Transactions between individuals and family and work environments: A qualitative analysis of workers' adaptation to organizational restructuring.

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ABSTRACT

In this study, ecosystems were examined to reveal the adaptational processes of individual, family environments, and work environments during and following organizational restructuring. Reorganizing the work place was expected to lead to changes in the employee's organizational ecosystem as well as the family ecosystem. Transactions between the family and work ecosystems and the individual were examined.

The sample of 10 women and 5 men were from a restructured state agency. Transactional human ecology provided the theoretical framework for the study. In-depth interviews were used to gather the data. Document analysis and personal viewpoint provided additional data.

Experiences that facilitated the adaptation process were individuals' choosing change, work support groups, families who listened, personal attitudes, and manager's style. Bringing a language of community and concepts of support from the family environment into the work ecosystem also aided adaptation. Experiences that hindered adaptation were the competitive hiring process, conflicts between team

work and function work, misinformation, and "little bureaucratic things." In addition, apparent contradictions between the rhetoric of the restructuring vision and reality from the participants' perspective hampered adaptation.

Analysis of the collected data provided the beginning of a grounded theory of adaptation to organizational restructuring. Under restructuring implemented in a manner like that at the agency, employees remaining after the downsizing required time to adapt. They also needed time to grieve for their colleagues who were laid off. Participants' feelings of uncertainty and tension increased if they did not have time to adapt to the new structure and to grieve for laid off colleagues.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Overview and Purpose of the Study

The focus of the study was on the adaptational processes of individual, family, and work environments in a restructured work place. Human ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) guided the study. A transactional world view was added to further define the theory (Altman & Rogoff, 1987; Wright & Herrin, 1990). Adding the transactional world view to human ecology ensured that in this study events were examined as a totality of ecosystems. Andrews, Bubolz, and Paolucci (1980) applied the human ecology perspective to the study of the family. Using the human ecology point of view permitted a holistic study of the ecosystems involved (Altman & Rogoff, 1987; Wright & Herrin, 1990).

The sample consisted of workers from a state agency that had undergone major organizational restructuring and downsizing of the work force. Data were analyzed according to procedures developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). This form of analysis facilitated the discovery of a grounded theory (see Chapter III) about the transactions supporting adaptation following organizational restructuring.

Qualitative research methods were used to explore participants' everyday experiences and feelings about the changes in their work place and their accompanying adaptation. The specific research methods used here were (a) in-depth interviews, (b) review of public agency documents, and (c) the researcher's personal and professional experience and perspective (see Chapter III for an explanation).

A key point in understanding the transactional family ecological perspective is recognizing that separate elements, or parts, do not make the whole. Describing the transactional *whole* as "a *confluence* of inseparable factors that depend on one another for their very definition and meaning" (Altman & Rogoff, 1987, p. 24, emphasis in the original) defined the focus of the study. The study's focus was on the changing relationships and adaptational processes of the whole nexus of ecosystems.

From the transactional human ecological perspective, *adaptation* is a specific response of individuals and families that enable them to "conform to or maintain flexibility" (Walker, 1991, p. 3). Adaptation responses indicate the willingness of flexible ecosystems to shift social roles (Walker, 1991). Since change is defined as continuous (Wright & Herrin, 1990), these adaptive responses have the potential to alter structural components of an ecosystem or environment (Bubolz & Sontag, in press).

Bubolz and Sontag (in press) said transactions are the exchanges or interactions within and between individuals, families, and environments that facilitate or hinder successful adaptation. Fannin (1987) defined transactions as continuous interactive processes between the family and its surroundings. Lazarus (1991) included the person struggling to manage the relationships with and between the physical and social environments in his definition of transactions. The person shapes and is shaped by the tussle (Lazarus, 1991).

Transactions, in this study, were defined as valued and continuous relationships between individuals and/or ecosystems where the person and environment(s) were conjoined. Persons and ecosystems separate identities are lost and a new level of abstraction achieved (Lazarus, 1991). The following metaphor may help the understanding of the transaction concept. H_2O is two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Water, the resulting compound, contains hydrogen and oxygen, but does not resemble either element. Both adaptation and transactions between and among individuals and environments were investigated in this study. Both transaction and adaptation embrace the idea that interactions include individual and ecosystem movement toward a valued goal (Lazarus, 1991).

Research Questions

The idea for this proposed study came from observing and reading about the sizable increase in corporate restructuring during the 1980s. My personal experiences while working with employees of corporations contributed to the idea as did empirical investigations about families and their economic situations. Voydanoff (1990) stressed the need to embellish the "linkages between economic distress, individual adjustment, and family relations" (p. 1,111). For this study, it was assumed that major organizational change could influence individual behavior as dramatically as unemployment could. Using this assumption, the overarching research question guiding the study was:

> In what ways did transactions between individual workers and their family and work environments facilitate individual adaptation to organizational restructuring?

More specific research questions were:

1. How did individual workers who survived organizational restructuring adapt to the changed work situation?

2. What characteristics of the individual, the family environment, and the work environment did workers identify as facilitating adaptation?
3. What characteristics of the individual, the family environment, and the work environment challenged workers' adaptation to restructuring?

This inquiry focused on the everyday experiences of participants as they adapted to the restructured work place. Participants were asked about their personal, work, and family encounters during and after the organizational restructuring.

A transactional human ecological perspective allowed me to assume that when the relationships in one environment changed, continuous adaptational processes would likely produce changes in other environments (Johnson, 1979). Those relational changes might, in turn, alter the original environment. In this study, I assumed that changes in the reactions of family members and fellow workers would modify the behaviors of the worker in the work environment. This modification contributed to and was reinforced by the workers' further experiences within the family and work environments. Such a multi-dimensional assumption was compatible with the transactional human ecology approach which "requires suspending bounded notions of cause and effect" (Marshall, 1986, p. 273). The idea of causal relationships was replaced by a concept of circular or spiral ones. The notion of multi-directional relations used in the human ecology perspective and in qualitative research methods increased opportunities for understanding the several dimensions of interconnecting events.

In summary, this study was guided by a transactional human ecology perspective. Qualitative methods were used to investigate individual worker transactions with family and work environments and their impact on individual adaptation to organizational change.

Rationale for the Study

During the 1980s, managers of corporations often responded to prevailing economic conditions by downsizing their companies (Heenan, 1990; Offerman & Gowing, 1990); that is, they reduced the number of people employed at all levels of the organization (Tomasko, 1987; Voydanoff, 1990). These corporate policies generated tangible amounts of job insecurity among workers (Curtis, 1989; Heenan, 1990; Jacobs, 1989; Xiaoge, 1991). In a decade review of work and family issues from the 1980s, Voydanoff (1990) concluded that researchers had not fully investigated the effects of uncertain employment on worker transactions in family and work environments and on employee adjustment to work place change.

This study provided an understanding of the adaptation of workers to organizational restructuring and subsequent downsizing. Wright and Herrin (1990) purported that family ecology research should lead to policy development. The "emphasis on policy is the most salient dimension of family ecology because it represents what an ecological perspective can contribute for the direct benefit of families" (Wright & Herrin, 1990, p. 9). This study provided usable information about adapting to change for policy makers and human resource personnel at the agency.

Definitions of Terms

In this study, *ecology* refers to the study of the "interrelations of organisms and environments" (Andrews et al., 1980, p. 30). An *ecosystem* is conceptualized as "sets of components bound together as functioning wholes in dynamic interaction with the environment" (Andrews et al., 1980, p. 42). The term *environment* embodies the natural physical-biological, the human-built, and social-cultural components of the family's external and internal worlds (Andrews et al., 1980; Bubolz & Sontag, in press). From the transactional world view, environment is further defined as "a complex and systematic organization of space, time, meaning, and communication" (Altman & Rogoff, 1987, p. 31).

Both definitions emphasize wholeness and interaction rather than static, separate parts.

Holism conceptualizes parts of ecosystems which are "indistinguishable from the wholes in which they are embedded" (Wright & Herrin, 1990, p. 8). Environments are studied in context. *Context* is the way in which the broader, distant ecosystems affect individual adaptation to the immediate micro-environment, for example, to the downsized work group. Additionally, context, as an integral part of the event, is a set of circumstances surrounding a particular occurrence (Rosnow & Geogoudi, 1986).

Major terms about the human ecological perspective that require definition are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) pictures the ecological environment as a "nested arrangement of concentric structures" (p. 22). The *macrosystem* is "the culture," or the "broad ideological values, norms, and institutional patterns" (Bubolz & Sontag, in press, p. 11) within which the micro-, meso-, and exo-systems existed. Included in the macrosystem are political, economic, legal, medical, educational, social, and psychological elements and resource development (Shera, 1988) that influence the family's activities and its use of time (Fannin, 1987). The individual is the smallest or most central component while the macro-environment forms the outer or largest structure (Henry, 1987).

The family is an example of a microsystem. The components of a *microsystem* are defined by the way the individuals in the system perceive and interpret them (Bronfenbrenner & Hamilton, 1978; Patton, 1990; Shera, 1988); that is, they are defined by the individual members of the ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Hamilton, 1978; Glossop, 1988).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) definition of *mesosystem* is that of an arrangement of microsystems. A mesosystem is the interrelations and interconnections among two or more micro-settings (Bronfenbrenner & Hamilton, 1978; Fannin, 1987; Lero, 1988). Mesosystems are similar to Bubolz and Sontag's (1991) community systems and are where work places, schools, and churches, and other microsystems interrelate. Resources, defined by Foa and Foa (1974) as love, status, service, information, goods, and money, are exchanged at this level (Andrews et al., 1980; Bubolz & Sontag, in press). Other transactions between individuals and/or ecosystems also take place at this level.

An *exosystem* represent the level at which society influence what happens inside a family, or other microsystem. Exosystems affect individuals involved in microsystems (Fannin, 1987; Henry, 1987). The family, as a unit, is not directly involved in an exosystem, though an individual family member can be. For example, a child's parent's work place was an exosystem for that child. The child does not participate directly in the parent's work place, but the parent's work place involvement affects, among other things, the family's standard of living.

For this study, *family* is conceived as "composed not only of persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption but also sets of interdependent ... persons who share some common goals, resources, and a commitment to each other over time" (Bubolz & Sontag, in press, p. 31). Family members are capable of action independent of the family ecosystem. Commitment, over and above blood, marriage, or adoption, circumscribe family membership. Additionally, the family system has an identity and a character that differs from that of its individual members. It is greater "than the sum of the individuals" (Andrews et al., 1980, p. 32) who live within its boundaries. A family ecosystem is capable of "transaction[s] with its environment" (Andrews et al., 1980, p. 32) as its individual members are.

Downsizing means the "deliberate and systematic reduction of a work force" (Tombaugh & White, 1990, p. 32). *Restructuring* is about companies "becoming leaner, changing the business mix to gain greater focus, discontinuing or contracting out activities unrelated to their core competence, and more flexibly moving into and out of business" (Kanter, 1989, p. 57). The downsizing at the state agency in the study was part of the restructuring process.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, an explanation of human ecology as it related to the study is given. The transactional world view of human ecology was used to communicate issues important and germane to the study. The world view also guided the selection of appropriate research methods for the study (Wright & Herrin, 1990). The literature reviewed utilized the human ecology perspective to examine family and work issues, workers and downsizing, and the family-work interface. Also reviewed are qualitative research studies on family and work issues. Discussion about the process of generating a grounded theory is included in Chapter III.

Theoretical Perspective

In this study, individual workers' adaptation to organizational restructuring was examined through the theoretical lens of the transactional human ecology perspective. This perspective oriented the investigation toward the reciprocity and interdependence of an individual's many ecosystems. An individual's adaptation to restructuring was assumed to be inseparable from and defined by those ecosystems. Specifically, this study examined the family and work ecosystems as perceived by the individual.

Human Ecology Perspective

Human ecology researchers seek to understand as well as define events (Pence, 1988). Further, ecological inquiry is broad, encompassing, and unrestricted rather that narrow, specific, and restricted. Family ecology, a specialization within human ecology, is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding family phenomena (Wright & Herrin, 1990). It developed from an ecological perspective of home economics, systems theory, human ecology (Bubolz & Sontag, 1991), and developmental psychology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Wright & Herrin, 1990). The family ecology perspective concentrates on the family as well as its individual members (Bubolz & Sontag, 1991). Adaptation within the family and work environments was examined rather than, for example, workers' perceptions of organizational commitment after restructuring.

A basic assumption of the human ecology perspective is: "environmental and situational factors played an important role in human activity, often in combination with personal qualities" (Altman & Rogoff, 1987, p. 14). Ray (1988) maintained that both the family and the individual needed to be included as units of analysis. Bronfenbrenner (1988) referred to ecological research as studying human "development in context" (p. ix). The *whole* is greater than the sum of its parts instead of equal to them (Glossop, 1988). The contexts specific to this study were the individual and the family and work environments at the microsystem level, transactions between them at the mesosystem level, and the exosystem *organization*.

Propositions of Human Ecology

A major proposition of human ecology used in this study was:

> the developmental processes taking place in the immediate settings in which human beings live, such as family, school, peer group, and workplace, are profoundly affected by conditions and events in the broader contexts in which these settings are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1988, p. x).

A more specific proposition, from the family ecology perspective, was that the family is an arrangement of organized patterns of relationships that depends on and changes the broader environments in which they operate (Andrews et al., 1980). Further, the family has concurrent linkages with many other systems; for example, work, school, and church. These linkages contextualize, multiply, and compound the possible consequences and associations that specific settings have for the individuals located in them (Bubolz & Sontag, in press). For example, during the agency restructuring period, there was a recession in the state.

That economic event had implications for participants' options for obtaining comparable employment elsewhere in the state capital. This study concentrated on two settings available to agency employees--the family and the work environments.

Another important assumption of the human ecological perspective was that relationships were dynamic (Andrews et al., 1980; Lero, 1988; Marshall, 1986). The family was constantly changing as it created and maintained its own system (Andrews et al., 1980; Bronfenbrenner, 1988). The individual influenced, and was influenced by, changes across time in intra- and inter-system relationships (Lero, 1988). Additionally, individuals and systems learned from experiences with change processes (Lazarus, 1991). For example, the family environment may change because one of its members spends more hours at work in response to changes there. This temporal dimension served to increase the flexibility and utility of the study. Differences and diversities of ecosystems (Andrews et al., 1980) and the intrinsic holism of the human ecology perspective (Pence, 1988) were examined within specific social contexts (Wharf, 1988).

In summary, using the propositions and assumptions of the human ecology approach enhanced recognition of the dynamics of the family system. Using the perspective also emphasized the basic interdependence and interconnectedness of human systems with each other and with the broader environment.

Transactional World View

The assumptions of the transactional world view are (a) events are holistic entities (b) people-place-time flow together, (c) changes occur continuously, and (d) change is emergent or undetermined. The observer is part of the research. The research methods are phenomenology, ethnography, and hermeneutics (adapted from Figure 1 in Wright & Herrin, 1990, p. 9).

Holism is the context of the transactional human ecology perspective (Wright & Herrin, 1990); that is, the parts are "indistinguishable from the wholes in which they are embedded" (Wright & Herrin, 1990, p. 8). This concept was used to examine the family and work ecosystems. Altman, Werner, Oxley, and Haggard (1987) recommended using these three important principles as aids to research design: (a) "focus[ing] on temporal-process-oriented features," (b) "seek[ing] a holistic approach" to the study, and (c) "appreciat[ing] the contribution of the multiple perspectives of observers and participants" (Altman et al., 1987, p. 510).

From the transactional view point, change is not caused but is "inherent in the system" (Altman & Rogoff, 1987, p. 25). Continuously changing relationships, or transactions, must be studied before the features of the event can be understood (Altman & Rogoff, 1987). Time and change are viewed as interconnected. Adaptation to change can be arranged and rearranged in unpredictable ways. This unpredictability did not prevent general themes from emerging from the restructuring event in this study. Atypical themes are also of interest to the transactional world view as they are to qualitative data analysis. A central philosophical proposition of this world view is: "phenomena comprise inseparable and mutually defining" (Altman et al., 1987, p. 513) aspects of the whole. Developing a study built on these principles and propositions enhanced the ability to recognize unique themes as they appeared during the research process.

Participant experiences and their interpretation of these experiences within their world (Patton, 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984)) was the focus of this phenomenological research. When using this perspective, researchers query themselves about their own perceptions of the situation and their understandings of the experiences of others. As researcher, my personal discoveries and the resulting insights into the project became part of the data analysis.

Application of ethnographic techniques would indicate participant observation as the primary research method (Patton, 1990). Rather than observe the culture of the state agency, other ethnographic techniques such as document analysis and in-depth worker interviews were used to ask about it. Since dramatic organizational modifications often change the culture, part of perceiving the transactions between environments and individual adaptation included understanding how the agency's culture may have changed. This change may be related to the restructuring, individual reactions to the change, or other, as yet, unidentified transactions.

