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Using a one-year longitudinal-panel design, 32 American, female, expatriate spouses who relocated to Ankara, Turkey, were interviewed at just-arrived, 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-months stages. This project utilized mixed methods research design. Results of the quantitative, repeated measures component is reported in Bikos et al. (2007, this issue). Results of the Naturalistic Inquiry provided rich, thick descriptions of eight themes as they unfolded through the first year of this expatriate assignment. The resulting themes included predeparture preparation, settling in, impact of expatriation on the wife's life roles, social emotional functioning, approaches to coping, supportive systems, language, and interaction with the host culture. The authors interpreted the results in light of the life role salience and career adaptability constructs of Super's Life-Span, Life-Space approach to career development. In addition, results of this project integrated well with previous research about expatriate spouse adjustment.

Keywords: *career adaptability; expatriate adjustment; expatriate spouse; life role salience; mixed methods; naturalistic inquiry; Turkey*

Researchers have begun to evaluate the adaptation experiences of the expatriate spouse, and studies are being conducted with the purpose of defining and refining a model of spouse adjustment to international assignments (i.e., Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). Toward this goal, researchers have begun to identify individual, interpersonal, and environmental factors that predict different aspects of adjustment (personal, interaction, cultural; e.g., Black & Gregersen, 1991; Mohr & Klein, 2004; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). The purpose of our project was to provide a greater understanding of the accompanying wife of an expatriating husband. Using quantitative and qualitative (naturalistic) methods, we used a longitudinal, repeated measures design to follow a group of 32 women through their first year of expatriation to Turkey. Results of the repeated measures analysis indicated differences in the importance and expectation of life roles (i.e., occupational, parent, marital, homecare). The quantitative results indicated no differences in life roles importance, alcohol use, marital satisfaction, or mental health functioning as a function of time-in-country (Bikos et al., 2007, this issue). Because we suspected that circumstances surrounding the first-year adaptation of the female expatriate spouses would be more complex than our repeated measures design could demonstrate, we included the concurrent Naturalistic Inquiry.

Both projects were designed in light of Super's Life-Span, Life-Space approach to career development (Super, 1980, 1990; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996) and the *U*-curve or Culture Shock model (see Black & Mendenhall, 1991, for a review). Two segments of Super's model guided the development of our semi-structured interview protocol for this Naturalistic Inquiry (described in the Method section). The first is Life Role Salience Theory. Super theorized that an individual's life career is composed of a series or combination of roles occupied throughout the life span. We hoped that the results of our Naturalistic Inquiry would provide insight into how the expatriate spouses defined and negotiated these roles.

Our design was also influenced by Super's construct of *career adaptability.* In 1981, Super and Knasel introduced career adaptability as an approach that

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views the individual as "engaged in the process of finding a balance between acceptance of the pressures that come from the world of work and making his or her own impact upon the environment" (pp. 198-199). They emphasized the interaction between the environment and the individual, described an orientation that is proactive and planful, and suggested that career adaptability may have greater utility in understanding and working with adult career issues than the career maturity construct. Since that time, career theorists have noted similarities between career adaptability and other constructs. Examples include Schlossberg's (1981) model of human adaptation to transition, Gelatt's (1991) positive uncertainty, Herr's (1992) personal flexibility, and Heppner's (1998; Heppner, Multon, & Johnston, 1994) career transition. It is not surprising to note that the definition of career adaptability continues to evolve. Savickas (1997) defined career adaptability as

> the quality of being able to change, without great difficulty, to fit new or changed circumstances" and "the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions. (p. 254)

The career adaptability construct has been summarized to include planfulness, exploration, decision making, and reality orientation (Cairo, Kritis, & Myers, 1996; Herr, 1992). Ebberwein, Krieshok, Ulven, and Prosser (2004) provided the following operational definition to participants in their study, "Career adaptability includes both an attitude that helps in coping with and adjusting to the changes in one's work life and the actions necessary to plan for and choose work that will meet one's individual needs" (p. 296). Results of their Grounded Theory investigation of adult career clients resulted in descriptions of adaptive responses, contextual challenges, and insights into the transition. Ebberwein et al. used these to delineate elements in a career-adaptable response to transition. The influence of the life role salience, career adaptability, and culture shock constructs are integrated into the discussion of our results.

Among the benefits of mixed methods research is the ability to augment the results of empirical tests of hypotheses with contextual, field-based information (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005); this was our purpose for incorporating quantitative and qualitative projects into our research design. Locating our project within the mixed methods framework provided by Hanson et al., our longitudinal data were collected concurrently throughout the project; equal weight was given to the quantitative and qualitative data; and data were analyzed separately, compared, and contrasted.

Our research design differed from two previous mixed methods evaluations of the expatriate spouse (Mohr & Klein, 2004; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). In these sequential designs qualitative interviews were conducted for the purpose of refining the test of a subsequent empirical model. Given that these manuscripts were published after our project began, they were not considered in our research design. Their findings (along with others who have studied the expatriate spouse) are, however, integrated into the discussion of our results.

Method

Participants

Recruitment. With the goal of having 30 women complete the 1-year, longitudinal, study, all known women who were moving to Ankara, Turkey, in conjunction with their husband's occupation were recruited for participation. Because of regulations protecting the release of information from the U.S. military and U.S. Foreign Service to international posts, it was impossible to obtain names or information of those employees who were identified for relocation to Turkey or who had recently arrived in Turkey. Rather, at the suggestion of both U.S. government branches, recruitment was completed through networking, advertising, and snowballing techniques. Specifically, the first author recruited volunteer participants for the research project by speaking at numerous meetings of expatriate women's groups; by writing articles for the *Ankara Scene* (a weekly newsletter published by the U.S. Embassy and distributed to official U.S. government personnel); and by staffing recruitment booths at informational welcome fairs and special events sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. In addition, the director of the Health Unit at the U.S. Embassy presented information about the project during Newcomers Orientation meetings. All members of the research team referred new arrivals to the first author for recruitment.

When identified in advance of their arrival to Ankara, the first author sent a personal e-mail that described the project and invited participation. When potential participants arrived in-country, the first author telephoned with the same information. Of the 36 women recruited for the project, two declined participation and two were determined ineligible because they did not meet the inclusion criteria for the study.

Demographic characteristics. The participants in the project were female, expatriate spouses who moved to Ankara, Turkey, because of their husband's

work assignments. There were two primary inclusion criteria: (a) the women held a U.S. passport, and (b) the women could have been employed, but their husband's position was the primary reason they moved to Turkey. Two women were excluded from participation in the study because they held tandem placements (i.e., husband and wife were jointly appointed) by their sponsoring organization.

