pursued, offered? New or existing co

For advancement only, reorg?, future reorg, establish
indispensability other: _____

In hindsight: Were you glad you made this move?

Why/Why not? _____

Move 3 – for which spouse?

From: _____ To: _____

Length of time there: _____

Pursued, offered? New or existing co

For advancement only, reorg?, future reorg, establish
indispensability other: _____

In hindsight: Were you glad you made this move?

Why/Why not? _____

Works/Tasks required immediately following decision to move

At the point that you realized or decided that you were actually moving,
what did you need to do to begin the process?

To plan move – what activities, who did them (why), most challenging

Probes - trips, research, soul-searching, engaging realtor, prepare spouse's
resume, network for new spouse job, transportation of goods, packing, financing for
home purchase, utilities shut off and turn on

To exit origin community – what activities, who did them (why), most
challenging?

Probes: Sell/sublet home, prepare home for sale, announce move to friends and
family, resign from spouse job, plan/attend farewell events, school records, medical
records

Strategies/Tasks for establishing in new community –

1. What things did you need to do immediately to get situated in your new home?

2. What were the first things you needed to do to get started in new
community? How did you go about these things?

Probes: drivers licenses, doctors/dentists, enroll in schools/child care, find way
around, libraries, churches

3. Thinking less short-term, what were your goals for your life in your new community, that is what things did you need to do in order to feel settled or satisfied after the move?

Probes: Finding a new job?

Making friends for self/other family members

Decorating/remodeling home

Working on hobby/special interests

4. What about other members of the family? What goals do you think they had? What role did you play in helping them meet these goals?

5. What role did the greater community play in helping you reach the point of being settled? How about the neighborhood? Did you join any organizations or get involved in any groups? Why/Why not?

6. What was the role of the employer? What kinds of formal assistance did they offer to facilitate the family's transition? What kinds of informal support? (ie. dinner invitations, afternoons off to unpack, etc.)

7. Are there other families in your neighborhood or community that have moved? Has that had an impact on your transition?

8. What were the biggest barriers to settling in the new community, to feeling happy there?

9. What was the worst part of the move?

10. What was the best part of the move?

11. What was the most helpful thing (strategy/ person/activity) for helping you reach the point of feeling settled and happy in the new destination?

12. Would you be open to another long distance move in the future?
Why/Why not?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORMS

Research Project: Family Adaptation to Employee Relocation

Consent Form

Thank you for volunteering to help with my research project. My name is Elizabeth Whitaker and I am a graduate student in sociology at Michigan State University. I am collecting interview data to look at the process of getting settled in a new community after a corporate relocation for families. I want to talk with you about the circumstances surrounding your offer for relocation(s), how you and your spouse arrived at the decision to proceed with the relocation, and what steps you took to select a new community then get acclimated to that community.

All information gathered will be kept confidential. Your name will not be associated with your responses in either my notes and or in the final paper. I will assign a number to each interview and take out all names and identifying information. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

The interview is intended to gather information and should not make you feel uncomfortable or harm you in any way. If you feel uncomfortable, you have every right to stop the interview and ask that your data not be used in the project. Interviews should take between half and hour to one hour. I will be speaking to both you and your partner and I will not disclose any of the information you provide to your partner.

After I have completed interviews with both you and your partner, I will provide your family with a \$25 gift certificate to Applebees as a “Thank You” for your participation. I will mail the gift certificate to your home address within two days of the final interview.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact either myself at 517-339-5244 or email me at whitak39@msu.edu, or contact my supervising professor, Dr. Steve Gold, at 517-353-6352, email gold@msu.edu . If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – director of MSU's Human Research Protection Program, Dr. Peter Vasilenko at 517-355-2180 ext. 239 or send an email to irb@msu.edu. or mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824

By signing this statement you are agreeing to participate in this interview and acknowledge that your participation is completely voluntary.

(print name)

(signature)

(date)

Family Adaptation to Employee Relocation
Page 2 – Consent Form

With your permission I will be using a tape recorder during the interview. However, if at any point in the interview you feel uncomfortable being recorded you may ask that recording stop and I can continue the interview without a recording device, or you may stop the interview entirely.

If you decline the tape recording now or during the interview but you are still willing to continue with the interview, the interviewer will take written notes that will exclude your identifying information (name, family member names, company and town names, etc.).

By signing on the line below, you are agreeing to the use of a tape recorder during the interview. Bear in mind, that you can withdraw this permission at any time during the interview by telling me that you would like the recording stopped.

(print name)

(signature)

(date)

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