Hermeneutics is the "interpretative understanding, or meaning, with special attention [given] to context and original purpose" (Patton, 1990, p. 84). Such interpretation is "a research and theoretical strategy" (Sprey, 1988, p. 883). The researcher inquires into the fundamental quality of the family environment (Sprey, 1988). In this study, hermeneutics was used to aid in understanding individual adaptation to organizational change within a historical and cultural context. A description of the history and culture of the agency was gleaned from public organizational documents and worker interviews.

In summary, holism is the overarching concept within the transactional human ecological perspective. Individuals and families are perceived as unique, and transactions among their various environments are perceived as interdependent and interconnected. Change, time, and space are intrinsic components of this holistic world view. The principles and propositions of a transactional view of human ecology indicate the appropriate research methods.

Studies Using Human Ecology Perspective

In the following discussion, investigations utilizing a human ecology framework to study family and work issues are reviewed. The literature review illustrates that the human ecology framework has only recently been applied to the family and work field.

Small and Riley's (1990) study measured work spillover into family life. Their challenge to other researchers was to study work-family *linkages*, not conflicts. Their study implicitly used a human ecology framework and was based largely on Bronfenbrenner and Crouter's (1982) and Crouter, Huston, and Robbins' (1983) research about time, space, and psychological spillover of family and work. Kanter (1977a) and Piotrkowski's (1979) research also influenced Small and Riley's (1990) selection of the processes to include in their instrument. The four studies referenced by Small and Riley (1990) identified negative linkages between work and family. For example, when both spouses worked, families needed child care. Quality, affordable child care was not always available to those who needed it thus creating a negative link between work and family.

Small and Riley's (1990) sample of 130 male bank executives and their wives responded to a questionnaire about work spillover as part of a larger study of work stress and family life. Small and Riley (1990) measured negative influences in one direction. This study of adaptation to organizational restructuring examined features of the whole event. These features could be negative or positive and could flow in either direction.

Occupational stress was the topic of many articles on work and family. Marshall (1986) pointed out that stress was only one side of the whole system. She used ecological theory "to achieve complex understandings of the environmental and personal pressures which contributed to individual experiences of stress" (Marshall, 1986, p. 271). Marshall (1986) used the whole work-family system as her unit of analysis and abandoned "bounded notions of cause and effect" (p. 273) for a more circular way of viewing relationships.

Marshall (1986) used her *self* as a data source because of her previous experiences with the particular occupational groups included in the study. Further, she explained how researchers often unconsciously and unintentionally adopt the norms and values of their subjects. Marshall (1986) suggested this potential bias be handled through the researchers' knowledge of their own selective perceptions. She described how intuition was reliable and valuable in research by comparing her intuition to insights grounded in the data.

Marshall (1986) included a caveat about comparing organizational change to individual change that had particular implications for this study. She cautioned: "the organization's ability and needs to stay the same were underestimated" (Marshall, 1986, p. 284). What was intended by management as organizational change could become only a new face on the same old behaviors.

In sum, these articles provided examples of how the family ecology perspective could be used when studying family and work environments. Small and Riley (1990) limited their research to negative work-to-family spillover. Marshall (1986), on the other hand, used the whole family-work system as her focus. She also included her own observations as part of the data.

Studies of Downsizing

Wide-spread corporate downsizing occurred frequently during the 1980s (Heenan, 1989). Many large, bureaucratic organizations decided that to stay competitive and make a profit, they had to cut their work force (Tomasko, 1987). The articles reviewed here concentrated on studies examining the influence of downsizing on workers rather than on organizations because this study focused on the individual worker and the family and work environments after downsizing.

London (1987) investigated employee development at AT&T following downsizing. One change that affected managers' development was that increases in self-managing, quality-of-work-life groups meant managers had to change their management style to a more cooperative, participative one. London (1987) concluded that employee development must be tied to the strategic design of the company to ensure employees acquired the skills and managers the management styles necessary to carry out the company's strategic plan. One of the structural outcomes of downsizing at the state agency under investigation in the present study was the implementation of self-managed work groups. London's (1987) research provided questions for the interview guide and insight into emerging themes about self-managed work groups during data analysis.

Ashford (1988) used responses to a survey questionnaire to study individual employee adaptation to organizational change during the divestiture of the Bell system. Her research question concerned the uncertainty and the disruption instigated by the organizational change and its affect on individuals' use of specific coping resources. She found uncertainty and disruption increased stress for those individuals experiencing feelings of lack of personal control and those who lacked tolerance for ambiguity.

Olson and Tetrick's (1988) representative sample was from employees completing an annual employee opinion survey at a large midwestern company. They found restructuring was statistically significant for predicting satisfaction with job security. No significant restructuring influence was found for company/job satisfaction, role clarity, role overload, or relations with the supervisor. An important conclusion was "to understand change, earlier organizational states must be compared with later states" (Olson & Tetrick, 1988, p. 382). Following Olson and Tetrick (1988), document analysis was used in this study to build a historical description of the restructuring and downsizing at the agency.

Tombaugh and White (1990) studied the survivors of downsizing at a large petrochemical plant in the southwest. They found survivors experienced increases in work-related stress. This stress increased workers' dissatisfaction with the company and increased their intention to seek employment elsewhere. The authors stated that management did not provide appropriate leadership, clear decisions, open communication, clearly stated organizational policies and procedures, and definitions of performance standards after the change. Olson and Tetrick's (1988) had found neither workers' dissatisfaction with the company or their intention to leave statistically significant. Therefore, Tombaugh and White's (1990) hypotheses about management practices (appropriate leadership, clear decisions, open communication) may be an important consideration when investigating workers' adaptation after downsizing.

Studies of the Family-Work Interface

The literature on family and work had increased since the mid-1970s when Kanter (1977b) issued her call for more research. Recent literature that examined family and work as related systems rather than as separate spheres (Kanter, 1977b) is reviewed here.

Jackson, Zedeck, and Summers (1985) examined shift work and family life disruptions. These researchers found the literature concerning work and nonwork relationships disconnected and incomplete. One of their goals was to contribute to "understanding the processes through which work affects life outside of work" (Jackson et al., 1985, p. 575).

Jackson et al. (1985) sampled 100 randomly selected employees from a large power and gas utility. The employee's spouse or live-in partner was also asked to answer the questionnaire. Jackson et al. (1985) found that despite the implications in previous literature, work and nonwork worlds were *not* psychologically separate. Further, while workers were dissatisfied with the amount of time available for interacting with their family, family members felt their time together was quality time.

Jackson et al. (1985) also found workers' emotional reactions to the job carried over to the family but structural job demands did not. The only statistically significant structural components were commuting time and a spouse's dissimilar work schedule.

Voydanoff (1988) viewed the family-work interface as conflictual. Her study was important because she considered psychological carry over as bidirectional in contrast to spilling over from work to family. She also noted that carry over could be either positive or negative. Bidirectional and positive/negative spillover were changes in the way family/work carry over had been conceptualized.

Nock and Kingston (1984) found the "family work day" (p. 333) an important concept in their study of how people balanced their work and family environments. They used data from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn & Staines, 1979) to develop three dimensions of the family work day. The first dimension of the family work day was the number of hours the couple spent in paid work. The more hours they spent in the work environment, the less time they had for the family environment, and vice versa. The second dimension was the scheduling of work time and was used to estimate the amount of time couples could choose to spend together. The last dimension, off-scheduling, was the amount of time only one spouse engaged in paid work.

Burke (1986) concluded that the changing disposition of society had increased interest in work and family research. He suggested a general systems approach to the study of the work-family interface and advocated a more holistic view of the process. Important for the present study was an essential feature from his holistic perspective: when studying families and work with an open-systems lens, researchers must consider the general economic climate at the time of the study.

In summary, research into the family-work connection has increased during the last 15 years. Much of that research has pointed to the pernicious effects of one environment on the other, especially of work experiences on family life. Other drawbacks are psychological impacts on workers and their families. Very few studies to this point in time have examined individuals and their work and family environments as part of an interconnected whole as did this research.

Studies Using Qualitative Methods

Stacey (1990) used ethnographic, participant-observation to investigate how people in their everyday-lived experiences negotiated their future behaviors without clear role models. Participants were designing their own reconstituted families as they underwent turbulent life changes. Stacey (1990) suggested that what evolved was not what was expected by the participants.

Stacey (1990) discussed the downward mobility of wives and children following divorce. Her sample was located in the Silicon Valley surrounding San Jose, California. The computer industry had initially generated an improved standard of living and raised expectations for those it employed. When the intense competitive nature of the industry forced companies in the Silicon Valley to downsize in the late 1970s, workers discovered they had little choice but to decrease their standard of living. Families disrupted by divorce were at a further disadvantage because women tended to hold the lower paying and less stable jobs in the computer industry (Stacey, 1990).

During the initial contact with each of 2 participants and her kin group, Stacey (1990) used formal interviews of two to three hours in length. At least two such interviews were scheduled. Later, less formal interviews continued over the course of the study. As Stacey became increasingly involved in the study and in the participants' lives, she interviewed, in-depth, 28 kin and friends of her participants. She also attended numerous social events, family gatherings, and religious occasions with her participants. Such informal occasions also contributed to her data.

Piotrkowski's (1979) study of work and family life considered the connections between family processes and events at family members' work places. Her naturalistic study of working class and lower-middle-class families met a need for knowledge about the work and family connection. The choice of an inductive and exploratory research design, called "generating close knowledge" (Piotrkowski, 1979, p. 289), allowed her to enter the research experience with few preconceptions. It enabled her to gather as much information about people's real-life experiences as was manageable.

Piotrkowski (1979) chose Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory approach to qualitative research. She confronted criticisms of small samples by stating that critics are confused about the research objectives in qualitative research. She noted that qualitative methods are not used to generalize from the data or to find statistical significance.

Kanter (1977a), for academic and personal reasons, studied men and women in corporations. She was involved with projects creating new organizational forms. Her personal belief was that structures had to change before human problems could be solved. Further, through a feminist perspective, she was concerned that placing women in management positions in unchanged corporations would make no difference in women's incorporation into the corporate world. Kanter (1977a) primarily used ethnographic, qualitative research methods in her search for alternative organizational forms, though more quantitative methods, such as surveys, were also used.

Unlike Piotrkowski (1979), Kanter (1977a) used qualitative research to further develop an existing theory. She envisioned her research method as a joining of theory and rich description. The data for her book was gathered over several years. Kanter's (1977a) study contributed to the understanding of how the social reality of corporations impact the lives of people who work there. She explained that no matter how insensible people's behaviors seemed to outsiders, they made sense given the people's organizational situation.

Kanter's (1977a) use of an intensive review of a broad spectrum of literature was integral to her study. Throughout the study, she went back and forth between the literature and the field as recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

In summary, the literature revealed that researchers of work and family issues had begun to use the family ecology theory to aid their investigations. A holistic examination of entire work and family environments still seemed to be lacking. Multiple research methods were used by the investigators. Several researchers used ethnography and in-depth interviews to gather their data.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Research Design

The transactional human ecological perspective was used to give order to and insight into the many viewpoints of the participants and the researcher. Using this perspective focused observations and inquiries onto the environmental and personal components that impacted individual adaptation to organizational restructuring. This perspective purported "elements are always indistinguishable from the wholes in which they are embedded" (Wright & Herrin, 1990, p. 8) and change is continuous (Altman & Rogoff, 1987).

Grounded theory was chosen as the specific qualitative research method (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Strauss, 1987). This method met the human ecology perspective requirement for finding the whole in context and during change. Qualitative methods guided by transactional human ecology opened the way for me to observe the many possible ways environments and individuals interacted. Wright and Herrin (1990) recommend "methodological pluralism" (p. 6) when using the transactional world view in human ecology. To accomplish this purpose, workers were interviewed in depth and public organizational documents were examined for insight into the structure of the work environment.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) "is a style of doing qualitative analysis" (Strauss, 1987, p. 5) rather than a specific method. Strauss and Corbin (1990) maintained that specificity is important to grounded theory methods. The methods were built upon concepts of continuous change and actors free to make choices according to their own perceptions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Important to this study was the premise that theory is "*systematically* obtained from social research [data]" (Glaser, 1978, p. 2, emphasis added). Guidelines for developing theory grounded in the data of a phenomenon dictated the orderly procedures to be followed by researchers using the methods (Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987). Such guidelines are essential if this style of doing qualitative analysis is to be effective (Strauss, 1987).

Grounded theory is a *transactional system* of analysis that focuses on the interactions of events (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Using it increased the theory-to-method fit of this study. Context, transactions, and temporality (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) are components of the grounded theory transactional system as they are of transactional human ecology. In summary, grounded theory is an inductive approach to letting a substantive theory emerge from a systematic, transactional analysis of the data.

Point of View

Max Weber used the term *verstehen*[1] (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) to describe the task of understanding what is behind other people's actions. Understanding what is behind actions is crucial because as W. I. and Dorothy S. Thomas (1928) stated, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (p. 81). Bronfenbrenner (1988) added: "Real situations *not* perceived are also real in their consequences" (p. xiv).

The goal of understanding is to focus attention on the meanings the participants ascribe to the events they experience. In qualitative research, the investigator depends, in part, on personal insight into the masses of collected data to achieve an understanding of another's experience of the world. Thus, the researcher is an instrument through which data are gathered and analyzed (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In this respect, qualitative

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[1]*Verstehen* assumes humans are different from natural science subjects; therefore, different research methods are needed. Verstehen is defined as the individual meaning each person ascribes to the world (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

research is compatible with the propositions and assumptions of transactional human ecology (see Chapter II).

As the researcher in this study, I had direct and personal contact with the people I investigated. Any interpretation of the observed phenomena came from informed analysis of the data. This informed analysis consisted of knowledge of the transactional human ecology perspective, the literature reviewed, the research questions, the data collected and analyzed, and personal assumptions and experiences.

Selection of Participants

Site Selection

The aim of this research was to investigate transactions between the family and work environments and their impact on individual adaptation to organizational change. Participants were from a state agency which had recently undergone organizational restructuring. They were from a single division of the agency.

The key concept about organizational change in this study was restructuring followed by downsizing. For an organization to qualify for the study, the number of its employees had to be reduced following restructuring. Another requirement for participation in the study was that employee reduction had occurred within the previous 6 to 12 months.

Sample Selection

Actual participants were the employees in the division. Bubolz and Sontag (in press) specify consideration of individuals and their interactions with other family members and the family system as the primary criteria for human ecology research. Interactions with fellow workers were added to the specifications for this study.

The workers were from the same organizational level. This requirement was made because, whereas individuals involved in the same organizational culture were unique, they shared similarities with others in that culture (Akin & Hopelain, 1986; Marshall, 1986). Further, Akin and Lee (1990) showed that workers at the same level shared a consensus about the components of good work in their work group. Additionally, these workers probably shared some common adaptation strategies and ways of transacting with their work environment that could facilitate or hinder adaptation (Marshall, 1986).

There were 18 employees in the same department and on the same level. Fifteen were interviewed. A detailed description of the sample is included in Chapter IV.

Data Collection Process and Procedures

In-depth Interviews

The purpose of the in-depth interview was to gather data. Contained within the data was the potential for the discovery of the meanings behind participants' perceptions (Patton, 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) of the restructuring and their later adaptation. The assumption was that the perspective of others is meaningful and can be made explicit (Patton, 1990). This type of interview provided the opportunity to develop an understanding of the participants' everyday experiences.

In-depth interviews as one-on-one conversations between the researcher and the participant allowed openness and freedom in the discussion (Patton, 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Time was needed to establish rapport and to set a relaxed climate for the interview to encourage openness. An interview guide to help focus the discussion was used to garner the specific information required from the participant (Denzin, 1989; Patton, 1990). At the same time, a spontaneous conversation was developed with the participant as suggested by Patton (1990). The researcher, not the interview guide, was the main research instrument in these interviews (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Mechanics of the interview. Interviews were conducted in an enclosed room instead of a cubical at the agency. The interviews were no longer than 2 hours because participants had work requirements and could only give that much time. At the beginning of the interview, the project was explained, the participant was asked to supply certain demographic information (see Appendix A), and the information was recorded on the data sheet. This approach was intended to give the participant an opportunity to relax between the introductions and research explanation and the interview itself.

Any follow-up to the initial interview would be by telephone. A follow-up would center upon areas of information that needed expansion. The possibility of a telephone follow-up was explained during the description of the research project in the introduction to the interview.

Interview guide. In this study, an outline of the topics to be discussed was used (Denzin, 1989; Patton, 1990) rather that an interview guide consisting of specific questions (see Appendix C for the guide). The outline was similar to a checklist and was intended to make sure that all the issues were addressed with each participant. Common areas were discussed with all participants (Patton, 1990).

Strengths of in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews permit a researcher to generate data from a larger sample than participant observation would allow (Patton, 1990). In this study, the participant's world was entered indirectly and an attempt was made to view the world as the participant did (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Weaknesses of in-depth interviews. Because the data were conversations between researcher and participant, they were subject to all the weaknesses of any conversation. For example, the participant may intentionally present situations in socially acceptable ways. An unskilled qualitative researcher may not have the ability to generate the quality of data needed for the study (Patton, 1990). The quality of the data depends on, among other things, the researcher's questioning and listening skills (Patton, 1990). Pilot interviews served as an orientation to the project and heightened awareness of potential problems.