The ages of the 32 women who were included in the project ranged between 30 and 50 years (M = 38.63, SD = 2.65). Regarding ethnicity, 82% of the women self-identified as European American, 6% as Hispanic, 3% as African American, and 3% as Asian American. Regarding highest level of education, 9% indicated that they completed high school, 25% had some college, 44% had completed a bachelor's degree, 3% had some graduate education, and 13% had completed a master's level degree. Nearly all of the women (94%) had children. Of those with children, 84% of the women had children who accompanied them to Turkey; 38% of the women had children who remained in the United States. In some cases the women's children were located in Turkey and in the United States. In the year prior to moving to Turkey 47% were employed.

Regarding classification of the husband's position, 41% of the men were in Turkey because of assignments with the U.S. military, 25% worked for the U.S. Foreign Service (i.e., U.S. Embassy). Thus, 66% were in Turkey because of the husband's work with the U.S. government. Thirteen percent of the husbands worked for large corporations, and 13% were in Turkey for human rights, humanitarian, or religious work. Eight percent did not indicate the nature of the husband's assignment. The anticipated length of the assignment in Turkey ranged from 1.5 to 4 years (M = 2.65, SD = .74); 75% were planning for at least one home-leave at some point during their assignment.

Regarding international exposure and experience, one woman was a dual-national, holding citizenship rights in the United States and another country. Six percent of the women were married to men who were dual-nationals. Twenty-five percent had lived abroad as children. Sixty-three percent of the women had previous adult experience in international assignments. For three of the women (9%), English was not their first language. Sixteen of the women (50%) spoke a second language. Nearly one third (28%) of the women were provided culture-specific training by their company prior to moving to Turkey; the length of this training ranged between 5 and 120 hours.

Research team. At the time of our study, our eight-member research team comprised of four American and four Turkish members. Of the Americans, one held a doctorate and three held master's degrees in mental health disciplines.

While in Turkey, one held roles as a university professor and as an expatriate spouse. Three primarily identified as expatriate spouses. Of the Turkish team members, three held doctorates and had lived abroad for extended periods of time (9-months or more). One held a master's degree and was anticipating study abroad.

Procedures

All aspects of the Naturalistic Inquiry (i.e., interview protocol, data analysis, quality criteria) followed the recommendations of the classic texts, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry* (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Naturalistic Inquiry is an approach deeply imbedded within the constructivist paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers using Naturalistic Inquiry assume there are multiple realities that are individually constructed by the research participants. A benefit of utilizing this research paradigm is its emphasis on the participant–observer status of the researchers. In fact, the four Americans on the team were expatriate spouses in Turkey. Hallmarks of the trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiry are its specific attention to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Interview protocol. We conducted in-depth interviews at the same intervals (just-arrived, 3-, 6-, 9-, 12-months) as the quantitative components. Following the guidelines of Erlandson et al. (1993) the interviews were semistructured. Although each research team member had a list of questions, the goal was to create rich descriptions of the sojourner's experience in Ankara. The interviewer took extensive notes during the interview process with paper and pencil or a laptop computer. Examples of interview items included the following: What things/people/events have helped your stay go more smoothly (made your stay more difficult)? What are your goals for this assignment? Do you feel supported? By whom? What has been the most surprising thing about living in Turkey? If you wrote a book, what "big stories" about this move would you include? What could your organization/company have done differently (or could continue to do differently)? What changes have you noticed in yourself in the variety of roles and aspects of your life?

Analyses

Data analysis and interpretation. In a manner consistent with Erlandson et al. (1993), each interviewer transcribed the contents of the interview sessions immediately after the interview and provided the transcript to the first

author who unitized the data (segmented data into its smallest complete thought; added identification codes that pointed to the participant number, interview interval, and specific unit of data; printed the data on note-card-sized forms). At the conclusion of each time-in-country phase of interviews, the research team divided into half and each themed (categorized) the data. No a priori schema was used; rather, in a manner consistent with inductive approach of Naturalistic Inquiry, themes were allowed to emerge. Theming began with each member reading aloud the content of the card and identifying its primary theme. Members continued the read-aloud process until they had generated sufficient categories that cards could be placed without lengthy discussion. In a manner consistent with the constant comparative method, members frequently stopped to discuss confusing cards, emerging themes, and to provide clarification (sometimes division or recategorization) of themes.

Several strategies were used to identify the most salient themes from each time-in-country phase. Specifically, we looked at the frequency of cards in each theme, common and/or overlapping themes between the two theming sessions, and the expatriate literature. To provide as-rich-as-possible descriptions of the naturalistic data analysis for each phase, a case study report was created. At the conclusion of the project, these five case studies were used to create a grand Case Study Report. We believe this process assisted us in the ability to tell the adaptation story as a function of time-in-country. This article is a condensed version of the near 60-page Case Study Report.

Trustworthiness. The validity of this Naturalistic Inquiry was supported through techniques recommended by Erlandson et al. (1993). Credibility (i.e., the degree of confidence the participants and related stakeholders have in the findings) was established through persistent observation and prolonged engagement. In total, we completed 131 interviews with 32 expatriate spouses that averaged 25 interviews per time-in-country. Individual member checks (i.e., reflecting back to the interviewee the most salient themes from the previous interview) were completed on 24% of the interviews. The offer to participate in a grand member check was offered to 32 stakeholders (i.e., study participants who expressed interest in a member check on their exit questionnaire, and others, known to the authors, to be invested in expatriation). Stakeholders were provided a draft copy of the Case Study Report; 47% responded with written reactions. Transferability (i.e., the degree to which results might generalize) was first established through thick descriptions. That is, we initially reported the results of our findings in detailed and precise case studies. In addition, we used purposive sampling—we sought

informants who would provide rich detail about their expatriate experience. Dependability (i.e., the consistency of the results) was established through establishing an audit trail. This trail consisted of recruiting materials, transcribed interviews, unitized data, case reports complete with codes pointing to all data sources, reflexive journals, grand member check responses, and categorized newsprint from the theming sessions. Finally, confirmability (i.e., the degree to which the results are the product of the focused inquiry and not researcher bias) was established with a confirmability audit. An expert in qualitative methods, not otherwise affiliated with this investigation, completed a confirmability audit with the materials in our audit trail. In addition, at seven points during the study, our research team submitted entries for reflexive journals that tracked our thoughts, feelings, and potential biases.

Results and Discussion of Individual Themes

Interviews (N = 131 occurring at just-arrived, 3-, 6-, 9-, 12-months in-country) took place between December 5, 2000, and November 18, 2002. Once prepared for analysis, there were an average of 25 interviews for each stage ranging from 390 to 818 units per stage. Teams created between 30 and 55 themes for each stage. What follows is a description of the most salient themes as they are tracked through the first year of expatriate adaptation. These eight themes included predeparture preparation, settling in, impact of expatriation on the wife's life roles, social emotional functioning, approaches to coping, supportive systems, language, and interaction with the host culture. To facilitate a space-efficient presentation of our findings, a discussion that relates to the published expatriate spouse literature is presented with each theme. Similarly, integration of the life role salience and career adaptability constructs occurs at the theme level. Finally, we present each theme as it unfolds as a function of time-in-country. Although the format of the presentation would indicate direct quotations, the quotes are not always verbatim. Because (a) the interviews were not audiotaped, (b) there is a need to safeguard personally identifying information, and (c) each conversation must be presented efficiently, the quotations are provided to reflect the voice, spirit, and essence of the conversations as accurately as possible.

