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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Steven A. Locke for the Master of Science in Speech Communication presented July 10, 1991.

Title: Reentry Shock in the Corporate Environment

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Devorah Lieberman, Chair

Theodore G. Grove

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Marjorie Terdal

While much research and attention have focused on sojourn adjustment to a new culture, very little research has addressed readjustment to the home culture. This research studies the problems of repatriation work adjustment experienced by U.S. corporate employees. This study also suggests that cultural readjustment is situational and a multifaceted process which is influenced by many different variables. Interviews with 25 corporate repatriated employees were conducted using a 22-question

survey instrument. Repatriates were asked to rate their readjustment experiences on a seven-item Likert scale. Respondents also had the opportunity to expand on their answers with open-ended questions. Fourteen variables were examined for their relationship to cultural readjustment and to each other. Of these 14 variables, the ability for repatriates to use job skills which were learned overseas and number of overseas assignments were found to positively relate to readjustment. As predicted, the amount of autonomy expatriates experienced overseas was found to relate negatively to repatriation work readjustment. Based on these findings, recommendations to facilitate readjustment to the corporate home environment are proposed.

REENTRY SHOCK IN THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT

by

STEVEN A. LOCKE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES:

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While the author of any piece of work always receives total credit for the completed product, I would be apochryphal if I were to say that this thesis was completed without the help and influence of others. The collective creative intelligence of my fellow human beings has always astounded me and I feel that I am merely a scribe recording our activities for posterity.

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their failures, their happiness, and their dissatisfaction. For me they became more than just faceless research subjects with data I could analysis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

For those coming home after being away for an extended period of time, the potential for readjustment problems has always existed. When Paul Bänmer returned home on leave from the front in Remarque's 1928 novel, All Quiet On The Western Front, he discovered he returned to a life which had somehow become alien to him. Although he had been absent for only a year, he was uncomfortable at home and looked forward to returning to the front even though his life was in constant danger there.

This example illustrates some of the problems people encounter when reentering ones own culture after living away from it for a period of time. Bänmer's homecoming experience and subsequent feelings of alienation are experienced by many people who live and work in foreign cultures and return home. Repatriated soldiers (Faulkner & McGaw, 1986), diplomats (Perry, 1986), students and professors (Corey, 1986; Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Martin, 1986; Uehara, 1986), Peace Corps volunteers (Longsworth, 1986) and corporate personnel (Clague & Krupp, 1980; Howard, 1974; Moran, 1988a), discover that returning

home can often be a traumatic and unsettling experience. People returning from a foreign culture to their native culture quickly discover that their cross-cultural problems are not over (Freedman, 1986).

As companies expand, these new ventures often require the transfer of home office personnel to countries overseas. Overseas assignments are a common part of a career for those working in international businesses (Werkman, 1986). Researchers have identify numerous problems corporate employees face when readjusting to the corporate environment when they return home. Repatriated employees are often faced with readjustment to an environment that has changed dramatically while they were gone or is totally alien to what they became accustomed to abroad (Clague & Krupp, 1980; Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Sussman, 1986).

Business International Corporation (1978), Howard (1974), and Smith (1975) listed personal finances, readjustment to the corporate structure, and reacclimation to North American culture as major problem areas which American corporate expatriates face when returning to the home corporate environment. Howard (1974) stated that expatriates are on the receiving end of a "golden chain" where they are paid higher salaries, overseas premiums, housing, education for their children, and cost-of-living allowances. It is difficult, Howard noted, for repatriates

to maintain the same standard of living after returning to the United States.

Repatriated executives may also suffer a loss in prestige and status upon their return home (Howard, 1974). Americans overseas are often involved with high-level government officials, such as ministers of finance and labor and become accustomed to moving in prestigious circles in the host country to which they were assigned. Back in the United States, executives often find themselves moved back to a more middle-class role. Expatriated executives who have been involved in multinational negotiations may have feelings of being let down when they find their work no longer affects global politics (Werkman, 1986). Says Smith (1975), "one minute he is Patton roaring across the desert, and the next he is on Eisenhower's staff where the moves must be made an inch at a time" (p.72).