People often do not behave as they say they do (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Actual behavior in this study was not observed, thus, the difference could not be known without direct observations. Further, people talk and behave differently in diverse situations (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Lack of observation except during the in-depth interviews delimited understanding of the context. Further observation could help with the interpretation of the participant's perceptions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Document Review

As a public institution, certain of the agency's documents were available for examination. Documents for 1990 and 1991 were reviewed. The purpose of this content analysis was to provide data about the larger organization (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Kanter, 1977a) and to lend insight into its culture (Marshall, 1986). The documents provided the public version of the restructuring.

Personal Viewpoint

Rather than try to suspend personal values, judgments, and viewpoints (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), they were acknowledged up front and were used to enhance the research process (Altman & Rogoff, 1987). A conscious attempt was made to listen to participants without judging. Some workers thrived in the altered environment while others did not. It was important to remain open to hearing and asking about the feelings behind what participants said in order that a clear picture of the situation could develop.

Environmental transactions as well as personal ones were important to the study. An influence on the ability to see the total picture came from the literature. A significant amount of the literature suggested family and work environments were adversaries (see Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz, & Beutell, 1989;

Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983; Loerch, 1989; MacEven & Barling, 1988; Voydanoff, 1988). The literature frequently concentrated on failures in the family/work interface, forgetting that the resources available for family use often came to it through family members' participation in paid work. Workers received benefits from participation in both environments despite the conflicts they experienced.

Finally, extending the literature review as new categories and themes emerged from the data facilitated the ability to hear and see all that was available from the data. At the very least, points were found in the literature that served to increase understanding of an issue. In summary, personal viewpoints that affected the interpretation of the data were documented as thoroughly as possible.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to discover adaptational processes to organizational restructuring. The emergence of a grounded theory of adaptation to organizational reorganization derived from the descriptive data of the study was anticipated. This theory would be generated from the data rather than previous assumptions or research.

The key elements of generating grounded theory are collecting, coding, and analyzing data (Glaser, 1978). The entire process is slow because "theoretical realizations come with growth and maturity in the data" (Glaser, 1978, p. 18). Coding and analysis occurs simultaneously with data collection when grounded theory procedures are used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Three types of coding are recommended (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open coding is the first step (Strauss, 1987). Data are broken down and examined for recurring themes. At this stage, the participants' own words frequently denote a theme. For example, several data entry workers said they learned how to use their computer program by "playing around with it." This phrase became an initial code.

Once open codes are established, comparisons are made between the codes. Similar codes are grouped into themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Following the breaking down of data with open coding, they are "put back together in new ways" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96) using axial coding.

Axial codes identify a category from the grouped themes of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A category represents a specific phenomenon and includes its context, interactions, and consequences. Both inductive and deductive processes are required to generate axial codes

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The basic difference between open and axial coding is that axial coding moves toward discovering and relating categories to the emerging theory.

The last coding technique is selective coding. This coding is the interpretive step where a grounded theory takes shape. At this point in the research, a few categories have emerged as central to explaining and understanding the phenomenon being studied. The task in selective coding is to relate these pivotal categories to other categories in a systematic way (Strauss, 1987).

The steps taken to accomplish selective coding are:

1. developing a story line - "conceptualization of a descriptive story about the central phenomenon of study" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 119);
2. relating subcategories to pivotal ones;
3. discovering relationships between categories based on their properties and dimensions;
4. validating those relationships against the data, and;
5. filling in categories - further refinement and/or development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

This study was a case study because participants were from a single cite. The in-depth interviews were conducted during the first 2 weeks of December 1991. Two interviews were scheduled each day. A transcriber was selected who had the speed and skill necessary to produce the printed copy of each interview the day following the interview. Having a printed copy the next day would make it possible to compare the emerging codes to the accumulating data. This concurrent data collection and analysis is the basis for grounded theory generation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). By using constant comparison, concepts could be refined as the data collection process continued. Also, interview questions could be dropped and added as needed to assist the refinement of concepts and the building of theory; this process reflects theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

When the transcriber became ill, I was unable to replace him until late December. Therefore, I depended on hand written notes when I made comparisons. These notes proved inadequate for the demands of the process. I was able to determine that the workers' family involvement seemed to be inadequately reported and adjusted the interview guide (see Appendix C, Final Interview Guide). Because data were not constantly compared and analyzed during the collection process, it was decided that a precise grounded theory study was not possible.

A change in procedure was indicated and I chose to integrate Taylor and Bogdan's (1984) method of qualitative data analysis with that of Strauss and Corbin (1990). With this synthesis, I hoped to fill in gaps created by applying only Strauss and Corbin's (1990) procedures to the analysis of data from the single cite when constant comparison was not present. The rest of this section explains the actual procedures used to analyze the study.

The data consisted of 15 interviews. Each interview averaged 25 single-spaced type-written pages. These interviews were read 3 times and then analyzed line by line for codes. The coding process is a "systematic way of developing and refining interpretations of the data" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 136). Line-by-line analysis involves examining each phrase in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The most important rule of coding in both Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Taylor and Bogdan (1984) is that the codes fit the data.

The initial codes were condensed into themes (see italicized headings in the coding scheme in Appendix D). Then the data were sorted by the coded themes. Each page of each transcript was numbered and labelled with the participant's code name. Each line on each page was numbered beginning with the numeral one. The data representing each code was cut from the transcripts. Each piece of cut-out data included the code name and page and line number. If necessary, it would be simple to return to the exact location in the transcript from which the data came.

Once the data were assembled according to theme, the storyline (see Chapter IV) was developed using the data from the coded themes as a guide. The storyline evolved and contradictions in the data became apparent. Further analysis led to interpretations and conclusions from the data. These conclusions were checked against the data and those that were supported appear in Chapter V.

As themes developed, additional literature about these themes was examined. For example, Weiss (1990) interviewed professional men in a suburb of Boston. These men seemed to experience traditional role separation of family members. Weiss (1990) described how men experiencing stress at work managed the transmission of these experiences to the family as they sought social support. These men intended to gradually and selectively divulge what was happening at work but the information often leaked into the family environment in an unplanned manner. Weiss (1990) suggested that men may compartmentalize stress between work and family roles. Another key reference was Pearlin and McCall's (1990) research examining the seeking of social support. They described the steps in the process from job stress to receiving social support at home. Men withheld information about work stress and complained when their wives' gave advice about job behavior. Women tried to give unrestricted support to their husbands. Social support was interactive and contained a reciprocal quality. Pearlin and McCall (1990) said *meaning shaping* was a key function of social support.

The final check of the coding scheme developed from the data followed a meeting I had with the participants. On February 10, 1992, I explained the findings of the study to participants. Five men and 3 women attended the presentation. Participants confirmed that the themes and conclusions reflected what they had told me. They seemed relieved that someone had heard their experiences. They asked if I would be willing to present the findings to management if they could arrange it. I said I would. The meeting with participants provided further evidence that the organization and interpretation of the data presented in Chapter IV reflected the experiences of the employees interviewed for this study.

Chapter IV

Results

Transactional approaches to research start with an event (Altman, 1986; Wright & Herrin, 1990). The event in this study was the restructuring of a public agency. The human ecology perspective (Bubolz & Sontag, in press) was used to explore how ecosystem characteristics contributed to individual employees' experience of the restructuring.

Two levels of analysis (Marshall, 1986) were important to the study. One was the macro level. In this study, both societal and organizational issues were examined because the agency change was influenced by larger societal events. Further changes in one of these would influence the pattern of change in the other. Public agency documents supplied the macro data.

The second level of analysis was the micro level which was represented by employees at work. Division employees' stories of their experiences during and after the restructuring provided the majority of the data for the study. Participants' reality, from a transactional human ecology perspective, was examined as an "open process of becoming" (Rosnow & Georgoudi, 1986, p. 3). The changes employees experienced during the restructuring were not static but part of an ongoing, incessantly changing process that fashioned the setting of their everyday lives.

The transactional human ecology perspective includes the role of the researcher (Doherty, 1986). As the researcher, my own historical and cultural background was located in relationships between micro/macro systems and those of the employees, the organization, and the larger society. My fundamental aspiration was to understand the meanings of what I discovered. The many ecosystems of all those involved in the event or the study served as the frameworks which were used to reveal the meaning of people's actions.

Employees in one division of the agency volunteered to be interviewed. The 15 interviews provided the basis for this contextual depiction of individual adaptation to organizational restructuring.

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 10 women and 5 men from one division within the agency. The division had 18 professional staff members and was 6 employees short of full staffing at the time of the interviews. Inclusion in the study was voluntary, and 3 women from the agency division chose not to participate. On the sign-up sheet, they cited "not available" as their reason. Cadice[1], the division manager, anticipated further budget cuts would abolish those six positions.

Table 4.1: Age and Gender of Participants

AGE AND GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS		
AGE	**FEMALE***	**MALE**
60	1	
53	1	
52		1
51	1	
49	1	
46		1
45		1
43		1
42	1	
41	1	
40	1	1
35	1	
28	1	
TOTAL	9	5
*One woman chose not to give her age.		

[1]All names used in the text are the creation of the researcher.

All participants but one woman were employed by the old[2] agency.

The ages of participants ranged from 28 to 60. Four women and 4 men were in their 40s, and 3 women and one man were in their early 50s. Table 4.1 illustrates the age break down by gender.

Three of the 10 women and 4 of the 5 men were married; 6 of the 7 married employees had children in the home (Table 4.2). One woman was divorced, and 3 women and one man were separated from their spouses. Three women had never married.

Table 4.2: Marital Status

MARITAL STATUS		
	FEMALE	**MALE**
Married*	3	4
Divorced	1	0
Separated+	3	1
Never Married	3	0
Totals	10	5
*Six of the married participants had children living in the home.		
+The separated man had children living with their mother.		

[2]In this paper, *old*, when used with such words as agency or structure, refers to the agency before the reorganization. *New*, in the same context, refers to the agency after the restructuring. Participants used old and new when they referred to the agency.

One woman had never worked for the agency before being hired in February 1991. Five women and 3 men joined the old agency in 1989 or 1990. One woman was hired in 1973 and the rest in the mid-1980s.

One woman had been with the agency the longest; she was first hired in 1973. She was a lead analyst in the new organization. Lead analysts were expected to have very specialized knowledge in a particular area along with competent leadership abilities. There was only one lead position in the division. Two women and one man held principal analyst positions, and the rest of the staff held associate analyst positions.

Seven women and 3 men held masters degrees, and one woman had a bachelors degree. One woman and one man had doctorates, and one woman and one man had "all but dissertation" status. The division manager had a masters degree and was working on her doctorate.

Public Information on the Restructuring: The View from Agency Documents

Management theorists believe that during restructuring a symbolic organizational *vision* (Kanter, 1983; Walton, 1986) is necessary to provide needed focus on the future and to steer the change efforts. The vision is a "brief and clear description of where an organization is going ... It must be understood and accepted throughout the organization" (Kotler, 1992, p. 42). For the restructuring to be successful, the symbolic vision must become part of each employee's vision for the organization (Senge, 1990). According to change management theory, an inspiring vision can help build commitment to the restructuring organization (Kanter, 1989).

A description of the official account of the vision and the participants' initial interpretation of that vision can assist in understanding the context of the agency. The context of the participants is also important. The way participants' describe themselves assists in understanding their context.

The *Vision*: From Agency Documents

A review of talks by Jackson, the chief executive officer, newsletters, and other agency documents helped define the rationale behind the restructuring. In 1989, the previous chief executive officer commissioned a comprehensive study of the agency. The aim of the study "was to identify improved decisionmaking processes, management practices, and organizational frameworks" (Price Waterhouse report to the agency, December 1989, p. I-1). Price Waterhouse, a Washington, DC consulting firm, won the competitive bid for the project. The consultants recommended the agency undergo a comprehensive reconceptualization. The change was considered necessary to enable the agency to serve its clients[3] in the future.

For decades, the agency had enforced regulations mandated by the state and federal governing bodies. This process worked because the various client groups were basically homogeneous but economic[4], political, and demographic[5] changes occurred during the 1980s. The year before the reorganization of the agency, the state's governor, the agency's cabinet-level secretary, the agency's chief executive officer, and the head of the agency's board of directors changed (from the "[Chief Executive Officer's][6] Annual Report for [the state] for 1989-90").

Using a systemic model of organizations as the basis for their recommendations, the consultants advised the agency to become more information-based and to install fewer

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[3]The term *client* is used to refer to the groups who use the agency's services. Any further description of its clients would identify the agency.

[4]Manufacturing jobs were decreasing while service jobs were expected to increase by 45 % by 1995 in the state (Price Waterhouse data).

[5]According to data in the Price Waterhouse report, the state's population was 2.3 % Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.6 % Hispanic, 1.9 % Native American, 24.6 % Black, and 63.1 % white.

[6]Words in titles that would identify the agency are omitted. In this instance, *Chief Executive Officer* is substituted for the actual title of the CEO.

managerial levels. Such changes would enable the agency to better serve its clients and help them meet the agency-identified challenges of the 21st century. In the future, the agency needed to provide leadership, innovation, and direction.

As Jackson, the CEO, announced the official beginning of the restructuring on September 5, 1990, he reiterated that employees had been involved since July 1990 "in the process of redefining the role of the [agency]" (letter to employees dated September 5, 1990). The work of management theorist, Tom Peters (document dated January 14, 1992 called "[Agency:] Goals, Strategic Direction and Operating Plan") influenced Jackson's vision for the agency. In fact, Jackson used two principles from Peters and Austin's (1985) book, A Passion for Excellence, as guideposts for the restructuring. Those precepts stated that nurture of the organization's clients and continuous innovation were necessary for an agency's long-term survival. Jackson added a third component, "a deep and abiding interest in and concern for the people who work with us" (speech in October 1990) to Peters and Austin's (1985) basic precepts.

The CEO stressed that the restructuring process was dynamic and ongoing. The principal work emphasis of the reorganized agency would be innovative research (1989-90 [CEO's] Annual Report). Present employees were asked to continue contributing to the re-defining process. To aid them, Jackson articulated the mission of the *new* agency. The mission was to "improve the delivery of essential ... services" (letter to employees dated September 5, 1990) thereby increasing the desired outcomes for constituents. Also in that letter, Jackson stated the organizational goals for the reconceptualization:

- focus resources on achieving mission
- increase individual creativity, autonomy and responsibility
- reduce bureaucratic layers
- make staffing flexible and efficient
- make more efficient use of time and tax dollars
- reduce services and staff not deemed essential

Jackson cut non-essential positions in the fall of 1990. Employees staffing those posts were scheduled for lay off. "Any agency can abolish a position when it determines the position is not needed. ... The difference here is the extent of the changes and the number of positions." (quoted from a flyer, "Redesign Update," October 31, 1990).

New staff positions in the reorganized agency would reflect the innovative research focus. Those posts would be: lead analyst (the top level requiring specialized knowledge and leadership skills); principal analyst; associate analyst; and, assistant analyst. State personnel regulations required that the new positions be advertised according to standard state procedure. Agency employees holding those non-essential positions were to apply for the new positions in competition with non-agency people. According to "Redesign Update" (December 7, 1990), an informational flyer, the time table for the hiring process established in October needed to be extended from December 1, 1990 to February 1, 1991. Jackson, quoted in the flyer, said, "The new time line should allow us to accomplish this task [fair selection of staff] and, I hope, ease the transition process for all involved."

In December 1990, Jackson named the transition team. That team consisted of four of the newly appointed division managers. Jackson charged the team with arranging "a smooth-as-possible changeover from the old era to the new." (quoted from the December 7, 1990, "Redesign Update"). The state's administration announced an early retirement incentive that would be an alternative to lay-off for those agency employees who were eligible. The December 20, 1990, "Redesign Update" included an explanation of the early retirement plan.

In January 1991, 7 employees of the agency filed suit in the state capital Circuit Court to stop the reorganization ("Redesign Update," January 30, 1991.) The Circuit Court judge sympathized with the employees but found Jackson conducted the reorganization within the bounds of state law.

By February 1, 1991, the agency had completed 80% to 85% percent of the employment process ("Redesign Update," February 1, 1991). In that flyer, Jackson announced that people would know their alternatives between February 19 and February 22, 1991. Beginning on February 19, 1991, those employees whose positions had ended and who did not secure a position in the new structure had 14 days before their lay-off began. Jackson expressed his regret that the change process had been so difficult, but affirmed his belief that the new organization would be effective for achieving the goals of the agency ("Redesign Update," February 1, 1991).

The last two "Redesign Updates," dated February 11 and February 26, 1991, included lists of the new employees of the agency. Logistical information, such as moving arrangements, was also included. During this period, Jackson suspended recruitment for a total of 18 positions pending further evaluation and the potential for more budget cuts.

Eleven months after the old organization officially was changed, the agency's management team issued a document (dated January 14, 1992) containing work guidelines. Teams would address the issues of the agency and would be the basic unit for accomplishing the work of the agency. The teams would be interdisciplinary consisting of people from various areas of professional expertise and knowledge.