Predeparture Preparation

At the just-arrived stage, most women were reflecting on the activities surrounding predeparture preparation. Many described this period as chaotic

and listed activities including getting vaccinations, selling or renting homes, situating children remaining behind, and making arrangements for their arrival in Turkey.

The benefits related to culture and/or language training provided by the husband's employer varied widely. The few who received extensive culture and/or language training felt it was valuable as it assisted them in interpreting culture-specific behaviors or with language. Thus, when women knew about Turkey prior to their arrival, it was primarily because of their own interest and initiative. In one case a couple arranged and paid for their own preassignment tour. The woman described it as, "the 'best investment' we ever made. It really gave us real expectations for planning." In fact, when women were asked what advice they might provide to their sponsoring organizations, the overwhelming response was a plea for better preparation, including more information and/or training about language, culture, the country, and life skills.

Similarly, participants in Mohr and Klein's (2004) study also requested predeparture training; they claimed it would decrease the level of uncertainty prior to the move. Although some researchers have reported that cross-cultural training facilitates cross-cultural adjustment and increases cross-cultural skills (see Black & Mendenhall, 1990, for a review), Mohr and Klein reported a nonsignificant negative relation. It is interesting to note that Black and Gregersen (1991) reported a negative relation between company-provided cross-cultural training and the expatriate spouse's adjustment to the general environment, yet they reported a positive relationship when such training was initiated by the spouse. Among the participants in their study, this predeparture training benefit was provided to only 10% of the spouses and, on average, it was fewer than 4 hours in duration. Black and Gregersen speculated that low quantity and questionable quality could have led spouses to have inaccurate expectations of overseas life. They encouraged firms to continue providing cross-cultural training for spouses but suggested that organizations consider supplying spouses with resources for their individualized study of host-country characteristics. Regarding a preassignment visit, Black and Gregersen reported a positive relationship with adjustment.

From the lens of career adaptability, planfulness and/or future perspective and exploration are important components (Herr, 1992; Super & Knasel, 1981). Savickas (1997) wrote that future orientation and planning attitudes sustain readiness and adaptability for success and satisfaction in all life roles, and Heppner et al. (1994; Heppner, 1998) reported that readiness was a factor in the Career Transitions Inventory. Among their sample of career clients,

Ebberwein et al. (2004) reported that visioning the details of the next move (planfulness and active exploration) and exploring the environment contributed to a positive transition.

Settling In

Living quarters. Interviews at the just-arrived stage were held in hotel lobbies, in temporary living quarters, and in newly rented furnished or unfurnished apartments or houses. In nearly all cases many were still unpacking, and suitcases often substituted as dresser drawers for clothes and personal items. Those residing in temporary quarters—often for 4 to 6 weeks—voiced frustrations with the extended move. One woman stated, "We lived two-and-a-half weeks in a temp facility before we left. There's a lot of unsettledness . . . we're wearing the same clothes out of our suitcases and the kids are playing with the same toys."

Occurring simultaneously with the transition into permanent lodging, the spouses were waiting for shipments of household goods, making arrangements for transportation, setting up utilities and banking, and making educational or child-care arrangements for their children. By 3-months, all who had shipped household goods and automobiles had received them. Some reported that automobiles and household goods arrived on time or earlier than expected. In those cases, the houses looked comfortable and furnished with personal items. In at least two cases, the household goods (and/or automobiles) arrived a few days prior to 3-months. In these cases, boxes remained unpacked, and rooms looked impersonal and cold. In tandem with the wide continua of settledness were attitudes about the physical aspects of the move. At one extreme: "I am doing great. I cannot believe how smooth everything is going. Last time I said I was waiting for the other shoe to drop. I am still waiting. This has been a fabulous move. It couldn't have gone any better."

At the other extreme women felt unsettled and frustrated about housing. A mother of several preschool children talked of moving 3 times within the first 3 months of the stay. Threats to health and safety (i.e., narrow, spiraling, marble staircases; ant infestations; stray dogs; problems with the heating system) and misinformation prompted these moves.

At 6-months, nearly all discussion of setting up a household had ceased; at 9-months most felt settled and had comfortable, predictable routines. One woman stated, "I've just got a groove going now. It took a long time to get it going!" Curiously, at 12-months, verbalization of feeling unsettled resurfaced. Several women mentioned large construction and maintenance projects

occurring in the apartments that left them with a partially functioning household. In addition, one woman spoke to a change in the home routine because of extra security measures that were implemented after September 11, 2001.

Financial circumstances. A component of settling in related to finances. Beginning with 3-months most reported that their financial circumstances were good and sometimes better than they anticipated. A number of women commented that the financial incentives were part of the motivation to live overseas. Others reported that the relationship between the U.S. dollar (strong at that time) and the Turkish lira made the cost of living low. Families were using the extra money to pay off debt, purchase luxuries such as rugs, travel, grow personal savings, and/or choose to have the wife remain at home and/or increase her volunteer and/or community activities.

For some, finances were problematic. Specifically, the women indicated that they were saving less money than planned or that complications related to the move involved unanticipated expenses. Some families found it difficult to save money. One woman stated, "Financially we are not saving money, there are so many things to buy here; we are currently just spending."

Regarding the integration of previous research to all aspects of settling in, researchers have reported positive relationships between favorable living conditions and spouse adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). From the perspective of career adaptability, Ebberwein et al. (2004) reported that sufficient financial resources contributed to positive transitions for career clients. Similarly, Schlossberg's (1981) model included socioeconomic status as a variable contributing to a successful transition.

Home-leave. At 12-months many were talking about recent returns from or plans to begin home-leaves or extended vacations. These varied in length from 10 days to 2 months. Families described numerous versions of extended leaves that involved visits with family and friends, international respites, traditional vacations, and attention to career issues (e.g., accruing continuing education). Many described completed home-leaves in very positive terms.

Simultaneously, women discussed the stresses of home-leave. Some found it caused them to be homesick. One woman stated, "On home-leave, all we could think about was moving back. We were home for 2 months. Life shouldn't be that good. It was hard to return to normal." Others indicated that the traditionally long-leaves (many 6 weeks or more) left them eager to return to Turkey, "We were all ready to come back. The kids wanted their own things. I got tired of packing. I was anxious to come back. My son was anxious to come

back to school. I guess it's [homeleave] restful." Once back in Turkey, the women struggled with jet lag, off-schedule children, and catching up with the expatriate lives they put on hold.