Business Week (1979) found that it is hard to recruit managers for overseas stints. One of the reasons is there is always the risk of being stuck in a mediocre job or in some cases not having a job upon return. Executives complain that there is a great deal of inducement to go overseas, but upon return they often feel the company does not know what to do with them (Smith, 1975). Overseas assignments are now being considered by many to be a one-way street where individuals are sent abroad and then forgotten (Clague & Krupp, 1980).

Other researchers examine repatriation problems from a intercultural communication perspective. This group of researchers posit that repatriates are faced with the problem of returning to values, customs, lifestyles, and behaviors that were set aside when they went overseas and are no longer familiar. By living away from the United States, expatriates lose contact with the anchoring points of their daily lives (Werkman, 1986). Sojourners, attempting to readjust to their own cultures, find that old friends are uninterested in their experiences. They also sense changes in themselves that they are uncomfortable with (Brislin, 1981). Kolhs writes:

When people return they are no longer the same innocent people they were when they first left home. The message of culture shock is that what we were raised to believe were absolutes are, in reality, just another set of possibilities no inherently better or worse than hundreds of other possible sets of values and assumptions. Having received this revelation, one faces the return to a whole nation of people--your own--who haven't the slightest inkling of this new truth, not to mention, the further insult that they don't really want to hear about all the unbelievable adventures you have just experienced and are dying to share (1986, p.xxi).

Repatriates leave a part of themselves behind when they return from living abroad. Leaving a home or lifestyle that may have become familiar while they were abroad may involve feelings of loss, separation and repudiation that can have serious consequences when trying to readapt back to the home culture (Werkman, 1986). When repatriates return to the home environment, values may be difficult to reconcile.

Besides gaining new values (Brislin, 1981), repatriates also accumulate a set of special competencies and behaviors that help them successfully adjust to new situations (Werkman, 1986). Yet there is little support for this special behavior when they return (Moran, 1988b). In fact, there is a considerable amount of pressure from the home culture to conform to the predictable behavior of the home culture (Freedman, 1986). Repatriates, says Freedman, have to be prepared to modify their acquired foreign behavior or suffer the consequences of becoming alienated from the very people they left behind.

PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION

In this study, the readjustment of U.S. employees to their home offices after having lived and worked at least six months in another country is examined. Researchers state there is very little systematic research and literature on reentry adjustment and suggest a clear need for more investigation of this topic (Austin, 1986; Brein & David, 1971; Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Koester, 1984; Martin, 1984; Uehara, 1986).

While research studies and literature of the behavioral sciences have paid little attention to the problems of repatriation, multinational corporations (MNC) have paid even less attention (Werkman, 1986). This lack of attention cannot be explained away by an absence of Americans abroad

or the lack of readjustment problems when they return home. Werkman estimates that there are approximately 1.7 million Americans presently living overseas. Each year U.S. corporations transfer more than 100,000 employees and their families overseas (Brett, 1980). While many multinational firms have some type of overseas training program for the employees they send abroad, few have any type of readjustment programs for their repatriated employees (Howard, 1974; Moran, 1988a).

In a survey of 33 midwestern companies and organizations, Tucker and Wight (1981) found that while 94 percent of those surveyed provided some type of intercultural training, most of the training consisted of little more than language training. Only 12 percent of those surveyed provided any type of assistance for repatriated employees and their families. The survey found that out of the 88 percent who did not offer reentry training, 43 percent thought that such a program should be provided. Another survey reported that while 81 percent of repatriated employees from different companies experienced some type of reverse culture shock, only seven percent of their companies provided any type of organized assistance (Sussman, 1986).