In the January 14, 1992 document, Jackson delineated a work-process framework for distributing agency resources. He outlined three types of work that would occupy employees. First, *project work* was the job of the interdisciplinary teams and included a completion date. Second, *function work* was ongoing, critical to the department, and frequently administrative. Third, a *functional project* was ongoing work accomplished through team work.

Central to interdisciplinary team work was the "Idea of Merit." Requests for agency services would be submitted as an "Idea Paper" on a standardized form. The management council then selected the *ideas* that would help the agency achieve its goals. Jackson detailed the criteria for selecting ideas. Once the management council approved it, the idea was explained in a Request for Proposal (RFP), or statement of need, that was sent to the division managers.

Once the management council issued a RFP, division managers responded to the RFP with a proposal. A proposal explained how the team would respond to the identified need if awarded the project.

Team members could come from any of the divisions within the agency and would exhibit a variety of knowledge bases. When a division manager was awarded a project, the project team developed an extensive work plan. A work plan included an implementation plan, a budget, and time lines.

When the management council approved the work plan, the project team began work.

The January 14, 1992 document outlined three classes of teams and the work and number of members for each type of team. A brief description of teamwork and how teams were expected to operate within the agency was included in the document as a guide for employees. Expectations for project team reports and evaluations of the product and the team process were described. Jackson expected as much as 80% of an employee's time to be spent on team project work:

> Through this team approach, we have an opportunity to work together to create quality products--products that can be translated into effective practices capable of addressing the challenges that lie before us.

In 1990, the state senate directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to review the agency's organization and management. After the reorganization started, the reviewers switched their focus to the reorganization. The Commission conducted its research in May, 1991, and issued the report in September 1991. A summary of the Commission's report follows.

Commission Reviews the Reorganization

The commission found that the scope of the reorganization was without precedent in recent state government. Two hundred eighty-eight positions, or 64%, were abolished. Two hundred twenty-eight new positions were created. In the end, 58 employees were laid off. Work was now accomplished by replacing individual work assignments with interdisciplinary project team assignments.

There were three major findings from the Commission's review. First, the competitive hiring process hindered the reorganization process and the ongoing operations of the agency. The commission said that the competitive hiring process had cost the agency the *goodwill* of its employees. According to the commission, other changes in staffing, including pay raises for some of the hired-back employees, offset any cost savings generated by the downsizing.

Second, the Commission identified pivotal concerns about the agency's new procedures. Those that were still a consideration during this study are listed below:

- low employee morale and trust of management
- an inefficient method for assignment of projects
- the complexity of team operations
- effectiveness of the new service delivery system
- lack of overall focus and planning
- lack of information about daily operations at the [agency] (quoted from page II of the summary.)

In May 1991, the Commission found 10% of employees said employee morale was good, and 12% said trust of management was good. Additionally, 34% of employees felt the goal of lessening bureaucracy had been accomplished with the reorganization.

At the time of the Commission's review, it took the management council up to 7 weeks to make team project assignments. Also, 140 RFPs existed in May, 1991. The Commission judged the competitive nature of the process counter-productive. It fostered the potential for duplicating efforts. The numerous, independent project teams might also reduce internal communications and blur the big picture of the agency's focus according to the Commission report.

The third finding centered on the agency's intent to reduce its monitoring function and to focus on results. The Commission concluded that this function might have implications for accountability to the client and to the governmental funding sources. While using the RFP process seemed to show the agency's willingness to trade timeliness for quality of single products, the Commission judged that the process avoided the issue of the quality and timeliness of overall service delivery. The Commission recommended several ways Jackson could improve the agency's reorganization:

- sharply curb the RFP process until an analysis of the process to date has been performed to determine its appropriateness
- use an internal audit to monitor the management of projects, team-based operations, and daily work processes
- reevaluate staffing in some areas of the agency
- develop a detailed implementation plan explaining how the reorganized agency will operate; the plan should include more than the vision (from the Commission's report, pp. V-VI).

A composite of employees' initial perceptions of the reorganization was similar to the public version. Those perceptions are examined next.

Employees' Perceptions of the *Vision*

Employees of the old agency acknowledged the need to change the focus of the agency. The changes they envisioned were often minor. For example, one participant specifically mentioned reducing the amount of monitoring of mandated programs as a needed improvement. When participants talked about Jackson's reconceptualization of the organization, they spoke about specific parts of the vision that seemed to interest them rather than about the entire vision.

Initial perceptions of the *vision*. Most participants claimed they supported the philosophy and rationale behind the restructuring, at least in the beginning. Three viewed the prospect for innovation and achievement through the research team projects as challenging. The prediction of less bureaucracy engaged most participants' attention. The promise of decision-making abilities excited others. Generally, participants' statements indicated they understood the reorganization as Jackson presented it on September 5, 1990. They were optimistic about the change process. Characteristic responses were:

> Ava: I love the ideas, the way that it's set up as far as the corporate model, the teams, the fact that ... anyone can lead depending on your expertise.
>
> Matti: The top leadership, meaning Jackson and the group of top managers, has said they want to go to a research-oriented agency.
>
> Dinah: Because every single thing goes through the management team, I think the idea was ... is that they would make sure that we were moving toward a common direction.
>
> Lona: One of the great advantages of this restructuring was going to be the elimination of the various steps or levels, the bureaucratic levels.

To accomplish change, employees must comprehend the vision, according to change management researchers Burke, Spencer, Clark, and Coruzzis (1991). The change effort had a better chance of succeeding if individuals understood the fundamental aspects of the change envisioned by management.

Jackson articulated the vision for the agency. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission evaluated the implementation of that vision after 3 months. Data from public documents provided the context for the implementation and evaluation. To help establish the context for the participants within the agency, their descriptions of themselves are explored next.

"Nature of the Person" Employed by the Agency

Employees in Cadice's division described themselves in similar ways. The following represents characteristics that most participants said they had. For example, the most frequently mentioned attribute was "motivated by change." Nine participants mentioned it as most important for adaptation to the restructuring. This attribute, love of change, was one of five elements Peters' (1987) considered necessary for people to thrive on turmoil. Separately, Steinburg (1992) commented that change will not happen unless people are motivated to change. Organizational behaviorists believe that people motivate themselves and "getting them motivated can be difficult" (Steinburg, 1992, p. 28). Some people love change, Steinburg (1992) said, and these will be the forerunners in any change effort.

> Ava: I am very motivated by change, and I really do not like routine, so, therefore, this variety works best for me. And for me, if things become too boring, too routine, I will create, I will do something to change that.

> Lona: Change doesn't scare me at all, doesn't frighten me at all. I'm, ah, in fact, I welcome it. I don't like routine that much and so, I think it's just my nature that this [change] did not have that devastating an affect on me.

> Janna: Transitions have not usually been something that I have steered clear of. In fact, it's usually exciting to me.

> Matti: I was willing to try new things. I mean there was just maybe a philosophy, a personal philosophy. It [the change] was exciting and so that did not really bother me.

Other characteristics participants said they had were flexibility and adaptability. They recalled a history of adapting successfully to changing work and personal situations. Jocelin said she was adaptable but did not "like chaos and constant turning around ... [something] that is so different that you can't cope with it easily." Lona saw change as a challenge and said she was a risk-taker.

Participants stated that their tolerance for ambiguity was critical to survival between September 1990 and February 1991. Participants who observed they dealt with that uncertainty with less trauma than their peers likewise stated they found the challenge of restructuring the way work was done easier to handle. Ava recapitulated the importance the participants placed on a tolerance for ambiguity:

> Ava: Nothing was the same, everything was changed--your office was changed, the people you work with were changed, the way that you work was changed, what was valued was changed, everything was changed! [So] if you can't tolerate ambiguity to a certain extent ...

Alden said, "Unknowns don't bother me."

Autonomy and a feeling of being in control of their work were critical to participants' acceptance of new work processes.

> Bailey: I don't like anybody telling me that's the way I've got to live.

> Matti: I've never felt I was restricted anywhere.

> Lona: I set very high standards for myself and I have felt very frustrated because, in the new organization, I'm feeling that I'm not able to give my work the polish and the time and the attention ...

Irvin said the ability to "self-select your project" and having that supported by management was crucial to developing a sense of what was valued in the new organization. Participants' need for autonomy and control proved a stumbling block to adaptation in some instances. These will be examined in the last section of this chapter which covers challenges to adaptation.

Having an internal sense of control, self-confidence, a tolerance for ambiguity, and self-esteem seemed to aid adaptation for participants who said they possessed these characteristics. Those with an internal sense of control were motivated by the task itself and by meeting their own criteria. Ashford (1988), in a study of individual strategies for coping with organizational transitions, found that feeling in control, self-esteem, and tolerance for ambiguity were the primary coping resources useful to the respondents. A future study might examine how these three characteristics can be useful adaptive coping resources for people during organizational transitions. A transactional human ecology perspective would indicate the relationships between organizational ecosystems and employee ecosystems be examined in addition to the individual's intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal ecosystem.

Pearlin and McCall (1990), in a study of work and marital support, found that stress often damaged workers' self-esteem. Loss of self-esteem frequently followed prolonged job stress. Enduring the long competitive hiring[7] period more than likely challenged many of the participants' self-esteem and self-confidence, yet they maintained that these characteristics were important to their adaptation.

The majority of the participants worked more than a 40-hour week. Only two stated they confined their work to the standard work day:

> Ava: This organization encourages overtime. I think it's almost an unwritten expectation.

> Bailey: In my former job, I spent a lot of time on weekends, a lot of evenings, working. When I came here I said I wasn't going to do that. And I haven't.

These people reported that historically they spent whatever time it took to get the work done. Committing large blocks of time to the job was not new behavior for the participants.

> Alden: One thing about this organization, old or new, doesn't make any difference, you can do as much or as little as you want. But people that are over extended are over extended because they choose to [be].

Bailey said that when he came to work at the old agency, he decided to confine his work within the 40-hour week and still attempted to do so. Lona was the only other participant who restricted her work day. Spending 50 to 60

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[7]The term *rehired*, legally incorrect, was used by participants to mean the competitive hiring process.

hours a week on agency work was another characteristic of the participants.

An attribute all 15 participants said they valued was "being an expert" in their area of specialization. In the old organization, participants reported rivalries between the various areas of expertise. The team concept seemed to encourage them to contribute their knowledge to the collaborative team effort and, consequently, reduced rivalries.

> Edina: I'm really excited about a lot of what I'm doing. It [teamwork] certainly broadens my knowledge base and will continue to do that.

> Matti: The [agency] has looked upon me as having, quote, unquote, the expert information on [my area]. I feel as though I'm actually more important because lots of people come to me and say, "Let's ask her about [so and so]."

> Bailey: I enjoy having people that I admire and respect listen to [me]. It's an ego builder and that's important in this day and time.

Participants also liked learning about other areas of expertise while serving on teams. Research they conducted as part of their team assignments often increased their knowledge in areas not their own.

Kanter (1989) listed four individual skills helpful to people who survived organizational restructuring:

- a belief in self
- ability to collaborate and become connected with new teams
- commitment to the intrinsic excitement of achievement in a project

- willingness to keep learning (pp. 364-365)

Participants identified high levels of three of Kanter's (1989) proficiencies in themselves. They were slowly learning the collaboration skills needed to function on teams. Other characteristics participants shared were a sense of humor, "love my job," not taking things too seriously, and being easy-going.

In summary, many participants believed that the reorganization of the agency was necessary. A composite of their reported understanding of the proposed restructuring closely resembled the vision articulated by management. Participants said specific personal characteristics enabled them to deal with the changes they faced. Experiences and attitudes that helped them adapt are examined next.

Experiences and Attitudes that Facilitated Adaptation

The story of adaptation at the agency was a complex one. In this study, more challengers than facilitators were discovered. Participants stated they *had adapted* as if the process was complete. As they talked about their background with the new organization, examples of experiences suggested the adaptation process was still going on. Patrickson (1986), in a study of redefining the work of newspaper compositors, found that 3 years after the change the majority of her subjects had adapted and that one-fourth preferred the new methods. Contrarily, Hirsch (1987) found workers still mentioned significant amounts of uncertainty and anxiety after 3 years.

Participants' historical experiences with change situations and their personal support groups influenced how they adapted to the reconceptualization of the agency. Being able to choose to change played a major role in past change experiences. Their backgrounds with choosing change are examined next.

Choice over the Change

At first, participants articulated over and over their love of change. Then, as the interview continued, words to qualify their perceptions began to appear. When recounting successfully executed changes in their lives, 11 of the 15 participants mentioned feeling they had some choice about or control over those previous experiences with impending change. Researchers of organizational change have found "what people are resisting is not necessarily change but the *imposition* [italics added] of change" (Burke et al., 1991, p. 88).

> Matti: The change wouldn't bother me. I would go ahead and go for the change. ... See I had that safety net. I knew I could always come back [to the old situation].

> Bailey: The change was one of ... choice, ... not by consequence or being forced upon me. ... each time I

> jumped, there was a place to land and I knew where I was landing.

They labeled the restructuring of the agency a change of "consequence" or of "being forced upon me."

Knowing they had something they could return to, a *safety net*, seemed to make change less risky. Participants felt the safety nets they had relied on during previous experiences with change were missing in this instance. Though not specifically stated, they implied the perceived risk for agency change was greater because there was no safety net. Kanter (1989) expressed it this way. "Some people joyously leap off the corporate ladder ... but others are shoved off callously, without a safety net." (Kanter, 1989, p. 357).

Participants had weathered changes in managers and administrations in earlier work situations. Consequently, they felt they knew how to respond in those situations.

> Edina: You just see what happens with [managers] that change, administrations that change ... that was a growth and learning process.

> Alden: It has taught me, in any type of change situation, it has taught me how to be versatile.

Previously participants felt they had a good idea about the outcome of an impending change before they committed themselves to making it. According to Senge (1990), people resist *being changed*, not the change itself.

> Matti: Every time I've needed a job I've always gotten one. It's always been there. I've always been able to take advantage of opportunities that came up.

Participants also perceived themselves to be in control of their choices. Burke et al. (1991) found the loss of personal choice provoked people to resist change. From the human ecology perspective, people are expected to resist change and to desire homeostasis. Their goal is to maintain consistency and continuity. Feeling in control, of having a choice about whether to change, was important to adaptation to the new agency structure.

> Ava: I went back to [a lower situation] by choice. In a very different socio-economic set-up than what I was used to ... So, yes, I've done that [drastically changed] before. But it was by choice.

Four participants mentioned experiences centering around expected life-course transitions, what Grant called "the march everyone is involved with." They recalled events like leaving home for college and getting married. Participants considered successful negotiation of expected life transitions important to their adaptation to the change at the agency. Few participants mentioned adverse developmental experiences, but when they did, they felt they came through the incidents well. Therefore, they concluded, they had learned to deal with change in a positive manner. Examining participants' statements about life-course transitions through a human ecology lens suggests these changes were consistent and progressive. Participants probably experienced congruence between their various system memberships.

Irvin summed up participants' feelings about previous reactions to change and their ability to influence adaptation positively.

> Irvin: I guess this past experience, knowing that you can adapt was the biggest thing. Past <u>successful</u> experience.

All 15 participants remembered at least one significant productive response to change, and most mentioned only constructive incidents. Four expressed the advantages of what they perceived to be smooth life-course transitions when adapting to change. Participants also mentioned personal support groups aided adaptation to change.

<u>Personal Support Groups</u>

Three men and one woman formed a lunch time support group. Alden explained the purpose and function of the group:

> Alden: What we talk about at lunch is business. It's not work related, but there's a lot of politics that happen within an organization and what we discuss is the politics ... Who's going to survive, who's going to decline, how do we fit in all this, that's politics. What do we need to do as a group, not as individuals, to change within that organization? Who is being rigid within [the] support group, and how are we going to challenge them to be more flexible?

In his research on bringing work stress home, Weiss (1990) found wives were expected to offer just this human-relations type of support to their working spouses. Rice and Dreilinger (1991) stated that the more information survivors of downsizing felt they had, the more secure they felt. Survivors' sense of security had been threatened by the downsizing process, they said, and having information increased feelings of security. The lunch-time group provided both types of support for members.

Fourteen participants formed smaller, more informal support groups as well. Group members came from the entire agency. Often, they were friends participants had worked with in the old agency. During the reorganization period, participants, such as Dinah, said they "really looked out for their buddies." In fact, they believed their *buddies* were still looking out for them during the time of the study. For example, friends made sure their buddies had read the latest memo or had heard the latest rumor that might have important issues behind it.

Kanter (1983) said that both underload and overload of information was harmful to adapting to a new organizational structure. Underload occurred when employees could not keep information moving in the informal structure and did not check rumors for elements of truth. Overload might have prevented them from checking out the rumors. Under conditions of overload, employees could not filter out the worthwhile information from the *noise*.

Employees felt management did not provide adequate amounts of the factual information. Still, they seemed to be helping each other manage their information requirements. An example of helping manage information was when they tried to interpret the meaning of memos for each other. Within ecosystems, harmony and regularity depend on having the right amounts of accurate information flowing within the system. Relationships between ecosystems also rely on trustworthy information. Ashford (1988) found two types of information important as coping resources during organizational transitions. Both information about the change itself and feedback about personal performance helped subjects understand the change and predict its impact (Ashford, 1988).