Several women described the negative financial aspects of home-leave. This is a contrast to the general picture of financial improvement that expatriation brings. One woman stated, "I think we spent $12,000 this summer on hotels, cars, clothes, everything we had to buy." Women talked about the costs of home-leave (hotels, rental cars, eating at restaurants) as well as shopping for clothes and other supplies for the whole year.

Repatriation. Participants introduced the topic of repatriation at the 6-month stage. That is, a few families were beginning to make decisions that would affect their tour in Turkey. As one woman stated:

> We don't know yet if they will extend our assignment. We know we can extend for a year. But that depends on whether or not my husband gets a promotion; and we won't know about the promotion until spring. I have my daughter to consider. If we extend only one year, she'll be leaving before her last year of high school. It brings all kinds of issues. So, we're in the "hold" mode.

For a few women, issues of repatriation remained significant through the 9- and 12-month stages. Several families were waiting to learn if a request for an extended Turkish assignment would be granted. If not, they would begin looking for another work assignment. Two husbands were preparing to retire from military careers. For these couples, the multiple decisions of leaving the military life, career change, and relocation seemed highly anxiety provoking. At the end of the first year, those women with at least two remaining years generally reported that they were not concerned about their next assignment.

The sentiments echoed by the women in our sample corroborate previous research findings. Respondents in the Shaffer and Harrison (2001) study voiced a preference for assignments of a fixed duration; a subsequent empirical test found a positive relationship between assignment duration certainty and adjustment. Similarly, Schlossberg's (1981) model included duration as a variable. She theorized that the greatest degree of stress and negative affect would be associated with an assignment of an uncertain duration.

Impact of Expatriation on the Wife's Life Roles

Before presenting this set of naturalistic results, we remind the reader that the investigation of life role salience was a critical component of our quantitative analysis. In our companion article we report the participants' parental role

was the most important and the occupational role, the least (Bikos et al., 2007, this issue). In addition, the women had greater value than commitment to the occupational role, and greater commitment than value for their marital role.

Impact on career role. Women arrived in Turkey voicing a wide variety of perceptions about their role as wife, homecare, parent, and career professional. Several of the women interpreted the expatriate move as being consistent with their life roles. One woman stated, "I'm a mother and wife wherever I go." Others, especially those following U.S. government employees, planned to hold civilian jobs with the military or local-hire positions with the U.S. Embassy. In fact, some viewed these positions as a career path. A few women located jobs prior to the move, and many were looking for jobs in the first few months of their arrival. By 6-months, most who wanted U.S. government work found it. For a few women, the U.S. government jobs were opening new career options. In several cases, unanticipated job opportunities were being pursued as professional careers. At 9-months some who found work had already quit or made changes. Although some reported frustrations, many found settling into a work routine to be enjoyable and enriching.

In contrast, a subset of the sample left career-defining jobs to move to Turkey. At arrival, the women clearly articulated their commitment to their careers and voiced optimism about finding compatible work. As one woman stated, "For any career woman, there is so much of our identity wrapped up in what we do." At 3-and 6-months, these three women had still not found acceptable work. One had found part-time work in her area, yet she longed for a full-time position. She stated she was "irritable and unhappy" because she was not working. By 9-months she found work that was consistent with her career identity. At the conclusion of the study she reflected about the impact of the job search in this way:

> The job has been a great big roller coaster ride, or the twister . . . the one that goes upside down, but comes up eventually. The job has been the issue all the way along. I think it impacts everything from your marriage to your family. This is the first time that we've been stung by it.

Prior to obtaining the new job, the woman strongly desired to relocate from Turkey. However, when she landed a desirable position she stated, "It changed my mind about staying; which changed everyone else's (the family's) mind."

By 6-months the second professional woman had found a temporary, exciting, and interesting (albeit unrelated to her career) position that was requiring intense amounts of overtime. Although she was excited to be given

such responsibility, at the assignment's end she would be returned to the substitute pool and be required to take any open position, even if it was far below her skill level. Summarizing the career aspect of her first year of expatriation, she stated, "None of the jobs have ever been bad, it's just difficult to accept being in a secretarial role when you've been more than that."

A third woman took a part-time job unrelated to her career area. She indicated that the position was "more like fun than work." During the same interview, she stated:

> I feel like my career has suffered. When we go back to the U.S., I'll need to work, but I've been out of the field and overseas for four years. I worry about hopping back into the field at a high enough level and believing that I'm worth the money they would pay.

Impact on homecare role. For a number of the participants, the move to Turkey was a promotion or significant role change for the husband. In several cases the husband's job was groundbreaking or the first-of-its-kind in Turkey. Consequently, especially at the just-arrived phase, the husband's job required long hours. In addition, because of their employment and legal status, the husbands were singly responsible for arranging for lodging, utilities, benefits, banking, and so on. Especially at the just-arrived stage, women, who were accustomed to managing many of these domestic responsibilities in the United States felt helpless, dependent, and intensely annoyed. As one woman stated, "It's frustrating because I can't do it. In the States, if something needs to be taken care of, I do it. But overseas, the one who has the job (i.e., the husband) has to do it."

Impact on parenting role. Husbands who worked for the U.S. government had extended duties after September 11, 2001. Consequently, many voiced frustration with the long hours that their husbands were working. Several commented that this left them to single-handedly care for children, explain the fathers' absence, and sacrifice family time.

At 3- and 6-months, several women reported that the quality of their family life had improved. Women who chose not to pursue employment while in Ankara were able to complete errands and chores during the day, could pursue leisure interests, and felt "less stress."

Impact on marital role. A few women were experiencing seemingly normal marital difficulties that were exacerbated by their international assignment. Most commonly, one spouse wanted to explore Turkey or socialize with new

friends, the other wanted to stay at home and rest on evenings and weekends. In one case, the couple had worked out a schedule. The wife would use Saturday mornings to explore then return to spend the late afternoon and evening in the apartment with her husband. A few in the study also had infant children, which created multiple stressors with the international move. Especially when their husbands wished to have family time at home, the women reported feeling trapped in the home without benefits of peer friendships or dates with their husbands.

New roles. Many women experienced a status change and/or increase in responsibilities such as hospitality because of the husband's career position. Preferring to be called by her first name, one woman resisted the more formal way in which others addressed her. Speaking of the expatriation and the new hospitality role related to her husband's career, another said, "I've made two changes at once. I've never played that role, and here, I'm wondering what I'm supposed to say and do." Moreover, she described anxiety whenever part of her husband's job performance would be evaluated based on her behavior.