Interestingly enough, both studies found that the cost of providing repatriates with reentry assistance was not a concern for the company. Rather, a majority of the companies and organizations surveyed just did not think the issue was

important enough to warrant their attention (Tucker & Wight, 1981). However, repatriation problems cost multinational corporations a great deal of money in terms of repatriate failure. Because repatriates often feel ignored and estranged from the parent company when they return to their old positions, they become disenchanted and often seek employment elsewhere (Clague and Krupp 1980; Tucker & Wight, 1981).

The Wall Street Journal (O'Bolye, 1989) reported that the average compensation package for an American expatriate overseas is \$300,000. Since the average stay overseas is 3 to 4 years (Black, 1989), this represents an investment of approximately \$1 million per repatriate for companies with overseas employees. The average failure rate for repatriates who return home but then leave their firms within one year, is about one in four (Black & Gregersen, 1990). Thus, multinational corporations lose approximately \$1 million for every \$4 million they have invested in their returning overseas employees. The practical reasons for paying attention to and investigating repatriation adjustment process seem compelling.

Clague and Krupp (1980) found that most companies when faced with a problem in an overseas division or branch, spent a great deal of time and attention selecting, training and setting up personnel for the overseas assignment. But once employees have been sent overseas, the personnel office

tends to ignore any future needs or problems the expatriates might have. The idea that employees would have problems readjusting to their own culture, has not occurred to many companies (Clague and Krupp, 1980). According to Kolhs (1986), the reason companies do not see the need to prepare employees for the shock of reentry into the corporate work place is because it does not seem logical that employees would need more training before returning to their original place of birth and enculturation. "It seems so patently unreasonable that any of us should have difficulty fitting back into a country with whose values and customs we are so intimately familiar" (p.xx).

Researchers have reported that for many repatriates, readjustment to the parent company is harder to cope with and more stressful than initial adjustment to the foreign culture (Adler, 1981, 1991; Uehara, 1984). Although no empirical or systematic research has been conducted to support their findings, Gama and Pedersen (1977), Martin (1984), Sussman (1986), and Werkman (1986) report that one of the biggest problems of repatriation is the unexpectedness of reentry problems by the repatriate and the organization. While many people expect to make cultural adjustments to a foreign host country, few expect to make them when they return (Clague & Krupp, 1980; Sussman, 1986).

Repatriates are also often faced with xenophobic responses from co-workers and supervisors when they return

home and their expertise and advice is seldom acknowledged, sought, or utilized (Adler, 1981; Harvey, 1970; Moran, 1988a). Adler found that repatriates who acted the "least foreign"--those who did not speak a foreign language, have foreign friends, or utilize management skills they learned and developed overseas--were assessed as being the most effective by their supervisors and co-workers (Adler, 1981, 1991; Sussman, 1986). A survey of 200 repatriated managers found that while subjects reported improved management skills as a result of their overseas experience, these improved skills led to readjustment difficulties (Sussman, 1986). Adler (1981) reported that co-workers and supervisors gave higher effectiveness ratings to repatriates who least utilized the skills they had learned and developed overseas.

While researchers surmise that possible cognitive and behavioral changes take place within successful expatriates, they also point out that changes in the home environment also affect repatriates. Highly technical people who work in rapidly changing fields are unable to keep up on new developments while they are away from the home office (Clague & Krupp, 1980). Corporate structures change and expatriated managers are passed over for advancement (Sussman, 1986). Last, those in lower caliber management positions often have qualifications which would allow them to continue in the country where they were posted and are still highly qualified. However, when lower caliber managers

return, companies often have problems finding them a position.

Howard (1974) also suggested that higher caliber managers often are being groomed by their overseas experience so they can learn the overseas operations first hand. Adler (1981, 1991), however, found that overseas assignments were not really a stepping stone up the corporate ladder and that companies traditionally promote fewer than half of their returnees. Many returnees stated that their careers had not been enhanced by their overseas assignment and that they experienced feelings of discontinuity and a loss of momentum in their careers. Repatriates interviewed by Clague and Krupp (1980) remarked that if they had the choice between overseas assignment and a corporate office assignment with visibility, they would choose the latter.