Participants also formed informal support groups with colleagues whose offices were near theirs. Labels for these groups included *community* (located in the west wing), *neighborhood* (south wing), and *inner city* (south wing). One woman turned down the opportunity to move into a highly prized window office because it would mean leaving her *community*. Participants called walking between the south and west wings of the floor *hiking*.

Support groups, whether established or casual, provided someone with whom to discuss the absurdities of whatever had happened that day. Likewise, support groups afforded participants friends with whom they could laugh.

> Dinah: I eat lunch with my buddies. [names 3 people in the division] And they are very funny people, and they make me laugh. Before I wouldn't have stopped to do that.

Laughing with people you trusted was important. Trusting their support groups meant participants were confident that any ridicule or "poking fun" at the latest administrative foible would remain private. Confidentiality was important because participants had not rebuilt trust in management. Rice and Dreilinger (1991) suggested that survivors of downsizing felt their "bargain with management has been canceled ... they wonder whether management can be trusted to keep its word about anything" (p. 41). Tomasko (1987) said mistrust was "hardly conducive to employees deviating from the straight and narrow" (p. 47).

During the first months in the restructured organization, what Dinah called "management edicts," proved stressful for participants. A trusted work friend with a sense of humor made participants feel they could safely laugh at management recommendations that seemed to complicate getting the work done. Further, laughing furnished a way of relieving some of the tension and served as a reminder not to take the "little things" too seriously.

By the time the interviews were conducted, "little bureaucratic things" were seriously affecting the participants' morale and productivity. "Nagging worries" were distracting people's attention from the agency's broad goals and focusing it on what, taken singly, should have been minor issues. These hindrances are discussed in the section on challenges to adaptation.

Another phenomenon about support groups was occurring at the time of the interviews. Seven people in the division who had worked together in a single unit in the old organization had begun meeting socially.

> Edina: There's some innateness in that particular group, we network. It's either we touch base at lunch or do social kinds of things occasionally.

In addition to social activities outside work hours, they were seeking ways to bring the dispersed members of the old unit back together within the new structure. They were investigating submitting an *idea* that potentially would gather them together in a team to perform some of their ongoing work.

Kiefer (1992) stated that organizational systems often "find compensating forces to restore the system to its original balance" (p. 36). Bolman and Deal (1991) found that employees who are unwilling to change can "informally redesign [sic] [roles] to fit what people used to do rather than what they are now supposed to do" (p. 375). From a human ecology perspective, knowing the characteristics of the old ecosystem of the group trying to recreate itself would enlighten attempts to understand its current recreation processes. Marshall (1986) said these processes usually foster ecosystem stability. Change managers frequently overlook or underrate an organization's bid for stability (Marshall, 1986). For the individuals involved, recreating the facsimile of the old unit in the restructured organization may be a way of coping.

In their research on occupational stress, Pearlin and McCall (1990) found that helping to construct a meaning was one way support groups helped people cope. "Management of meaning" (Pearlin & McCall, 1990, p. 52) often neutralized the perceived threat from the organization. These researchers established that their respondents rejected advice from a spouse, an outsider to the work place. They believed a spouse did not really understand the complications of the work problem. Participants in the agency study may have been responding in a similar manner when they said support from agency friends, insiders, was more helpful for successful adaptation to the new situation.

> Janna: They [outside family and friends] don't understand. Well, the friend within the [agency] has

> gone through some of the same things, so we share ... what's happening.

Outside family and friends were willing to listen and do whatever they could, but participants felt the *understanding* of agency friends was more helpful.

Teams provided the last type of support group that aided adaptation. Team members gave support that focused on a specific project which had to do with how the participants were functioning on the team.

> Regina: I have formed closer relationships with those people who actually serve on teams with me.

> Jocelin: ... working on a team is really a supportive thing, and, in some cases, you make relationships that will help you in other situations. But I don't see them, the team, as a major supporting group outside of the team.

Teams were organized around a common goal (Carnevale, 1991); therefore, the restricted support that teams seemed to provide may be related to having a common purpose.

In summary, participants found support groups consisting of fellow workers beneficial as they adapted to the restructured organization. The process of maintaining support groups was similar to coalition building. Whether their groups had definite boundaries or consisted informally of work friends, participants said supporters reminded them to laugh and to take things less seriously. Team members provided support within the context of the team activity but there was little carry over to other areas. Seven people were trying to formalize their casual support group in the new structure within boundaries similar to those that existed in the old.

Support from Family and Very Close Friends

Kendai remarked that her family was a support system in a reverse way.

> Kendai: [They] don't ask me why I'm so tired. ... It's much more fun to shout at George Bush on the evening news. 'Let's not talk about this because we can't, it's not anything we can change.'

Close friends offered a unique form of support to three participants during the competitive hiring phase.

> Edina: They were looking at jobs that would be available in [a mid-western state} where I am from originally. Also I have some very close friends in [another state] who were doing the same thing.

Family members who lived in different states provided similar aid for two other participants.

Spouses often provide a *management of meaning* function and coping assistance according to Pearlin and McCall (1990). Participants in this study seemed to rely on work friends for help with constructing meaning but spouses did help them cope. The most beneficial support provided by family members was *listening*. Faye expressed it well. "He just listened. That's all, he just listened."

Participants living alone found parents and siblings willing to listen over the telephone.

> Regina: It's just the fact that they do listen to, to my complaints and they tolerate it. That has been helpful, just to know I have someone that is willing to listen.

Pearlin and McCall (1990) found that adding *advice giving* to listening could be counter-productive. Their respondents stated "that the substance of advice is not appropriate to the nature of their problem" (Pearlin & McCall, 1990, p. 56). This seemed to be what the participnats in the agency meant when they said family "just didn't understand."

Relying on family as listening posts had another side. Reciprocity seemed implicit in their family support relationships, and family members expected participants to listen to their concerns as well.

> Grant: It's just a matter of a reciprocal arrangement ... you talk about what you did, each of you did during the day. I think just talking about issues and what you've done ... is implicit support.

The length and uncertain nature of the competitive hiring process may have concentrated participants' attentions on their own issues to the exclusion of those of other family members. During that period, family members' attention also focused on what was happening at the agency. Participants said families anxiously kept track of how the competitive hiring was going.

In summary, family and close friends provided various kinds of support for participants. Depending on the needs of the participant, they either listened to or avoided the subject of work. Friends and family helped locate alternative employment opportunities during the competitive hiring process. Reciprocity was also an element of family support.

Personal Attitudes

Once participants knew they had a position in the new agency, they expressed a need to put the turmoil of the 6 month competitive hiring process behind them. They were anxious to prove they could *fit* the requirements for personnel in the restructured organization. Mattie verbalized the participants' feelings about getting on with the work of the new agency.

> Matti: Once we moved beyond all that [rehiring], you can tell a difference in the attitude of the people. I don't really want to forget the way I was treated because I don't think that was fair. But I want to move ahead and take advantage of all the, all the neat new opportunities that have come about.

The perception that they were being positive about what was happening in the new structure was very important to productive adaptation. Participants asserted that they avoided fellow employees who were always espousing negative attitudes. One woman stated that complaining to friends within the agency was adaptive for her.

> Irvin: In a sense, when everybody is anxious, then one's person anxiety plays off another one's.

Responses to the interview question about transactions with colleagues somewhat validated this tendency to avoid negativity. Peers sought contact with 5 participants in 3 or less instances (maximum was 20), and they did not seek the person who preferred to complain. The data analysis revealed 4 participants seemed to harbor negative attitudes, and 3 of those were among the least sought. In contrast, transactions with a participant who expressed strong negative attitudes during the interview were sought 75% more than with other participants.

When task allocations were examined, 2 who were infrequently sought but who expressed positive attitudes about the agency proved to have strenuous work assignments that kept them out of the division a lot of time. In those two cases, colleagues did not seek them out as much, not because of their attitudes but because they were not around.

In summary, personal attitudes helped participants adapt to the new structure. A positive attitude, a belief in one's self, and the feeling "everyone is in the same mess" seemed to be the most helpful. In Kanter's (1989) work on change, the first two attitudes were seen as being adaptive during change experiences.

Personal and Management Style of the Division Manager

Thirteen of the 15 participants said their manager's personal and management style was important for their effective adaptation to the reorganized agency. They described Cadice as being a warm, open person with a sense of humor.

> Faye: She diluted anxiety by using her humor and her warmth.

> Irvin: [Cadice] is pretty good about not taking herself seriously.

Participants said Cadice was supportive of and sensitive to their personal and professional needs. They appreciated her willingness to share her personal slant on the organization.

> Janna: ... knowing her style, feeling able to communicate openly with her. And I think she served as a buffer for a number of us, between the management team and the new division.

> Matti: [Cadice] doesn't mind calling a silly rule a silly rule ... she has a pretty good realistic approach [to] what can and can't be done.

Generally, participants felt their manager respected their professionalism and "doesn't try to tell you how to do it or when to do it" (Bailey). Employees said Cadice gave them the flexibility to get their jobs done. Since participants mentioned an internal locus of control as an important personal characteristic, having a manager who did not "cramp my style" (Matti) eased their transition into the new organization.

Many participants appreciated Cadice not "looking over my shoulder all the time" (Alden). She had not "told [me] unconditionally that I can't do something on this job" (Kendai). Participants said they valued personal autonomy, and Cadice facilitated their need to design their own work as much as possible.

One of the two participants who did not value Cadice's style felt she was not a good manager. The other participant did not mention the manager in relation to facilitating change.

In summary, participants who had previous successful experiences making changes and who had formed a personal work support group seemed to be adapting better to the new organizational climate. Certain personal characteristics and attitudes aided this adaptation. Their manager's personality as well as her management style assisted their acculturation.

By December 1991, participants said they had adapted to the new structure of the agency. In the next section, the challenges to adaptation are examined. This examination reveals a contradiction between what participants said about their adaptation and how they described their various work behaviors.

Experiences and Attitudes that Challenged Adaptation

Employees' experiences during the extended competitive hiring process hindered adaptation most. In responding to the question about what hindered adaptation, 14 participants talked about the competitive hiring process first. The 15th person, the newly hired woman, did not mention the competitive hiring process as a personal issue.

> Janna: [For] literally six months I lived in crisis, not knowing whether or not I had a job.

In this section, participants' statements about how well they had adapted to the new situation and their stated inability to let go of the negative feelings generated during the competitive hiring process and the resulting conflict between expectations and emotions are recounted. Additionally, participants perceived changes to the vision, which initially they had supported, as a stumbling block. Probably the most time-consuming difficulty with accommodating the new structure resulted from participants' interpretation of how the work would be done. In the beginning, they had signed onto too many teams. Finally, "little bureaucratic things" kept occurring and interfering with smooth acclimatization to the developing culture. Underlying all these hindrances to adaptation was the issue of communication--both the type and amount and from whom to whom.

The Competitive Hiring Process

Participants referred to the process of applying for the new jobs in the reorganized agency as the "rehiring process." According to state personnel regulations, all the jobs were new, and people were *hired* to fill them through a competitive process. Participants felt they were *rehired* because some of their responsibilities in the new organization closely resembled their work in the old. The positions, as described by top management, were different enough to fall under state personnel procedures that required advertising newly created jobs.

> Ava: I went through a period like everyone else where I was scared to death because I didn't have a job and here I had just left a very good job in [another location] and I was worried.

> Matti: There's nothing that you find, I think, that was really positive in reapplying for jobs in that manner. And you had to watch people that were perfectly qualified not make it. So I think most everybody is bound to agree that was not a very positive reorganization concept.

> Alden: To tell you the honest to God truth, I hate firing a bunch of people over this. I hate that! It's not humanistic.

> Janna: My most difficult problem with this [restructuring] process was during the interview process and not knowing whether or not I was going to have a job. ... I knew what the job market was like, and at that point, it was self-preservation. I needed a job. I live alone, I've got my own mortgage, I don't have anybody to fall back on.

By December 1991, many participants felt their work was actually similar, at least in part, to what it had been in the old agency.

Fifteen months after Jackson announced the restructuring process, participants' answers to the question "What hindered your adaptation?" indicated the way the agency had abolished jobs and created new ones was still affecting their adaptation. Despite their reports of positive adaptation, people were still suffering from the uncertainty and distress they experienced during that September 1990 to February 1991 competitive hiring period.

At first, participants said they were nervous, a little anxious, but not really frightened about having a job. As the process wore on and the deadline for hiring was postponed again and again, tension mounted.

> Bailey: And boy, when it drug out into Christmas, it was even worse. But you don't do that to people and then expect them to turn around and rally behind you.

Steinburg (1992) reported that people created pain for themselves by fighting the change process. Pain, he stated, was motivating, but only in the short-term. Conner (1992), who endorsed a structured strategy for change, stated that pain management is an important component of an organization's plan to change. Pain, in the form of fear of not having a job, may have motivated participants during the competitive hiring and the early days of the new agency. At the time of the interviews, people were trying to get beyond their feelings of pain. For instance, they attempted to avoid negative-sounding colleagues. By implication, people's feelings of pain were losing motivational power and beginning to hinder their progress toward becoming a fully functioning member of the agency.

Self-esteem and self-confidence, valued personal characteristics, began to suffer as the competitive hiring time extended. Participants said they had never had to worry about having jobs before that experience. On Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Gray & Starke, 1984), self-esteem is a higher need than security. Possibly, participants' need for security in the form of a job meant they stopped pursuing self-esteem needs until security needs were met (Gray & Starke, 1984). From a human ecology perspective, people experiencing inconsistencies and lack of continuity in their ecosystems spend their energy seeking the return of stability within ecosystems and congruence between ecosystems.

Since most participants had been in the work force at least 20 years, having to fight for a job they thought was secure was threatening to self-esteem and confidence.

> Janna: The thing I dislike most about the reorganization is what it has done to people as individuals. There are a number of people that I [thought were] very self-confident and very independent

> before. I don't see that kind of spirit coming from them anymore.

The staffing announcements were made in mid-February 1991 and these statements by Bailey and Jocelin reflected participants' feelings at the time.

> Bailey: Sure, I've still got a job, I'm here. But do you realize the hell you put me through during that period of time?

> Jocelin: ... was such a tension-feeling time, tension-rising time, that when it was over, we were almost in a euphoric mood for a while.

Participants also expressed guilt that they were hired and others were not.

> Grant: A lot of good friends [were] laid off. [I had] a certain sort of implicit, or undercurrent, of guilt. The unfairness of that for somebody that had been with the department longer and had done good work.

The guilt felt by those left after downsizing could be reflecting their understanding of the "human costs" (Tomasko, 1987, p. 44) involved for those who were fired. For example, those over 35 who leave during downsizing will more than likely have difficulty finding equivalent jobs (Tomasko, 1987).

The sense of loss people experience following the death of a relative or close friend paralleled participants' reactions to the loss of work friends (Weiss, 1988). Unfortunately for people experiencing a significant loss in an organization, there are no culturally-defined ceremonies for dealing with the ensuing grief.

Bolman and Deal (1991) recommend that organizations use "transition rituals [which are] symbolic events initiat[ing] a sequence of ritualistic steps that allow people to let go of the past, deal with the present, and move into a meaningful future" (p. 394). These authors stated that such rites enabled people to recognize their loss consciously. This act of loss recognition permitted people to let go of the past. Kanter (1989) concurred that such periods of mourning made it possible for people to let go of the painful past. Companies and organizations that did not develop programs to help those who remained in the system deal with their feelings of grief, loss, and guilt frequently found reduced morale and feelings of job insecurity lingered months after the downsizing (Tomasko, 1987). If commitment to the restructured organization was to develop, it seemed to follow this necessary mourning period (Kanter, 1989).

The nature of the competitive hiring process interfered with employees' developing a feeling of a sense of ownership for the reconceptualization. Tomasko (1987) stated that employee commitment to the vision was crucial if vision blueprints were to bear results.

> Irvin: I don't think a lot of people ever felt like owning it.

> Lona: They've [management] really destroyed employee loyalty. The feelings of insecurity from this restructuring, I don't think will ever, ever be healed.

Once participants were hired, they felt they were expected to perform as acculturated employees of the new organization from day one. Alden explained employee frustrations. "[We did not know] how to 'be' in the new organization." A new culture had not yet been worked out.

Another unanticipated change occurred in the personal lives of participants. Experiences at work seemed to lead to questioning other parts of their lives for several of the participants.

> Ava: Everything that happened here made me start to question everything in my life. ... I don't know if something in me changed because of this reorganization that prompted this change at home [leaving her husband]. ... The things I had just been accepting all along, I no longer wanted to accept. My thinking changed.

Beginning in July 1990, talk in the agency had centered around the need for change to meet the challenges of the future. As Jackson delayed the competitive hiring process and stress-related tension mounted, "people went into issues about their personal need to change" according to Edwin. The matter expanded from issues of organizational change to issues of change within personal lives. Two of the participants who separated from their spouses during that period said the turmoil and questioning generated by the competitive hiring process led, in part, to their decision to leave their spouses.