From the perspective of Life Role Salience Theory, our results point to the impact that expatriation has on life roles. For most of the women, most life roles experienced significant change. Given Super's (1980) notion that the work role is not the only role to which career practitioners should attend, those who prepare and support expatriate spouses would be wise to address and plan for this aspect of the adaptive process.

Social Emotional Functioning

Symptoms of depression and disengagement. At 3-months some shared social-emotional concerns. Curiously, these women talked about events that occurred months earlier, yet these incidents were not shared with the researcher during the interview period in which the symptoms were occurring. There appeared to be the pattern of saying, "I was really having difficulties then, but now I'm fine." It is not surprising to note that at subsequent interview intervals, similar patterns occurred. One woman, who had begun taking an antidepressant before leaving for Turkey, described symptoms of sleeplessness, hopelessness, the inability to complete tasks, and the desire to "just close my eyes and go away." Another described symptoms of depression this way: "I was really depressed. I was always tired. I did not want to move. I was not even cooking, just making sandwiches for my children." These descriptions are consistent with Anees, van der Zee, and Sanders' (2003) findings of a negative relationship between emotional stability and adjustment.

Normal life events experienced overseas. During their first year in Turkey, most experienced an event, or events, that would have likely happened had they stayed in the United States. However, the geographic relocation to Turkey heightened the negative and emotional aspects of these events. At least three women experienced significant health concerns that pointed to the possibility of chronic and/or critical illness. Although all three had access to health care that they considered to be quality, it meant traveling by air to the nearest military base in Turkey, in Europe, or back to the United States. Thus, for treatment, numerous disruptions to child care, school, and work occurred. In addition, the wait time between appointments seemed difficult.

Nearly one third of the participants reported that family members still in the United States were having significant health problems or had died. Whether the women chose to remain in Turkey or flew home, significant stress was added to the family. While describing her concerns, one woman stated, "If I were still at home I could have helped out." Another stated, "I was kind of expecting her death, she had health problems. But, being so far away when she died was difficult."

Women also described bouts with routine illness. Although most attributed their health conditions to normal occurrences, some worried about the contribution of local environmental conditions. One woman described the constant presence of a smell similar to diesel fuel. She and her neighbors reported similar symptoms (nosebleeds), and all were being tested for anemia. The woman stated, "My daughter woke up with her face covered in dried blood. She was lethargic . . . the doctor said if it happened again to bring her right in. If it's unhealthy, we don't want to stay in this apartment."

Another struggled with serious illness of a child. The cause was uncertain, the treatment was not working, and the family was stressed. The mother spoke of it in this way:

> My daughter has a bacterial infection in her ear. She had to get an injection every day. We were quarantined for 18 days. I cannot go out. I just stay at home. I have not seen anybody because the doctor told us that if she gets sick again it could be life threatening.

Approaches to Coping

Previous experience. Throughout the study, women described their previous international experience as the best preparation for moving to Turkey. A very common attribution was like this, "This would have been more of a shock if I hadn't been to the former Yugoslavia, which prepared me, the hard

way." Even at 12-months women continued to attribute many of their coping strategies to previous experience.

Previous research has resulted in mixed findings about the relationship between previous international experience and adjustment. Respondents in Mohr and Klein's (2004) project voiced the belief that previous experience would facilitate adjustment, and the subsequent correlation was positive. In contrast, Black and Stephens (1989) found no such relation. From the perspective of career adaptability, Schlossberg (1981) included the variable previous experience with a transition of a similar nature. Schlossberg qualified its inclusion in her model indicating that an individual whose previous, similar experience was negative may be increasingly vulnerable or less able to cope.

Attitudinal variables. The women in the study cited numerous, intentional, attitudinal strategies for coping with the adaptation. Perhaps the most cited was flexibility and open-mindedness. The next most cited strategy was patience; specifically, patience with self and with those who are culturally different. Women also mentioned the importance of self-reliance, optimism, self-confidence, and a sense of humor.

Previous research has evaluated the effect of attitudinal variables on adjustment. Several have reported a positive relation between the spouse's motivation for taking the international assignment and adjustment (Black & Stephens, 1989; Mohr & Klein, 2004). Mixed results have been found regarding the concept of open-mindedness. Some reported positive relations between flexibility and adjustment (Anees, et al., 2003; Yi, Yu, Chiao, & Wei, 2005); however, Mohr and Klein (2004) found no such relation.

Much of the career adaptability literature addresses the importance of attitudinal variables. Herr's (1992) personal flexibility construct included attitudinal variables including motivation for the transition. Gelatt's (1991) positive uncertainty approach encouraged individuals to adopt paradoxical attitudes such as being simultaneously focused and flexible. Schlossberg (1981) indicated that one's perception or attitude toward the role change (gain or loss) and affect toward the change (positive or negative) would affect adaptation. In addition, she included self-attitudes and world-attitudes as components of the variable, psychosocial competence.

Behaviors. Nearly all of the women required themselves to "get out." The get out directive was intended for social activities with other Americans, for integration into Turkish culture, and for health and wellness. One said, "Get out and do things. Go to church (even if you wouldn't otherwise) because it

is a place to meet others. Go to the library. Accept every invitation you receive just to make those connections."

Behaviors and actions are included in the definition of career adaptability (Herr, 1992). Results from the Ebberwein et al. (2004) study included the notion that the adaptive career client was prepared to make changes (or to act) when the transition was imminent.

Intentional cultural awareness. A number of women intentionally immersed themselves in Turkish culture. One woman opened her windows to hear the street noises. Others involved their children in Turkish and international sports and activities. Yet others read books and took Turkish history courses. Many felt strongly that learning about the language and culture strongly contributed to their success. One voiced the beliefs of many when she said, "If you do anything extra, it will be better. If you know 50 words in Turkish, it will be better than none . . . if you put in extra effort, you will adjust better." In the Mohr and Klein (2004) study, respondents articulated that interaction with host-country nationals was important for adjustment; a subsequent correlation was positive.

The origin of the career adaptability construct was, in part, motivated by Super and Knasel's (1981) recognition that the world of work would constantly evolve and adults would find themselves adjusting to changed life roles in new arenas in which they unfolded. Subsequently, career theorists have included the notion of the context (Savickas, 1997) in the definition of career adaptability. Ebberwein et al. (1997) included insight as one of the three themes that characterized the adaptation experiences of the career clients in the study. Career clients who recognized that positive adaptation occurred in new environments, and who intentionally refreshed their skills or learning so they could operate in those new environments, fared better.

Supportive Systems

Sponsoring organizations. At the just-arrived stage, the external source that was most referenced was the sponsor family. The U.S. government offered formalized programs that paired in-country employees (i.e., sponsors) with incoming employees. The (volunteer) job of the sponsor was to greet and orient the incoming employee and his or her family. Great variability was observed in this program; that is, some sponsors provided little more than cursory information whereas others went to great lengths to offer abundant information and hospitality. Although not as formalized, members of some

of the religious and/or not-for-profit and corporate expatriate communities described similar sponsor-like arrangements. At 3-months, a few women were still receiving support from the sponsor family assigned to them to assist with their entrance into the country; by 6-months, little mention was made of sponsor families.