Smith (1975) found that while there was a mystique about going overseas and promises of advancement, overseas experience did not necessarily lead to furthering one's career. In a survey of the presidents and chairmen of 50 large multinational corporations, only a handful had international experience. Of the 87 top officials surveyed, over 79 percent had no experience working overseas. One top executive told Smith that while international experience is great, "just make sure you get it in the international

division at headquarters, right down the corridor from the chairman of the board" (p.72).

Research thus far has shown that living overseas has a long lasting effect on personality, says Werkman (1986). Schools, government agencies, and businesses would benefit greatly if they set up some type of transition programs to help returning Americans understand their overseas experience and reintegrate back into their culture. Corporations who do not pay attention to this problem run the risk of losing highly qualified and key personnel who return to disappointing positions in the corporate structure. Corporations also run the risk of not being able to recruit enough employees for overseas assignments (Adler, 1981).

THEORETICAL SCOPE AND DEFINITION

There is little agreement among researchers when defining and explaining what constitutes the reentry process. "The approaches of various investigators have been so divergent that it is difficult to either interrelate their findings or to develop any consistencies among the factors deemed relevant to intercultural adjustment" (Brein & David, 1971, p. 218). Consequently, the theoretical base to explain reentry shock does not appear to have progressed much beyond a taxonomy. Much of the past research has done little more than define and label a set of concepts that

describe the readjustment process. Few researchers it appears have ventured beyond this first stage to provide explanations, statements about how or why these concepts are interrelated.

An examination of the definitions and concepts that have thus far been developed by researchers show some consistencies and interrelationships that suggest problems in cultural readjustment can be explained within a theoretical framework. This framework involves the development of stress during the readjustment process. In order to develop a framework to explain reentry shock, some of the definitions and concepts will be examined.

Researchers often labeled reentry shock as being somewhat of a close cousin to culture shock. They compare the reentry experience to the shock one experiences when entering a new culture (Adler, 1975; Bennett, 1977; Koester, 1984). The two phenomena appear to be similar in principle and share many common traits.

Hall (1959) described culture shock as the "removal or distortion of familiar cues one encounters at home and the substitution for them of other cues which are strange" (p. 174). This removal or loss of familiar cultural signs and symbols of social intercourse can produce anxiety and is disruptive to people entering new cultures (Oberg, 1960). These negative affective reactions to foreign encounters are caused by the lack of a complete and accurate set of

schemates for understanding and acting appropriately (Black & Gregersen, 1990). There is a loss of social reinforcements when confronted with new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning to people entering new cultures (Adler, 1975). Sojourners essentially perceive themselves as alienated from the culture in which they reside.

Similar to culture shock, sojourner alienation is a salient element in reverse culture shock (Black & Gregersen, 1990; Brislin, 1981; Koester, 1984). Sojourners who become familiar with and adapt to new cultural values, signs and symbols of social intercourse, beliefs, and behaviors feel alienated when confronted with the different cultural norms when they return home. Also, very similar to the symptoms of culture shock, the individual experiences psychosocial difficulties that are associated with physical problems in the initial stage of readjustment to one's home culture (Uehara, 1986).

Brislin (1981) describes the problems of reentry adjustment in terms of the development of new reference and membership groups or shifting to a new "in-group." Traveling abroad, sojourners develop new reference and membership groups which are chosen on the basis of their long term goals. This attachment to new groups can become problematic, stressful, and creates anxiety upon repatriation. While returnees may find that situations in their native culture

seem familiar, they are puzzled because of their past exposure to new cultural dimensions.

Koester (1984) describes reentry shock as occurring during the transition an individual makes from a foreign culture to a home culture. Here again, while this definition describes reentry shock, it does little to explain why cross-cultural transitions are problematic. The definition adds to a growing paradigm that looks at reentry as a transitional process which creates feelings of alienation, uncertainty, perceived loss of control and helplessness and thus produces stress and anxiety (Black, 1990; Brett, 1980). Some researchers surmise that one does not have to go outside one's own country to experience culture shock (Adler, 1975; Bennett, 1977). Such episodes can be experienced by returning veterans, married couples who divorce, or a person who changes occupations in mid-career.