Juechter, quoted in Steinburg (1992), said, "When we talk about organizational change, we are really talking about individual change" (p. 32). People undergoing change in one area of their lives frequently found themselves examining what was most important to them in totality (Steinburg, 1992). They used this knowledge to help them decide which route to follow. Land and Jarman (1992) reported that people applied what they learned from organizational change experiences to their family lives. Change in one area of people's lives cannot help affecting other areas, they said. The human ecology perspective supports the idea that when change occurs in one area, other areas may change as well.

Perceptions of Changes in the *Vision*

At the time of the study, 14 employees said they were less enthusiastic about the reconceptualization than they had been originally. The remaining person was still excited about the restructuring concept. Much of the reported negativity resulted from the personal traumas of the lengthy hiring process.

> Janna: My attitude about how it was happening was very negative. Ah, so after we made the switch over and had to start trying to adapt to a new way of doing things, it was those negative attitudes [that hindered me.]

Matti: Generally, overall, I've been pleased with ... if [Jackson] had not made the decision to cause people to reapply for jobs in that way.

In December 1991, employees were disillusioned. They felt that the reorganization as presented had not materialized since the date of the change over.

Faye: It would be helpful to know the master plan a little better.

Matti: I [have a] feeling that there is no specific plan that everyone is following.

Ava: I was reading Tom Peters over the weekend, about his model organization [and] what they need to look like. I think [Jackson] had a vision, it's gotten tied up, but his idea was a good idea.

Peters, in Thriving on Chaos (1987), advocated rapid change (chaos) coupled with the flexibility to thrive on that chaos as a means for achieving organizational success in the future. Viewed within Peters' model, agency employees still desired the predictability provided by the old organization as they dealt with the chaos of the new.

Dinah: I think what we're finding is that the work of this agency was never defined before they began the process and there are thousands of things that are still cropping up that used to be someone's job.

Regina: The fact that you had a different perception of the reorganization than what is actually occurring. And that has really hindered the adaptation in the new system.

Edina: The impression I got initially was that it would be less bureaucratic. I don't see it that way. I think it is much more controlling. We don't do anything without it going through the management decision-making process.

Lazarus (1991) said people responded to uncertain situations by trying to force meaning upon the chaos. Often it took all people's energy to cope with the changes and to stay abreast of new developments (Kanter, 1983). Kanter (1989) stated: "well-planned and carefully executed" (p. 87) change process does not stress people. Nor does it leave them feeling uncertain. For instance, her respondents were told when information would be available and later events proved the received information reliable (Kanter, 1989). Kanter's (1989) respondents said consistency and reliability enabled them to begin to develop confidence that management would do what it said it would.

Agency employees felt they faced delays and changes in plans from the beginning. Indeed, they spent a lot of physical and emotional energy making sense of information and rumors. Five participants felt top management had ignored or missed the "people element" (Dinah) in the restructuring design.

> Bailey: There's no sincerity in the statements that were made about we care about the employees. Jackson didn't do things with people, he did it to them.

Doing the Work of the Agency

Uncertainty did not end just because participants had jobs at the agency. Once the organization flipped[8] from the old to the new, participants had to learn how to work in the new organization. They had to learn how to "be" within the new structure as they built the new culture. Participants felt the old way of being that once served to guide their behavior had been thrown out in the restructuring. Since everyone was *new* to the reorganized agency, they could not watch behavior and "do as the Romans do" (Edina).

Kanter (1983) said that change masters built change upon an organization's history. Agency employees perceived that the history of the old agency died with it on flip-over day. They believed that references to the old ways were looked on by top management with disfavor. People making comments about how tasks used to be done were labelled "naysayers" or "old-order thinkers" (Dinah) by management.

Given their perceptions of management's thinking, participants could not use the history of the old agency to help build a new way of being. "Do as the Romans do" suggested that participants were used to observing how people already in a situation behaved and then imitating that behavior. In fact, new members of groups or

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[8]Participants said that one day in late February or early March 1991 was actually designated "flip- or change-over day." No one remembered the actual date, and it was not mentioned in the available documents.

organizations are taught appropriate ways of behaving by people already there (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Since the agency had no history or recognized old timers, participants had no guides, and their uncertainty seemed appropriate.

Team work. Participants understood they were to work on teams 80% of the time. They received no agency training in the requirements and demands of team participation before selecting their team memberships.

> Irvin: Basically, [top management] said, "We want everybody on teams." So everybody ran off and got on teams. And looking down the road to when all these products would become due, how would people keep up with the meetings, let alone the deliverables. It's a mess. Not a technical term. Just a mess.

Having no prior experience with the amount of time team projects required, many participants signed onto too many teams at the time of the change from the old to the new. Participants seemed to be doing what Bolman and Deal (1991) called "ignor[ing] the loss and rush[ing] pell-mell into the future" (p. 391) in their desire to prove they were worthy of being employed by the new agency. That behavior included getting on a great number of teams.

It was common for participants to be on 10 teams. The most any one person reported being on was 18, and the least was 5.

> Alden: You can be on this team and that team, 14, 15, 20 different teams. It just is a marvelous opportunity to be compulsive.

> Edwin: I'm on approximately 5 to 7 teams. I'm a team leader on two of those teams.

With most team members on numerous teams, it became a major task during team meetings to schedule the next meeting. Further, being a team leader increased that person's responsibilities and time commitment to a project.

Participants also understood they could self-select their team memberships. Thus, participants believed they could serve on any team that interested them. Jackson probably intended *self-select* to mean employees would select those teams that needed their particular *expertise* (implied in agency documents). By the time the interviews were conducted, participants had learned to be more cautious about signing up for team projects.

> Grant: I've thought about this a lot. Now [December 1991], I am more careful about what I want to get involved with, even if I'm excited about something that's important or looks exciting or I think I have some expertise to offer.

Participants could be on projects directed by a division manager other than their own.

> Edina: It's very hard if you're a manager. [The people who report to you could] be on teams that are under the authority of a different [manager]. So you never really have control over your people's time.

During the interviews in December 1991, the participants felt particularly pulled by the need to have personal control of their time to meet team obligations versus their manager's need to direct some of their time. Specifically, Cadice had asked all people in her division to clear their calendars for the second and third weeks of December and devote their time to a issue she had been assigned. Cadice asked them to clear their calendars of all other work, team or function, for that two-week period. Participants were uncertain how their temporary bowing-out on their team responsibilities would affect performance evaluations, especially if the evaluator was another division manager. Managers' lack of control over the team assignments of those employees who reported to them seemed likely to continue given the self-selection team focus of the organization.

Function work. Participants found the team work itself exciting because it was stimulating. They said the team concept was "innovative and considered various outcomes [and] decisions" (Ava), and they liked that concept. Nevertheless, participants experienced many conflicts between their team work and their function work. A function was the ongoing work of the agency; it often consisted of administrative activities. Much of that type of work involved managing grants or Federal funds and programs that were in place before the restructuring.

> Alden: They [management] tried to separate [it] out and say there are people that do administration and there people who do team ... type things. There are some of us animals that have each in our basket.

There was tension between the two types of work. Some participants usually spent most of their time on teamwork and experienced less tension than participants who worked primarily on functions. Participants perceived team work to be more valued by Franklin and other top managers. Thus, employees spending a significant amount of time on function work experienced heightened tension.

At the time of the interviews, this conflict between team work and function work had not been resolved to the participants satisfaction. Those who preferred function work over team work seemed to adapt less smoothly. The idea that 80% of an employee's was to be devoted to team work could not be substantiated in the available documents. That concept has become part of the culture of the emerging organization.

Team work versus function work. Seven participants who had been in one particular unit in the old organization seemed to undergo the most difficulty making the transition. Of course, these were also the people who managed the most government monies and programs. They said they enjoyed many of the tasks related to function work. Furthermore, these participants felt monies management and program monitoring had to be performed by someone. This group was particularly critical of their colleagues who claimed they could *self-*

select now and avoided the "work that used to be just doing your job" (Dinah).

Team work and function work seemed to be polarizing. Employees experienced friction between the time spent on one or the other. Alden said that in his case, team and function work split about 50-50. Dinah administered a large grant and felt she could spend all her time on function work.

Some of what participants labeled function work did not appear on the public function list. One participant asked influential outsiders who often support her work with clients to contact Jackson and express their desire for her to perform a particular function. Within days, that function was added to the list. Participants perceived their desire to perform these omitted tasks as contradictory to the established job requirements. People who felt personally bound to their function work were trying to meet that commitment in one of two ways. Some were searching for ways to make those functions into *functional projects*. Functional projects would allow them to work on functions in a team setting. They perceived functional team work as more acceptable since they felt top management was committed to employees devoting 80% of their time to team work. Some employees said they were not willing to risk their jobs by spending as much time as they wanted to on functions.

> Kendai: What happened was people began to take what they were doing before ... and began to form teams around their own functions.

> Alden: I slid that into the next one [new organization]. I just took the RFP process and the team process and took the things I needed to deal with and put them in there. But not to continue it, to extend it.

Consequently, participants were using the new way of developing projects, the "idea of merit" process, to gain management sanction for work from the old. Other researchers found survivors of restructured organizations often used the new system to recreate their old work (Kiefer, 1992).

Trust in management had not rebuilt since the restructuring. The lack of trust accounted for some of the unwillingness participants felt about trying to do tasks outside the prescribed manner. They viewed attending to functions, which they perceived as important, as risky because management did not emphasize it.

> Bailey: Today [there is] still a lesion on virtually everyone's mind and there's a lot of distrust. There's no confidence in the individuals who made those decisions [reorganization] ... If you've done it before, will you do it again?

> Alden: When you have an organization that does this [firing and rehiring] and keeps people, the trust level is so low that they [employees] won't talk to anybody. Even in confidence and even if you [the interviewer] turned the recorder off, even if you didn't take any notes. They won't trust you regardless.

Second, a few employees who wished to continue their function work were doing the work without approval. Some of these employees had tried the idea of merit process, but it had taken so long they decided to just do the work the way they had previously.

> Dinah: So they just did the work. Everybody's [saying] "Yeah! Good for them." But they didn't get any credit for it.

The few employees who were willing to risk their job or to ignore their distrust of management to "do [function work] anyway" were doubly penalized because they also did not receive credit for those work hours.

In summary, participants selected too many team assignments in the beginning. They felt conflict between team obligations and function responsibilities. They often felt their work included more function work than management said it should. Strategies to solve the dilemma had not aided adaptation nor been resolved satisfactorily from the participants' perspective.

"Little Bureaucratic Things"

Participants reported that the team-function conflict contributed to their being less productive. Another threat to production was what participants labeled "little bureaucratic things." Any one disruption by itself would not generate much disturbance in the work flow but, over time, the accumulation was annoying. By the time the interviews were conducted, participants felt a lot of these minor annoyances had built up until, in combination, they represented major disruptions in productive work time. A list of the most frequently mentioned "little bureaucratic things" will illustrate how petty any one is when viewed singly:

- secretarial pooling
  - doing clerical work myself
  - voice mail tag
- lack of storage space
- high-volume copier moved to basement
- timeliness of response to requisitions for activities and materials
- location of conference room
- paper work required to move from idea to team project
- not having colored paper (It has since been restored.)
- travel and conference-attendance constraints
- securing a state car
- lack of a smoking policy

For example, Dinah said lack of adequate storage may seem like a minor problem. And it was, until she had to figure out an orderly way to keep documents for government projects. Participants with federally funded projects were required to keep documents for 5 years, and they had not had a central space for these papers since February 1991.

Participants faced many time-constraint issues involving their team work. Time-constraints heightened the problems with the secretarial pool and the copier move. Often, participants said, they did not have the lead-time necessary to use the secretarial pool or to send copies for more than 20 sheets to the basement. People managing the distribution of clerical work and the copying also needed lead time. Lead-time demands of others meant they could not turn a job around immediately which was what participants often needed done:

> Kendai: It's a natural assumption that if you have a secretary, [she] knows these things. So you can say to your secretary, I need [such and such] and she knows where to find it.
>
> Dinah: There's nobody that knows what you're doing so you don't have the kind of back up that you had before.
>
> Lona: We're working on this project that goes over several months' time. There's no way I can assign [to the secretarial pool] the individual pieces of a particular job every single time that a piece of paper has to leave my hand. It's so wasteful of time, I might as well do it myself.

Like Lona, most participants were doing their own clerical work:

> Lona: So you end up doing it yourself. Consequently, a lot of my thinking and creating time which is what I would like to be doing is spent doing menial things.

Doing clerical work reduced time available for production. One participant answered the phone 45 times one day. When they had secretaries in the old organization, participants said their secretaries often handled telephone calls and sent out the information requested:

> Dinah: Like answering my own telephone. Lots of times there were calls that never came to me. It was a repetitive thing, [my secretary] took care of it.

In summary, small concerns that by themselves would not have caused problems added together to slow productive work time. Participants felt the compounding of these *nagging worries* added to their concerns about getting their work done.

Communication Needs

Participants had many communication needs they felt were not being met within the new organization. They tended to label the lack of appropriate communication as an expected "problem in a bureaucracy" (Lona). Currently, they were getting more information than previously but "there's not a lot of rhyme or reason to it" (Kendai). As Kanter (1983) noted, too much information was as worrisome as too little. If there was too much, participants could not process it all. And if there was too little information, rumors and scuttlebutt filled the void.

> Irvin: I do think communication of official information could be a whole lot better. ... We have a strong rumor mill here. So we get official information, and then we get unofficial, rumor information. And they [management] often let the rumor run instead of com[ing] out and clarify[ing it].

However much communication participants perceived as coming from management, they felt that it was not personal enough. Communication did not reflect the valuing of the people who received it, participants said. What and how top management communicated did not confirm their statement about valuing the individual. One participant revealed that she had to hunt down a request she had submitted asking to attend a conference. When she found it, a "great big red NO!" was slashed across the front of the request. She stated that she could accept not going to the conference, but felt very devalued by the process and the way the answer was communicated.

Participants felt they were their own most satisfactory source of information. Seven participants said they relied on self-assessment, self-judgment, or self-evaluation for information about their job performance:

> Edina: When I have that feeling inside of me that says, "Ah-ha! It's finished." It's probably more my own self-evaluation than it is someone else's.

> Grant: Upon completion of a project you may not get written feedback on it, [but] most people have an intrinsic sense of when they've done something well.

Recently, participants said, the management team had been returning work plans or completed projects without including explicit information about what needed correcting. After having this happen several times, they said they began to doubt their ability to judge the quality of their own work:

> Dinah: Although you may feel good about the product, if your superiors throw it back to you and say, "This isn't what we want," ... the process has taken away our ability to judge our own work or to know what we should be expected to do.

> Edina: I'm working on something right now and I'm pretty frustrated with it because ... it keeps coming back and has to be redone.

Participants said clearer feedback on returned work plans or projects would help them understand how to improve or correct the products.

Fellow team members not only served as support groups for the participants, they also provided an excellent source of feedback about participants' work. Further, team leaders kept participants informed about what the team was doing.

> Irvin: Team leaders keep you posted on what they're doing and why they're doing it. They're the ones really making this [team work concept] go. They've really taken ownership.

Communication fell short of expectations when it was from top management to the teams or team leaders.

During the first year in the new organization, many participants found it extremely frustrating that replies to requests for travel or materials or to proposals took so long. Not getting replies when expected increased participants' uncertainties about what was required of them.

> Lona: The lag time ... [to] communication [hasn't] been resolved. No one can do their best work that way [not getting timely responses to requests]. I don't know if it's just that there has been too much work for them to handle upstairs, but, again, we don't even hear that. We don't get any explanation as to why we're not getting response.

Rumor even resulted from guessing why management did not respond quickly to requests and proposals - "too much work for them to handle (Alden)."

The division manager did attempt to answer participants' questions, but participants criticized her for not responding to written requests in a timely manner[9]; Cadice, however, fared better than top management. Participants were willing to "cut [her] some rope" (Edwin). Only three participants were extremely critical of their manager and that criticism involved timeliness of responses. Given how much participants felt Cadice helped them adapt to the new organization, lack of timeliness might fit into the *little bureaucratic things* category. In and of itself, it was not serious, but, added to other insignificant matters, it became important for those 3 people.

Communicating with their clients, who they called *the field*, had been important to participants in the old agency and continued to be meaningful in the new structure. Participants thought of their clients as *my people*. They felt the agency's image had been damaged by the confusion during the early days following the turnover.

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[9]When participants used the term *timely manner*, they were referring to some formal time line they perceived to be in existence.

Another little annoyance was the first voice mail system[10]. It was a disaster, according to the participants. The agency's telephone directory, issued in the Spring 1991, included only the names of the division managers and not their staff. Clients could not call the agency and find people they wanted. After the change over, it took weeks to compile the lists of people's locations and telephone numbers. If clients managed to get a valid telephone number, the person they were calling was probably away from the phone at a team meeting. This situation of voice mail tag was very disconcerting for staff and client alike:

> Regina: The perception of the client of the agency is awful. It's very bad. They're having a hard time trying to get people here. In the old system, they could just pick up the phone and we were there.