Given that the employers represented the U.S. government, private corporations, and not-for-profit organizations, the level of benefits and support provided to the families varied widely. Many voiced satisfaction with their sponsoring organization. As one woman stated, "I have no criticism about the company. They prepared us for the assignment. They sent materials about Turkey. We did not get language training because we did not have time . . . they are wonderful." A handful of women felt abandoned and unsupported by their organization. One woman indicated that the company had downsized, leaving no services to assist with the transition. She said, "They have stopped all support. It is a shame and they really should establish something. I have had to do everything on my own; the company hasn't done anything."

Some of the most interesting research about the relationship between the employer and the expatriate spouse has to do with the inclusion of the spouse in the determination of the assignment. Results have been mixed. Two (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Copeland & Norrell, 2002) reported a positive correlation between spouse involvement and adjustment; Mohr and Klein (2004) found no such relation. Regarding general company support and expatriate spouse adjustment, Anees et al. (2003) reported a positive relation. From the transitions literature, personal control is a variable theorized to positively influence the adaptation experience (Heppner, 1998; Heppner et al., 1994; Schlossberg, 1981). In these models, it is hypothesized that the individual adapts more easily to transitions when the source is internal.

Immediate family. Members of the immediate family (i.e., husbands and dependent children) were sources of support and concern to the expatriate women throughout the year. Several previous studies have found strong, positive relationships between the adjustment of the expatriate employee and spouse (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black & Stephens, 1989; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). Shaffer and Harrison speculated that because of the common experience, the spouse might provide the strongest source of support. Similar studies have found a positive relationship between family cohesion and adjustment (Anees et al., 2003; Copeland & Norrell, 2002). To facilitate the ease of presentation, information about dependent children is grouped by dependent status: preschool, school-age, and unaccompanying young adults.

Preschool children. At the just-arrived stage, mothers reported that preschool children displayed a variety of reactions to the international move. By 3-months, many mothers were utilizing services (i.e., housekeepers, nannies) to provide daily assistance with chores and/or babysitting; most would have not utilized these services in the United States. One mother who would not have enrolled her children in a preschool in the United States chose to do so in Turkey because she believed it helped by meeting the children's social needs and decreasing their constant reliance on her. The mother commented that in the United States she would have had more access to local resources and her own transportation (in most cases, the family had one automobile).

In contrast, some struggled to find acceptable child care, preschool activities, and playmates for their children. Women mentioned difficulty in locating safe, conveniently located playgrounds and libraries with English and/or child-oriented materials.

School-age children. Most of the school-age children of the women in the study were enrolled in the U.S. Department of Defense Dependents School (DoDD). This school, whose primary objective is to serve children of U.S. mission personnel and children of other foreign diplomats, is accustomed to serving a transient population. Most mothers voiced high satisfaction with the quality of the school. Specifically, they commented that the children were making friends, fitting in, and enjoying the school curriculum and activities. Throughout the first year mothers commented that their children's exposure to other cultures within and outside of the school was a positive growth experience. One mother was pleased that her son was traveling to Germany to compete in a regional golf tournament. Another was delighted that her daughter had friends from Turkey, France, Israel, and Poland.

At 9-months the women talked more deeply about specific successes and struggles of their children at home and at school. Perhaps this is because enough settling in had happened so that children's issue became a greater focus. Mothers noticed positive and negative changes in their children. Regarding one case the mother stated, "It is hard to tell if the changes happened because we are in Turkey or if it's just because of their age." At 12-months women commonly reported that they did not have the same activities available that they might have at home; sometimes children were bored. This theme seemed likely emerged because many of the 12-month interviews took place in the summer. Families who were connected with the U.S. government reported a variety of activities (e.g., summer camp, swimming at the Ambassador's residence) in which their school-age children

could participate; these activities were not equally available to members of other expatriate groups.

Previous research has found mixed results regarding the presence of children and expatriate spouse adjustment. Results from the qualitative and quantitative results of the Shaffer and Harrison (2001) study indicated a positive relationship between parental demands and adjustment; those with school-age and younger children fared better. In contrast, Mohr and Klein (2004) found no differences in adjustment between those with and those without children. These authors acknowledged that children's educational and social needs provided a conduit for social interaction; however, they also introduced stress.

Unaccompanying young adults. A few mothers' children were young adults who remained in the United States for school or work. When these mothers mentioned concerns about these children they felt torn between rushing home to help and letting the young adult child solve the problem. One woman described her struggles this way:

> It's really tough because you miss a lot. You get all the advertisements for *parents' weekend* but you can't attend. We couldn't go back every year to be with them to help them set up for the new school year. They had to do it by themselves. My youngest doesn't have a car and he doesn't have a driver's license because he lived overseas. There are normal challenges in sending a kid to college. However, when you do it from overseas, everything's a bit more difficult.

Ready-made social structures. Throughout the stay, social support came from the preexisting social structures of the American (and international) community into which the women were entering. At the just-arrived stage women frequently referenced their husband's coworkers as the people with whom they were most social. Women were meeting others at church, at their children's schools, and at social organizations such as the Ankara Foreign Women's Club. Within the U.S. government community, many resided in large, guarded, apartment buildings where they lived with other government employees. Thus, they had begun to socialize with their new American neighbors. One woman stated, "The third day here my neighbor knocked on the door. That's been great: an English-speaking neighbor with a coffee pot."

By 3-months, the women had committed to some of the ready-made social structures they had discovered or had joined additional groups (i.e., international golf, tennis, horseback riding). Pursuing her own interests, one woman

started a book club that was attended by 12 other Americans and was referenced throughout the year by several in the study.

Fellow Americans. By 3-months, most of the U.S. expatriate wives were gathering in pairs or small groups for socialization and support. These gatherings remained strong throughout the year, and many of the women commented about the hospitality and helpfulness (e.g., car pooling) shown by the American community. Even at 6-months, the women in the study were relying on fellow Americans to "help us know how to get settled and how to find things." Several women mentioned, "Saturdays at Balgat." *Balgat* is an informal term used to reference the Office of Defense Coordination base shared between the Turkish and U.S. militaries. It was on this property that the DoDD School, the U.S. Commissary, and shared Turkish/U.S. military offices were located. On Saturdays, those who had access (because of their own status with the U.S. government or those who had been sponsored by an authorized person), could utilize the American community library, eat American-style pizza at a snack shop, and participate in activities such as the American Youth Soccer Organization and a youth softball league.