The development of stress thus can be argued to be one of the primary elements related to cross-cultural work adjustment and readjustment (Adler, 1991, Black, 1988, 1990; Brett, 1980; Feldman & Brett, 1983; Weissman & Furnham, 1987). The shock produced by the transition is a stress reaction that is a consequence of not being able to understand, control, and predict the behavior of others (Weissman & Furnham, 1987). Thus, when people feel they have little hope of reducing uncertainty or reasserting control, they are likely to experience feelings of helplessness and

depression, and other physiological and physical problems that are commonly associated with culture and reentry shock (Feldman & Brett, 1983).

Lazarus (1966) defines stress as the psychological state that develops when an individual faces a situation that taxes or exceeds available resources for dealing with the particular situation. In a review of the research on stress, there appears three major components of stress that affect human performance and social behavior: uncertainty, ambiguity, and loss of control (Cohen, 1980). Uncertainty contributes to stress when individuals are faced with situations which have unpredictable outcomes. Ambiguity contributes to stress when individuals are faced with situations where they are unclear as to what is expected or appropriate. Last, stress develops when individuals feel that they are helpless and lack control over situations (Lazarus, 1966).

In the application to cross-cultural transfers and subsequent adjustment, Brett (1980) hypothesizes that stress is caused by the disruption of roles and the routines inherent in those roles which are used to determine how individuals interact with others in a variety of environmental settings. She conceptualizes routines as a stream of ongoing behavioral interactions with outcomes or outcome avoidance. Old routines are valued because

behaviors--outcome contingencies--are known or are predictable.

Moving disrupts these routines by changing the environment in which behavior is carried out and by changing the people with whom these behaviors are acted out (Brett, 1980). Whereas the old routines offered control, in a transfer there may be feelings of loss of valued outcome; uncertainty and lack of control disrupt routines and threaten identity. Brett concludes that the greater the perceived disruption of routines, the more difficult will be the adjustment.

Similar to entering a new culture, repatriated employees returning to their own culture experience stress because they are uncertain as to what is acceptable and unacceptable or appropriate and inappropriate (Black & Gregersen, 1990). Black (1990) reports a negative relationship between stress and outcomes such as performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

Based on the above assertions, the creation of stress can thus be used to create a useful framework to examine repatriates' adjustment problems. Uncertainty of outcome, ambiguity in what is expected, loss of control over situations, and sojourn alienation contribute to the development of stress and the physiological and physical problems that are commonly associated with reentry shock.

Since repatriates lack a current understanding of their home office environment, they are motivated to replace previously valued outcomes so they can reduce uncertainty and reassert control and predictability over their environments (Brett, 1980; Feldman & Brett, 1983). It is important to note that while repatriates develop coping strategies to decrease uncertainty and stress, the choice of strategies is determined by the relationship between the repatriate and the environment rather than by the repatriate (Feldman & Brett, 1983).

Thesis Statement

This research project posits that reentry shock is a stress related phenomena. Variables or situations which increase stress and uncertainty for repatriates are expected to inhibit the readjustment process. Likewise those situations or variables that decrease stress are expected to have a positive relationship with repatriation adjustment.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

In a compilation of articles on reentry shock, Austin (1986) notes that there is a limited amount of attention paid to readjustment to the home culture. Researchers have paid even less attention to the readjustment of multinational corporate employees (Werkman, 1986). While a few studies in the past have examined some of the issues related to repatriation adjustment, most of these focus on problems as identified by corporate human resource executives (Black & Gregersen, 1990). Only a few studies employ repatriated corporate employees as research subjects (Adler, 1981; Black & Gregersen, 1990; Clague & Krupp, 1980). Most systematic research studies focus on university students and professors involved with exchange programs (Baty & Dold, 1977; Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Martin, 1986; Uehara, 1983).