Participants stated they valued clients' responses and used them as validity checks to ensure that what they were doing had meaning for the users of the products. These contacts were very important to participants because clients had been very supportive of their efforts in the old agency. They did not want to tell these valued constituents that they could no longer serve them in the expected way.

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[10]Participants said 10 people had shared one voice mail box.

For many months, participants were uncertain about how they could have direct contact with the field. One by one, they began doing some of the activities they had done in the old agency. These endeavors were often visits to the client. When one person seemed to succeed, others eventually followed. Though they had more contact with the field than in the beginning, the issue of field contact had not been resolved to the participants' satisfaction at the time of the interviews. It was one of those issues still creating tension and stress for participants.

In summary, communication played an important part in participants' adaptation to the new structure. Lack of official information was supplanted by rumors and left people confused. Some information from top management seemed to reflect a lack of valuing the employees. Although the division manager was not as prompt with replies to requisitions as some participants wanted her to be, she answered many questions that helped clarify issues. Communication with team members and team leaders and with the field was the most satisfactory communication participants received.

Summary

Transactional human ecology theory was used to examine individual, family, and work ecosystems following organizational restructuring. The sample consisted of 10 women and 5 men from one division of a state agency. The public version of the restructuring vision was contrasted to the participants' perceptions of the reality of the reorganization.

Experiences of choice and change, work support groups, families who listened, personal attitudes, and manager's style facilitated the adaptation process. The competitive hiring process, perceptions of changes in the vision, conflicts between team work and function work, misinformation, and "little bureaucratic things" hindered adaptation.

Chapter V

Discussion and Implications

In this study, I examined individual, family, and work environments and their adaptation processes to organizational restructuring. Interviews with 15 employees at a reorganized state agency provided the basis for the interpretation of these processes. In Chapter IV, the interviews were summarized according to the public record of the official vision and the perceived reality of the participants. Facilitators and challengers to adaptation were described. The implications and contradictions of those findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research and conclusions are explored in this chapter.

Paradox[1] of Organizational Change

From the viewpoint of transactional human ecology, an ecosystem is constantly changing (Andrews, Bubolz, & Paolucci, 1980; Bronfenbrenner, 1988). Interconnected systems continuously adapt in response to those changes (Johnson, 1979). Frequently, the changes and adaptations are small and go unnoticed at the ecosystem level.

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[1]Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) said typically paradox is unintentionally created by mishandling a needed change.

Consistency and continuity are characteristics of transactions between a person and an ecosystem or between two ecosystems. The ecosystem can accommodate minor changes. When a major change such as the restructuring of a public agency occurs, the incongruence between interconnected ecosystems can result in resistance to the change. The system often struggles to return to homeostasis (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and homeostasis means no change at all (Watzlawick et al., 1974).

A metaphor for a human ecosystem change is like the tectonic plates under the earth's surface. Tectonic plates move apart and over and under each other releasing energy from the earth's center during the process (Walker, 1982). When large amounts of energy are freed, earthquakes occur. Significant change in an ecosystem could affect its interconnected systems in ways that resemble the force of an earthquake. At the agency in this study, participants would give the change high seismic readings.

The initial research question had implied some *constant* ingredient in the individual, the family, and the work environment that, if identified, could explain how participants adapted to organizational restructuring. The original, overarching research question for the study was:

> In what ways do transactions between individual workers and their family and work environments facilitate individual adaptation to organizational restructuring?

The issue under investigation was more complex than the research question implied. All concurrent changes the pertinent ecosystems experienced following the restructuring were germane to the study. Following the collection and analysis of the data and in keeping with grounded theory tenets, a reformulated research question more appropriate to the data is:

> What does the examination of ecosystems reveal about the adaptational processes of individuals, family environments, and work environments existing in a restructured work place?

Apparent Contradictions: *Vision* and Reality

Participants believed that the initial restructuring plan presented by the chief executive officer would provide benefits for the agency. Ultimately, however, participants' perceived that the change process did not result in the depicted, or ideal, structure. Participants felt they had undergone the turmoil of the competitive hiring process without receiving the benefits they expected.

Many discrepancies existed between the vision unfolded at the initial meeting on September 5, 1990 and participants' accounts for their experiences with the new agency over the next 10 months. For example, team work was the designated way jobs were to be done in the new agency. Participants found they could not do all the work required of them through the team process. One participant explained the difficulty and absurdity of convening a team to make a 2-minute administrative decision concerning a grant. She needed team approval for procedural and update memos about grants before sending the memos through the hierarchy for management approval. To deal with contingencies like this, her team established a *core team* of 6 members. The core group decided administrative issues. Viewed from the human ecological perspective, this work environment is learning from experiences and bringing equilibrium back to its organizational ecosystem.

The idea of less bureaucracy was another point that initially sold participants on the restructuring. Paradoxically, participants felt there had been an over-all increase in bureaucracy since the restructuring. Although fewer bureaucratic, or management, levels for reporting now existed, participants found increased paper work slowed the work process more than had the additional administrative layers. The human ecology perspective could be used to explain the increase in paper work. The macrosystem had expectations of managers who were representatives of the exosystem *organization*. Managers would be expected to establish equilibrium or stability within the restructured organization as soon as possible. There were fewer management level personnel to work toward that goal. The increased paper work could exemplify management attempts to develop routine steps for work processes. Routine work processes decrease uncertainty and, therefore, could aid stabilization. Participants' perceptions of more bureaucracy may have resulted because they filled out forms instead of talking with managers when either they or managers needed information.

Decision making by those doing the work was another aspect of the new agency participants favored. They defined being able to select their team assignments and contribute to project designs as decision making at their level. Yet decision making abilities seemed to be decreasing. For example, participants said decision making included deciding how to allocate their time between projects and functions. Recently their manager said she had an issue that needed immediate attention. She asked employees in her division to clear time on their calendars for the next two weeks to work on it. Participants had to suspend their own project time allocations for the period.

Another example of reduced decision making concerned project reports. Participants remarked that the management council had been returning projects for major corrections. One participant commented that management might as well tell them up front what they wanted from the project since they ended up redoing it to match management's expectations. Participants also said today's team work offered fewer opportunities for creativity than they had experienced at the beginning of the new organization.

In summary, goals of the restructured organization were less bureaucracy, decision making at the team level, and creative work. Yet, from the participants' viewpoint, bureaucracy had increased. Participants felt there was less decision making and fewer opportunities for creative work. Apparent contradictions between organizational goals and participants' reality had developed in the agency.

The Rhetoric of Change and Reality

The rhetoric used by agency managers to describe the restructuring process mystified the employees' experiences and the losses they faced. For example, Jackson, the CEO, adopted Peters and Austin's (1985) axiom of "nurturing the customer." He added the precept of an interest in and concern for employees. The two principles served as guides for the restructuring. Yet, he abolished 288 jobs while creating 228 competitive positions resulting in a net loss of 58 employees. Participants perceived this action as inconsistent with the idea of nurture, interest, and concern for people.

Agency use of the word *dynamic* to describe the restructuring process promised a vigorous, charismatic, vibrant, energetic plan. Yet, the competitive hiring process reduced the momentum generated by the vision. Energy was diverted from the organization, and people fighting for their jobs concentrated on the job hunt. Participants described the elaborate system for cover letters and resumes they set up on their computers to aid their job searches.

Another anomaly in the rhetoric was putting a *creative* Idea of Merit on a *standardized* form. In the beginning, certain parts of Ideas of Merit went on certain colors of paper. One participant said she thought she had done it according to the directions. When she turned her idea in, the secretary said she had not. Ultimately, neither she nor the secretary figured out what went on which color of paper. Maybe the temporary removal of colored paper from the agency was one outgrowth of this confusion among staff. At the time of the interviews, ideas were submitted on white, standardized forms.

The goals for the new organization illustrated other contradictions between the initial rhetoric and the emerging reality as reflected by participants' perceptions. The goal to "increase individual creativity, autonomy and responsibility" (September 5, 1990 letter to employees) was inconsistent with the uncertainty employees experienced during the competitive hiring process. From a human ecology perspective, people going through the uncertainty of that period would focus on stabilizing the work ecosystem. Creativity, as a new focus, represented more change, not balance.

The notion that employees in the new organization were to be *innovative* was inconsistent with the risk that it would require. Tomasko (1987) said mistrust of management was "hardly conducive to employees deviating from the straight and narrow" (p. 47). The Commission report indicated that in May 1991, 75% of agency personnel did not trust management. Participants were not sure of the work process. Doing work differently without a learning period would indicate individuals experienced inconsistency and discontinuity within the work environment. The human ecology perspective would predict their striving for balance, not innovation.

While employees were actively involved in the competitive hiring process in December 1990, Jackson talked about "easing the transition." Until the fall of 1990, participants thought they had secure positions with the agency. Meanwhile, other employees were planning a law suit to stop the reorganization. The Circuit Court dismissed the suit in January 1991. Instead of ease during the transition, inconsistencies, discontinuity, incongruence, and instability characterized the agency during the winter of 1991.

The words used to describe the restructuring plan and the vision for the agency indicated caring and nurturing of people. Participants perceived the actual implementation of the process did not reflect a belief in those concepts. Perceived discrepancies between rhetoric and implementation represented a major theme in challenges to adaptation.

Participants' Change Experiences

In the past, participants said they had always had a choice about change. For the most part, they perceived they could choose to take part in the change experience or stay with the existing condition. Choosing change would create less disruption within and between an individual's microsystems. Choice could reduce resistance. The participants perceived that the agency management forced the change upon them. They felt compelled to accept the change if they wanted to maintain employment with the agency.

Participants identified *feeling in control* as an important personal characteristic. Employees perceived being compelled to either relinquish their job or to embrace the philosophy of the new agency as threatening to this sense of control. At the ecosystem level, a sense of control would weaken resistance to change. Also, participants previously had a safety net to fall back on during their personal experiences with change. They perceived no safety net for the agency restructuring. Such a perception could reflect the disruption of consistency and continuity within and between themselves and their work environment and between their family and work environments.

Ecosystems constantly create and maintain themselves (Andrews et al., 1980). Over time, they tend towards maintenance of consistency and continuity between microsystems such as the family and the work place. For example, family and work microsystems seek to sustain equilibrium between the attitudes and ideologies of their macro-culture and exosystems.

Maintaining congruence of behavior is also a key consideration in interactions between ecosystem levels. The agency restructuring was perceived as interrupting consistency, continuity, stability, and congruence within the agency and in transactions with its interconnected systems. The restructuring created turmoil in the participants' intra- and inter-system relationships (Lero, 1988). From a human ecological perspective, those systems were then expected to strive to reestablish balance.

As Lazarus (1991) suggested, individuals and their home and work environments learn from instability even as they reinstituted equilibrium. Therefore, the relationships between systems were never exactly as they were before adapting to a change. Learning from change, a gradual process, could be easier when the change is chosen by individuals or ecosystems. At first, ecosystems frequently resist changing.

In summary, participants preferred to choose the changes in their lives. From a human ecology viewpoint, choosing change could reduce resistance. Choice could lessen the disequilibrium people within ecosystems undergo during and following change.

Resistance to change. Burke et al. (1991) said people resisted imposed change. One example of resistance came from a group of participants trying to establish their old work unit in the new agency. They were trying to organize their old unit into a team. The group, as an ecosystem, was attempting to return to a homeostatic, or zero-change, condition. Homeostasis--no change--was impossible since change had occurred and continued to occur. Examining the group from a human ecology perspective suggested that it was the comfortable feelings and ease of working in the old agency that the group found appealing. Group members might find the old structure no longer appropriate for them because they had experienced months of learning how to exist in the new agency. Consequently, they had changed in small ways they might not recognize. Still, participants trying to reestablish their old work unit expressed resistance more overtly than other participants did.

Participants said many "little bureaucratic things" irritated them. Using the tenets of the human ecology perspective, their response could be interpreted as resistance that reified the importance they assigned to these "nagging worries." Moving the copier disrupted the consistency and continuity they needed in their work. Participants, unable to resist the agency change, might have felt they could oppose these smaller changes to their environments. Opposition to moving the copier was far less risky than contesting the organizational change. Resistance to the change ranged from overt to grumbling about little irritations in the bureaucracy.

In summary, the human ecology position indicated resistance to change was an expected reaction by ecosystems. Some participants expressed resistance by trying to recreate the old structure. Participants chose smaller, more insignificant changes to resist.

What Culture?

Culture, subsumed in the macrosystem, embraces all the attitudes and ideologies that constitute a particular macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bubolz & Sontag, in press). Employees felt the old exosystem *organization* prescribed an organizational culture no longer appropriate for the new structure. Participants had to learn how to "be" in the new agency. There were no role models that would help them identify the cultural blueprints (Bubolz & Sontag, in press).

Participants were creating organizational culture as they worked day-to-day in the organization. They found the process of developing the ways of working unsettling. One participant said management would have been better off to have fired everyone and brought in all new people. He was implying that new people would not be torn trying to maintain the old culture while being compelled to create the new one.

Costs of changing culture. From the theoretical perspective of human ecology, the costs of changing culture would be instability and incongruence between ecosystems. Within an ecosystem like the agency, reduced productivity resulted as participants struggled to restore equilibrium. As they worked to develop new ways of working, they made mistakes and learned from them. As learning increased, productivity increased.

Participants did not know how to work in teams and learned through team interactions. They learned that team meetings operating from an agenda went more smoothly and accomplished the meeting goal in a timely manner. Employees learned which team leaders were effective and which were not. As a result of this knowledge, they concluded that leaders had certain kinds of characteristics and that all team heads did not possess the desired attributes. Learning about team work increased. Participants could now spend more of their time doing the work instead of figuring out how to discharge their assignments in the new organization.

Uncertainty and tension. Drastic cultural change could produce uncertainty and tension. Participants first experienced those emotions during the competitive hiring process. One participant said she lived in crisis for 6 months not knowing whether she would have a job or not. Feelings of uncertainty and tension did not cease once participants were employed by the new agency.

The different expectations from the two types of work, team work and function work, contributed to uncertainty for employees. In time, individuals and work ecosystems will develop a stable, productive climate in which to work. An ecological perspective indicates uncertainty will remain part of the environment until equilibrium is achieved.

Another source of tension centered around the timeliness of management responses to requisitions and idea papers. Participants had to meet deadlines for team projects. They felt delayed responses from management frequently prevented the accomplishment of tasks necessary to meet deadlines. The exosystem *organization* was still developing its own systems for working. Learning from inefficiencies, in theory, would eventually lead to improvement in the organization. For now, inefficiency in a higher ecosystem was delaying work in the microsystem. In summary, uncertainty and tensions were expected to continue until the various ecosystems involved in the restructuring establish a new culture.

Family Concepts in the Work Environment

Participants brought notions usually found in the family environment into the work place. The type of support generally received from spouses came from work support groups. Language used to describe certain groups of people within the work environment reflected terms associated with the family ecosystem. The need to grieve for colleagues from the old structure was not accommodated by the organizational culture as was grieving for loved ones by the family culture.

Work support groups. Support groups of work friends provided participants the most beneficial help during and after the restructuring. These groups provided types of support commonly expected of families (Pearlin & McCall, 1990). For example, participants relied on work support groups to help them interpret the meaning of communication from management. Workers typically ask spouses, not fellow employees, for help with interpreting meaning (Pearlin & McCall, 1990; Weiss, 1990).

The language used to describe relationships within the division and with clients reflected usage in the family environment. Referring to themselves and those located near them as *neighborhood*, *community*, and *inner city* reproduced expressions families might use. Participants reported receiving support from members of their community or neighborhood. Moving from the neighborhood could cause microsystem instability. One participant forfeited a window office located elsewhere to stay with her community.

Clients, called *my people* by some participants, were valued contacts. The employee/client relationship corresponded to that of family members' connection with extended family. Face to face meetings might be rare but telephone conversations helped maintain the relationship. Clients also offered verbal support as the extended family might.

Participants grieved for colleagues who were laid off. Unlike family systems, the work environment did not include a culturally-defined way of grieving. Researchers of organizational change have pointed out the benefits of appropriate grieving rituals in organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Kanter, 1989; Tomasko, 1987; Weiss, 1988).

Employees at the agency had not had grieving rituals for lost colleagues.

In summary, participants seemed to turn to co-workers and clients to fulfill needs typically satisfied by family. Fellow workers helped interpret meaning. Clients substituted for extended family. Co-workers located near-by on the floor became the participant's community or neighborhood. Work friends could not help with the grief process as family could because the organizational culture did not include rites for grieving.

Implications for Theory

Human ecology theory can contribute much to the study of families. Families do not exist in a vacuum, and human ecology theory leads the researcher into looking beyond the specific event being studied. In this study, human ecology theory was used to direct the exploration of organizational restructuring, thereby extending the context for the application of this framework. Further studies may be designed to test the theory in addition to using it as a guide for exploration.

In applying human ecology theory to new contexts, researchers would do well to adapt the language of their particular context area. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) theory is most frequently used in researching children, and the language used reflects that focus. Researchers currently working with human ecology models need to place their particular subjects, rather than the children to which Bronfenbrenner refers, at the center and place other pertinent systems in the surrounding ecosystems.