Respondents in the qualitative element of the Shaffer and Harrison (2001) study also joined ready-made organizations and created informal groups of their own. Empirical results indicated that the size, breadth, and depth of the social network were positively related to adjustment. Similarly, Yi et al. (2005) found a positive relationship between social orientation and adjustment.

Turkish and international community. Adventuring into the community of local nationals, women immediately found social support from the Turkish citizens. At the just-arrived stage, one woman stated, "Turkish people, the total strangers I have met have been wonderful." At 3-months, a few women had developed relationships with Turkish and/or other foreign nationals; however, fellow Americans remained the most frequently cited source of social support.

By 6-months, several were participating in English conversation groups. These groups, predominantly sponsored by the Turkish-American Women's Charitable Society, involved 6 to 10 Turkish women and one volunteer, American leader. Each month, the American volunteer brought material (e.g., magazine articles), and the group discussed it in English. The American modeled English and gently corrected the mistakes of the members. The Turkish members of the conversation groups tended to stay together for many years, whereas the rather transient Americans passed along their responsibilities to the expatriates who followed. Those involved in these groups spoke warmly of the support and assistance offered by the Turkish women.

Research has generally reported a positive relationship between relationships with host-country nationals and adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991). Respondents in the Shaffer and Harrison (2001) study voiced that forming relationships with local nationals would facilitate an understanding of the host-country culture.

Friends from home. At 6-months, women began speaking of family and friends at home as concerned and supportive. Especially after September 11, 2001, stateside acquaintances voiced many concerns about the safety of Turkey. As one woman stated, "Every time something is on CNN regarding Turkey, all my friends call my parents. My parents call me. They'd probably be worried anyway, but it seems like September 11th made it worse." One woman, who was expecting a baby, stated that family in the United States was pressing them to return for the delivery.

Throughout the year, many kept weekly or daily contact with family and friends at home via telephone, e-mail, and/or other Internet-based technologies. Some mentioned that the frequency of communication with those back home was declining. This was, perhaps, best evidenced by a decrease in phone calls. The women attributed the change in relationship to (a) close family and friends at home who were "more relaxed" about the assignment, (b) increasingly busy schedules on both sides of the relationship, and/or (c) successive or sustained international assignment(s) that led to more distant relationships. One woman stated, "I have friends at home but the friendships are not strong. Because of this assignment and others our concerns have become different. That's sad."

It is curious to note that Shaffer and Harrison (2001) found a negative relation between extended family support and adjustment. Results from Copeland and Norrell (2002) may help explain these results. These authors reported that adjustment was generally better when expatriate spouses received more of their support from local rather long-distance relationships.

Still searching. A handful of women reported feeling lonely and isolated. A stay-at-home mom described participating in a weekly playgroup and attempting to reach out to other women with whom she thought she could be a friend. She stated,

> People are working here on more than other assignments we had and not knowing the language is a barrier to having Turkish friends. There are times when I need someone to chat with, even for five minutes. I sometimes feel lonely.

Friends' relocation. The one-year anniversary was the first time that some of the women mentioned disappointment in the relocation of people in their supportive networks. One woman commented, "One of the easy things has been my Persian friends. They have made it lovely. Unfortunately they are leaving this summer and then I don't know what I will do."

Career theorists and researchers clearly recognize the importance of supportive systems. In her model for adaptation to transition, Schlossberg (1981) included the variables internal support systems (intimate relationships, family unit, and network of friends) as well as institutional support. Heppner et al. (1994; Heppner, 1998) also reported that support (from the people in one's life) was a factor of the Career Transition Inventory. Within the theme of contextual challenges, Ebberwein et al. (2004) reported that family life and the support of an employer affected the adaptation experience of the career clients in their study.

Language

Throughout the study, the most frequent difficulty experienced by the women was the language barrier. It is not surprising to note that the unanimous advice to future sojourners was "learn the language," and the most frequent recommendation to sponsoring organizations was "provide language training." As one woman put it:

> If you could learn everything that is on these sheets [pointing to worksheets of basic Turkish phrases], and that's all you learned, you'd learn a lot. However, by the time I look up the words and speak in Turkish [pointing to a dictionary], the shopkeeper is ready to close.

At 3-months, many were attempting to ease the frustration through short courses, tutors, and self-study. By 6-months, some had made enough progress with the language to feel comfortable moving around in the Turkish community. These women commented that some language proficiency was possible and that language capacity eased the tasks of daily life. Some of the women stopped further attempts at language learning. One woman stated that it was "surprising how easy it was to get by without knowing Turkish." Although a few were continuing with language classes at the 9-month stage, many who had initially set a goal to learn Turkish were struggling to meet that goal. One woman stated, "My motivation to learn Turkish is regressing" and another, "[I'm] doing fine overall except that I'm sick of Turkish."

It is interesting to note that many women shared their struggle with language with a hopeful, humorous spirit. On a shopping outing, one woman received 4 kilograms (more than 8 pounds) of tomatoes when she only wanted four tomatoes. A family who liked trying new restaurants realized that there were no English speakers and no menus printed in English. Thus, they ordered their food without any knowledge of what they might be eating. They and the restaurant staff were quite surprised that their order was mostly bread. In previous research, positive correlations have been found with host-country language acquisition and adjustment (Mohr & Klein, 2004; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001).

Interaction with the Host Culture

Physical environment. Although women frequently mentioned similar Turkey-specific topics, the positive or negative valence attached to them varied greatly; this pattern was consistent throughout the study. Many commented that Ankara was more modern than anticipated. One family had gathered information from an Internet site that portrayed Ankara as an unattractive city. The woman stated, "I was expecting Moscow, all grey and concrete. Sure there is concrete, but it is like any European city. There are trees, parks, statues, and silver roofs on the mosques." In contrast, "Turkey looks more like the third world than Europe; the housing looks poorer than I expected." Many mentioned the presence of items that were potentially harmful to health and safety (e.g., air pollution, litter, stray cats, aggressive dogs, pigeon scat, and unreliable electricity and/or water). During the summer of 2002, Turkey experienced a water shortage. To conserve water the city was divided into sections, and water would be unavailable to those sections on alternating days. Commenting on this, one woman stated, "I can't believe water would be off for 12 hours. We could get a disease because we can't wash our hands."

It is curious to note that 6-months marked a change in attitude for some. One woman who was quite optimistic about Turkey's modernity during previous stages stated, "When I first came to Turkey, it seemed so modern. It seemed like you could get anything here but really you couldn't."

Cultural observations. Throughout the study, the majority of comments about Turkish culture centered mostly on observations of Turkish hospitality and on Eastern or Islamic dress and behavior. Regarding Turkish hospitality, most women commented that the doormen, shopkeepers, and strangers were quick to offer help and friendship. One pregnant mother told of walking uphill

while carrying an 18-month-old. Some Turkish nationals recognized her struggle and "just stopped traffic. 'She needs a taxi!' they said." Others told stories of attending elaborate meals prepared and served in homes of co-workers or newly made Turkish friends.

Women also voiced concerns. A mother of an infant was surprised by "how much Turkish people love babies. While I'm happy about that, strangers often want to come and kiss and touch my daughter. It's been difficult to stop them." Another mother spoke of a 3- or 4-year-old boy who, "comes and plays in our backyard; he is mean and undisciplined. Since I cannot speak Turkish and I cannot say anything to him and I feel helpless."

A number of women were surprised by contrasts to expectations they had about the role of Islam in Turkey. Some were surprised by the visible presence of Islam and more Eastern traditions. Specifically, they commented about women wearing scarves, the Call to Prayer heard five times per day, and the presence of men (but absence of women) in parks, playing games, and drinking tea. Many women were concerned that they had made (or would make) cultural mistakes. During *Ramazan* (Ramadan), a woman learned that it is potentially rude to eat, drink, or smoke in public; she also commented that the traditional drumming (calling people to wake up for their last big meal before sunrise) was an alarming surprise that awoke her at 2:00 a.m. One woman was embarrassed because she had given religiously conservative neighbors (who do not consume alcohol) a bottle of wine.

A few found Ankara to be more Western in behavior than expected. One woman stated it this way, "We had heard it's a secular country; but were still shocked at how women dressed. We were expecting that they wouldn't be in veils, but we didn't expect tight clothes and tight pants."

It is curious to note that even at 6-months, some of the women appeared to have rather limited interactions and impressions of Turkish nationals. One woman stated her level of interaction this way, "I have no real impressions of Turkey or Turks. My only interaction is with our security guards and at the stores. It is nice that more and more people are speaking English." Others offered a number of shallow descriptions of Turkish people (i.e., they are honest, people are helpful and nice, they will talk to you). It is interesting to note that most of the women did not share anecdotes or stories that would indicate relationships characterized by intimacy and depth.

At 9-months, more than in the previous stages, women seemed to mention specific frustrations and conflicts with the local nationals. One woman said:

> I guess my honeymoon period is over. It is like a roller coaster. Driving has been difficult. Why do people not care about the traffic lights here? Turkish

> people try to help and be nice but they give promises that they cannot keep. They say it will be ready next week, but it takes three weeks. Why do they not tell me how long it takes to get something?

Other women also told stories of conflicts and misunderstandings. Several complained of troubles with house help. One indicated that the maid was making decisions (e.g., rearranging furniture), "as if it were her house." Several were frustrated with repair work. In one case a workman left broken glass on the kitchen floor and did not tell the mother of young children. In another case, car repair was more expensive than expected and took longer than was acceptable.

A number of researchers have addressed the issue of cultural novelty or cultural distance. Essentially, this refers to the degree of difference between the host culture and American culture. Generally, a negative relationship between cultural novelty and adjustment has been found (i.e., the greater the novelty, the lower the adjustment; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black & Stephens, 1989; Mohr & Klein, 2004; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). We were fascinated by the widely varied perceptions of cultural distance in our participant pool.

Central to the career adaptability definition is the interaction between the individual and the environment (Super & Knasel, 1981) and the inclusion of context (Savickas, 1997). During adaptation, "an individual seeks to develop or to improve the congruence of person-position fit while at the same time becoming more like the person that she or he wants to be" (Savickas 1997, p. 253). Schlossberg (1981) included the factor, characteristics of the posttransition environment including the variable, physical setting in her model of adaptation. She acknowledged that elements such as climate, weather, density, and personal space may interact with individual characteristics in a manner that will affect the transition experience.

Closing Remarks

Our project is the first longitudinal, Naturalistic Inquiry into the adaptation experiences of expatriate spouses. Results provided rich, thick descriptions of eight themes as they unfolded through the first year of their expatriate assignment in Ankara, Turkey. These eight themes included predeparture preparation, settling in, impact of expatriation on the wife's life roles, social emotional functioning, approaches to coping, supportive systems, language, and interaction with the host culture. We found that the life role salience and career adaptability constructs of Super's Life-Space, Life Span approach to career development provided an effective theoretical framework for interpreting our results.

Results were largely consistent with published research about spouse adjustment. However, the integration of previous literature highlights the discrepancies. There have been mixed findings about the effect of previous experience, openness/open-mindedness, and the presence of young children on adjustment. In addition, results point to the multiple and numerous issues that effect adaptation to the international living assignment. Finally, though phrases such as "At 6-months, nearly all discussion of setting up a household had ceased; at 9-months most felt settled and had comfortable, predictable routines" may appear to suggest a phasic effect, we remind the reader that the results of the repeated measures analyses do not suggest changes in global psychological indicators as a function of time-in-country (Bikos et al., 2007, this issue).

Limitations

Given that qualitative research often focuses on the investigation of narrowly defined phenomena, one limitation is the large sample size that included wives of military, foreign service, corporate, and missionary/humanitarian service employees. Our analysis did not separate these groups. Consequently, differences may have been overlooked. This point is highlighted by results of a 2002 study (Navara & James) where a comparison of 100 missionaries to 67 expatriates from other categories indicated missionaries had less satisfaction in their foreign posting than the other expatriates.

Similarly, readers should understand that generalizability/external validity is generally not a goal of qualitative research methods. Rather, the goal is to explain the phenomena locally. Consequently, readers should not assume that the experiences of those expatriate spouses in Turkey would generalize to other locations, or, as geopolitical events unfold, to other future periods in time.

Implications for Research and Practice

We believe that our research can be utilized by researchers, practitioners, and sojourners. Previous researchers have conducted smaller qualitative projects to expand models of spouse expatriate adjustment (e.g., Mohr & Klein, 2004; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). We believe the results of our longitudinal Naturalistic Inquiry will provide a rich source of data for further refinement of spouse adjustment models for this purpose. More specifically, we believe that integrating our findings with the career adaptability and life role salience constructs could be useful in developing a model of expatriate spouse adaptation. We encourage theorists and researchers to consider the structure of this model and to test it with expatriate populations. We hope that organizations who

place employees and their families overseas and career practitioners who provide cultural training and support to expatriate families will find our material useful in reshaping their policies, benefits, and curriculum. In light of the career adaptability and life role salience constructs that guided our project, we believe that career practitioners should focus on developing readiness to cope with the transition among the constellation of existing and emerging life roles. We encourage counselors to assist the expatriate client in proactive planning by conducting a realistic assessment of self, resources, and the posttransition environment. Finally, we hope the results of our project make it into the hands of the potential sojourner. We believe that the themes and stories of the 32 women who participated in the study may help create a realistic picture of the adaptation process. Consequently, it could be helpful in deciding whether to embark on an international journey and in negotiating the first year abroad.

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