Before beginning a program to aid workers or families, practitioners can use human ecology theory to examine more influences than those obviously related to the issue for which the program was designed. Practitioners who look beyond the obvious may discover ways to enhance the program or unforeseen road blocks to the program's success. Those on the outside cannot understand the culture of those they are trying to help unless they explore deeply the lives of those people. Using human ecology theory would ensure a broad picture of the culture develops. Practitioners who wish to help workers or families need to explore the broader concerns surrounding the issue if they want their programs to be successful.

Limitations of the Study

This study was intended to examine the individual, the work environment, and the family environment. An important component of the study was the examination of how the family environment and the work environment are interconnected with the individual's adaptation to restructuring. A limitation of the study was the lack of substantial information about the employees' family environment despite the constant adjustment of the interview guide to attempt to gather more information about these families.

Interviewing the spouse of each married participant would have provided evidence of his or her reactions to the restructuring. Participants perceived that their families handled the competitive hiring period without too much tension because of the way the participant interpreted it to the family. Knowing what the family did to allow the participant to maintain this opinion would enrich the study. Conclusions about family environments were based on participants' perceptions of their families' reactions rather than family members' accounts of those reactions.

Other reasons for the dearth of family information were as follows. The interviews were limited to 2 hours and provided only a narrow window through which to view the environments of concern to the study. Two hours may have been insufficient time to overcome any boundaries participants might have raised to protect their families from what was happening at the agency. Given participants' experiences during the competitive hiring period (see Chapter IV), they may have erected intense barriers to keep their families from being stressed by happenings at the agency. This practice may have carried over into the agency.

If barriers to protect families were as strong as they seemed, participants may have refused to take part in the study if I had requested to interview family members also. A further possibility for the lack of family information was that for some participants work might be a more intimate relationship than the family one. Last, having half the sample unmarried or separated from their spouse may have contributed to the paucity of family information.

Observation of participants engaging in the team meetings and in function work would add to the analysis about the conflict they recounted. Observation on the floor during work hours would illuminate the perceptions of the amount of time participants said they were away from their desks. Use of the secretarial pool, interactions within the neighborhood and community, noise levels, and general movement patterns could be observed and would add more richness and depth to the data.

Another limitation concerned the sample. Participants came from only one group which limited diversity of experience. Further, they were middle class, well educated, and similar in age. The voluntary nature of the sample selection restricted the study. Three eligible participants chose not to participate. Their participation would have increased the sample size and added to the data.

Time was a limitation. Participants were willing to devote 2 hours to the interview. A lack of time constraints may have freed both the researcher and the participant for a more in-depth interview and follow-up.

As a novice researcher, my inexperience with analyzing data may have been limiting. Data analysis is an experience that is best shared with colleagues. Personal biases, while acknowledged in this study, hindered analysis by narrowing explanations from the data. Having colleagues' input would reveal aspects in the data those biases concealed. Collaborative data analysis could enrich the research experience for the researcher.

Future Research Possibilities

Future research interests come from extending the research question and the limitations to this study. Future research could reveal whether other work groups substitute work support for family support. If they do, what are the processes they use, and under what circumstances does it occur? Comparisons with skilled workers and middle managers in restructured situations from private organizations would reveal any differences the groups might experience in their adaptation processes.

Choosing a sample from several different restructured organizations would provide comparisons with those from one location. Samples selected from throughout an organization could also be compared to those from one group. Men and women's adaptation processes could be compared for similarities and differences. Married and unmarried people could be compared to give a broader perspective to the data.

Extending the methodology to include participant observation as well as interviewing would enable the researcher to enter into the environment of the participants in a more salient way. Participant observation would broaden the point of view included in the data and increase understanding of the participants' experiences.

Conclusion

These data provided the beginning of a grounded theory of adaptation to organizational restructuring. Under restructuring, implemented in a manner like that at the agency, the employees who remained after the downsizing required time to adapt. They also needed time to grieve for their colleagues who were laid off. The uncertainties and tensions they experienced increased if they did not have the time to grieve and to completely adapt to the new structure.

Apparent contradictions between the rhetoric of the restructuring vision and the reality as perceived by participants hindered their adaptation. Bringing language of community and concepts of support from the family environment into the work ecosystem facilitated adaptation. Previous successful experiences with change also aided adaptation.

In summary, under conditions of change like that of the agency, being given the time to reestablish a work place culture and to grieve would facilitate adaptation processes. Facilitators of adaptation at the agency included bringing family concepts into the work place and previous experiences with change. Challenges to adaptation included contradictions between rhetoric and reality in the way participants' experienced the restructured organization. Other challenges were occurrences that increased uncertainty and tension of employees. Awareness of the apparent contradictions between ideology and reality, as well as overtly valuing workers' perceptions and needs, would enhance adaptation to change processes.

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Appendix A

Transactions between individuals and family and work environments: A qualitative analysis of workers' adaptation to organizational restructuring

GENERAL INFORMATION FORM

NAME__________________________________ DATE______

HOME ADDRESS______________________________________

TELEPHONE (HOME)__________________ (OFFICE)______________

BIRTHDATE____________________ ETHNICITY__________________
Month/day/year

GENDER_______ HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION_______

GOVERNMENT GRADE:_______

MARITAL STATUS: MARRIED______ DIVORCED______

SEPARATED______ NEVER MARRIED______ OTHER______

NUMBER OF YEARS LIVING WITH CURRENT SPOUSE/PARTNER_____

NUMBER OF TIMES MARRIED________

AGES OF CHILDREN LIVING IN YOUR HOME______________________

DATE OF EARLIEST EMPLOYMENT AT AGENCY______________________

DATE YOU BEGAN YOUR CURRENT POSITION______________________

Appendix B

Transactions between individuals and family and work environments: A qualitative analysis of workers' adaptation to organizational restructuring

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

To [Agency] participants in this study:

I am a graduate student at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. The subject of my doctoral research is: TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY AND WORK ENVIRONMENTS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WORKERS' ADAPTATION TO ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING. I am interviewing employees who have experienced restructuring in their organization within the last six to twelve months.

As part of this study, you are invited to participate in an approximately two hour interview and, possibly, one or two short telephone follow-up interviews. The interview concentrates on your thoughts, feelings, and actions about your personal, family, and work experiences since the [agency] restructured. The interview will take place at a time that you choose in an enclosed room at [the agency].

My goal is to analyze the interview material in order to understand everyday experiences after the restructuring process. I am interested in the details of your story. As part of my dissertation, I may compile the interview material into a profile of employee adaptation to the change. Direct quotes from the interviews may be used to illustrate the profile. Any quotes will respect the confidentiality of participants. I may also wish to use some of the interview material in journal articles or presentations to interested groups. I may wish to write a book based on the dissertation.

Each interview will be audiotaped and later transcribed by me or by a typist who is also committed to maintaining confidentiality. The transcriptions will be reviewed by me and faculty advisors or co-researchers who assist me with the analysis; they also are committed to maintaining confidentiality. In all written material and oral presentations which may use information from these interviews, your name, names of your family members, co-workers or other people at [the agency], or the name and location of the agency will not be used. Transcripts will use codes instead of your name, and the final document will use pseudonyms for participants' names.

I hope you will find the interview an interesting and illuminating experience. If at anytime you change your mind about continuing the interview, you may postpone, reschedule, or quit, whichever you prefer. Upon reflection, you may decide a section of the interview is too personal to be included in the data. I promise to delete that section from the transcription upon notification by you.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

I, ________________________________, have read the above statement and agree to participate in the interview under the conditions stated above.

____
Signature of Participant

____

Date

Researcher's Signature

If you have any questions, please contact me:

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Appendix C

Transactions between individuals and family and work environments: A qualitative analysis of workers' adaptation to organizational restructuring

INITIAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Tell me about your family.
Probe: What is your relationship with each person described?

How involved are you with your family?
Probes: enthusiasm, tension, tiredness

What kinds of activities does the whole family do together?

What are some of the activities your family does without you?

How satisfied are you with the amount of family time you have? How satisfied does your family seem to be with this amount of time?

Have you noticed any changes in your lifestyle or habits over the last year or so?
Probes: eating, sleeping, alcohol consumption

Tell me about the chores you do at home.

Generally, how healthy would you say you are?
Probes: digestion, muscle pain, heart problems

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Describe your work.

What does good work look like in your department?
How do you know when good work is done?
How do your ideas about good work fit with the formal structure - things like job descriptions, performance reviews, and actual responsibilities?

FAMILY-WORK SPILLOVER

Tell me your thoughts about your family while you are at work.

Tell me about the time you spend with your spouse/partner or children.

> What do you think about during this time?
> Tell me about the energy you have when you are with your spouse or children.

Generally, tell me about what you do when you are <u>not</u> at work.

> How satisfied are you with the ways you spend your time and the amount of time you have to spend?

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Is there anything about your personal make-up or past experiences that has helped/hindered you in this situation?

> Tell me about any situation in your past where you had to adapt to a significantly different situation. Do you think your adaptation was successful given your personal characteristics?

DOWNSIZING

Tell me about your family's reactions during the most intense part of the downsizing. How do they react now?
Probes: worker support system

Tell me how your work fits into the restructured organizational plan at the agency.

> How do you understand the new organizational design?
> What do you think the agency goals and philosophies are today?
> Tell me about the feedback between work groups and management.
>
> > How do you feel about the kind, consistency, and amount of feedback you and your work group receive?

Generally, how do you feel about the changes at the agency?

Transactions between individuals and family and work environments: A qualitative analysis of workers' adaptation to organizational restructuring

FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

WORK ENVIRONMENT

What constitutes good work in the division?

How do you know when good work is done?

For this next question, I need to define formal structure first. In this question only, formal structure means things like job descriptions, performance review criteria, reward systems, and actual responsibilities.

Now, how do your ideas about good work fit with the formal structure?

Describe good work in team meetings.

Tell me about the work you yourself do and how it fits into your picture of good work.

How does the physical arrangement of the division influence how work gets done and relationships you form?

How does your work space influence how you work?
Probe: interior and surrounding area

What about your support network at work:
Who helps you? Who do you help?
Who do you go to for information? Who do you give information to?
Who do you have fun with on the job?
Who supports you? (type of support left to participant to define)
Which division colleagues do you have fun with outside the job?

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Please include your family as well as very close friends when you answer these next questions.

Tell me about your family and their reactions to the work restructuring and downsizing.

What family or friend roles did you have to renegotiate?

How satisfied is your family with the amount of time you spend with them?

How do you feel about the time you have to spend with your family?

What kinds of life-style changes have you made since September 1990?

Who, in your family, forms your support network?

Are there any close friends in this network? (Relationship.)

How have family and close friends aided your adaptation?

How have they hindered it?

Tell me about your general health.

FAMILY-WORK SPILLOVER

Tell me your thoughts about your family while you are at work.

What do you think about when you are at home?

Tell me about the energy you have when you are at work versus at home.

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Tell me about any situation in your past where you had to adapt to a significantly different situation.

How did previous experiences with change help you adapt at the agency?

-hindered your adaptation?

Tell me what other things you think aided your adaptation to the restructured agency.

-hindered your adaptation?

What is your sense of control or autonomy about your job?

Given your personal characteristics, describe your satisfaction with the way you adapted to the new situation.

RESTRUCTURING

Tell me how your work fits into the restructured organizational plan at the agency.

How do you understand the new organizational design?

What do you think the agency goals and philosophies are today?

Tell me about the feedback between work groups and management.

How do you feel about the kind, consistency, and amount of feedback you and your work group receive?

Generally, how do you feel about the changes at the agency?

Is there anything you want to add to what you have already said in any part of the interview?

Appendix D

CODING SCHEME

1.0 *Vision behind the restructuring*

1.1 Politics of restructuring

1.2 Impact of the restructuring on the organization

1.3 Moving the vision into the future

2.0 *Employees' perceptions during and after the restructuring*

2.1 Chief executive officer and the vision

2.2 "People element" is missing

2.3 Lack of trust

2.4 Feelings and emotions during competitive hiring process

2.5 Feelings and emotions ten (10) months later

2.6 Subsequent changes to the initial restructuring

2.7 Timeliness of communication on work issues - rumors and scuttlebutt

3.0 *Important sources for communication and feedback*

3.1 Myself - "Self-assessment, self-judgment, self-evaluation"

3.2 My teammates

3.3 My division manager

3.4 The field (users of agency services located throughout the state)

3.5 Top management (CEO and his deputies and area heads)

3.6 The system

4.0 *"Nature of the person" in the restructured agency*

4.1 Motivated by change, adaptable, flexible

4.2 Tolerance for ambiguity, "unknowns don't bother me"

4.3 Internal locus of control, self-confident, high self-esteem

4.4 Achievement and goal oriented

4.5 Value being an "expert" in my content area

5.0 *Experiences and attitudes that helped adaptation*

5.1 Previous successful experiences with change

5.2 Having a personal support group

5.3 Division manager's personal and management style

5.4 "Everyone is in the same mess" attitude

5.5 "It's up to me" attitude

6.0 *Doing the work of the agency*

6.1 Working on team projects

6.2 Number of teams in which employee maintains membership

6.3 Working on functions (tasks that are mandated by government)

6.4 Length of the work day - Time spent on agency work

6.5 Agency work done away from the agency

6.6 Physical arrangement of cubicles - work flow and work relationships

7.0 *Little bureaucratic things - "Little nagging worries," "little pricks," and "rinky dink"*

7.1 Lack of storage space on our floor

7.2 High-volume copier moved off our floor to the basement

7.3 Secretarial pooling

7.4 Doing clerical things myself

7.5 Timeliness of response to requisitions for activities and materials

8.0 *Spillover factors*

8.1 Spillover of family into work

8.2 Spillover of work into family

8.3 Separation and/or merger of the two spheres

9.0 *Involvement of family and very close friends*

9.1 Listened

9.2 We are here to support you.

9.3 Feelings and emotions about the competitive hiring process

9.4 Understood I was under a lot of tension and stress

10.0 *Demographics of employees*

10.1 Age

10.2 Years with the agency

10.3 Level of professional accomplishment

11.0 *Methods codes*

11.1 Stating what thinks researcher is looking for with a particular question

11.2 Observer comments

11.3 Anomalies in data

Appendix E

RESUME

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, 1992
College of Human Resources, Department of Family and Child Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA
Concentration: Family Studies
Dissertation: *Transactions between Individuals and Family and Work Environments: A Qualitative Analysis of Workers' Adaptation to Organizational Restructuring*

Masters of Business Administration, 1988
College of Business, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA
Concentration: Training and Human Resource Management

Bachelors of Science, 1969
College of Human Resources, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA
Concentration: Child Development

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

4/88 - 8/89	Organizational Consultant Akin and Company Charlottesville, VA
8/88 - 5/89	Adjunct Faculty James Madison University Harrisonburg, VA
1/83 - 3/88	Computer Operations and Software Support R. R. Donnelley and Sons Harrisonburg, VA
8/69 - 6/81	Public School Teacher Kindergarten, First, and Third Grades Middle School Gifted/Talented Program

CONSULTING SERVICE/CONTINUING EDUCATION

Clients: CENTEL Corporation
Charlottesville, VA

Virginia Department of Transportation
Richmond, VA

TransAmerica Telemarketing
Harrisonburg, VA

Imago Merle Norman
Harrisonburg, VA

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

Goal Setting: Key to the Future. Presented for Faculty and Staff Development of the Learning Resource Center, Virginia Tech, November 1991.

Women and Work: A History. Presented to sociology classes at Roanoke College, November 1991.

Career Development: Choosing a Career You Will Love. Presented for the Elizabeth Brant School of Business, November 1982.

Helping Gifted Students Develop Alternative Thinking Skills: "In What Ways Might I ..." Presented at the State of Virginia Gifted Conference, June 1980.

Making Local Newsletters Work for You. Presented to newsletter editors for District M of the Virginia Education Association, September 1980.

The Benefits of a Two-day Pre-kindergarten Orientation Program. Presented to the State of Virginia Kindergarten Conference, Spring 1978.

PUBLICATIONS

Akin, G., & Chafin, C. G. (1988). Building the culture of productivity at TransAmerica Telemarketing. Research Report for TransAmerica Telemarketing.

Akin, G., & Chafin, C. G. (1988). Patterns of use of the VDOT road and bridge specs book. Research Report for Virginia Transportation Research Council.

Chafin, C. G. (1988). Technical skills training for LUCAS users in the Plant Service Center. Internal Research Report for CENTEL.

Chafin, C. G. (1988). Technical skills training in the Plant Service Center at the Central Telephone Company--CENTEL. Research Report for Internship for the Masters of Business Administration, College of Business, James Madison University.

Chafin, C. G. (1980). Mysteries: A multi-dimensional study unit for gifted students. Radford, VA: Teachers' Center.

Chafin, C. G. (1979). Creative problem solving for gifted/talented students: A teacher's guide. Radford, VA: Teachers' Center.

Chafin, C. G. (1978). Kindergarten handbook for parents. Floyd, VA: Floyd County Schools.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Society for Training and Development
National Council of Family Relations
National Society for Performance and Instruction