CULTURAL READJUSTMENT ON A TEMPORAL SCALE

Past research examined repatriation adjustment as a unidimensional construct. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) described cultural readjustment as part of the sojourn

experience that occurred along a temporal dimension. In a study with 5300 American Fulbright and Smith-Mundt grantees and 400 American university students in France, they explained the intercultural sojourn experience in terms of a W-curved function that included six stages (see Figure 1).

(1) The "honeymoon" stage is marked by euphoria and excitement from being in a new country. (2) Initial excitement is followed by culture shock and a decline in adjustment to the host culture. (3) Culture shock is followed by recovery where the individual adjusts to the new culture. (4) Upon returning home, the individual experiences satisfaction and euphoria which is followed by (5) reentry shock as the individual attempts to adjust to the home culture. (6) The individual, over time adjusts back to the home culture.

LEVELS OF SATISFACTION DURING SOJOURN

Figure 1. The W-Curve Hypothesis.
(Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963)

There is no conclusive evidence which supports the W-Curve function and several researchers have found flaws in this description (Adler, 1981; Brislin, 1981; Church, 1982; Martin 1984). Church found the whole idea to be weak and

suggested that while time may be a factor in describing sojourn adjustment, other variables must be added. Variables such as nationality, status, language proficiency, age, education level, gender, and previous cross culture experience are much more important in determining cultural readjustment.

Citing empirical studies, Brein and David (1971) and Brislin (1981) found no evidence that supported the W-shaped hypothesis. They suggest that there is too much latitude in the reported experiences of individual sojourners and a single set of responses is not generalizable across different groups of people. In other cases, parts of the W-shaped curve were missing and not reported by sojourners (Klineberg & Hull, 1979).

While Brislin (1981) does not rule out the possibility that people's responses might follow a W-shaped curve, he argues that they occur at such different times that they cannot be captured by a research study. He suggests that research needs to focus on variables such as individual traits and skills, length of time in host country, amount of difference between the host and home culture, presence of support groups, and availability of training programs.

Adler (1981, 1991) found a W-shaped curve similar to that of Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) although it was somewhat "flattened" (see Figure 2). Her study involved 200 repatriated government and corporate employees.

LEVELS OF SATISFACTION DURING SOJOURN

Figure 2. Modified W-Curve Hypothesis.
(Adler, 1981)

Adler (1981) found the highest levels of satisfaction during the first month of repatriation. These high levels of satisfaction were short-lived and lasted less than a month for most returnees. They were followed immediately by the lowest levels and for some returnees the feeling of high satisfaction upon their immediate return lasted only a few hours. The lowest periods of the repatriation period, Adler discovered, were during the second and third months and were frequently associated with realizations that the job repatriates were returning to did not meet their expectations. Many of the returnees felt the foreign assignment had not been beneficial to their careers and felt their careers had suffered a loss of momentum. By the sixth month repatriates, had generally accepted their situations and reported feeling "average," neither very high nor very low (Adler, 1981; Moran, 1988a).

Black and Gregersen (1990) suggest that the lapse of time is an important consideration in the repatriation

adjustment process because individuals acquire information through experience the longer they are in their environment. The more information repatriates have about their environment, the more uncertainty is reduced and the greater the repatriation adjustment. Black (1990) and Brett (1980) suggest that uncertainty is responsible for producing stress and thus inhibits repatriate adjustment. Therefore, one would expect repatriates who were home the longest would experience less stress and would be better adjusted than those who had recently returned from overseas.

VARIABLES IN CULTURAL READJUSTMENT

Several researchers have examined variables which they hypothesized were predictors of repatriation adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1990; Martin, 1986; Moore, Jones, & Austin, 1987; and Uehara, 1986). However, these studies differ in the variables examined and the studies have not been replicated. Other researchers (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Brabant, Palmer, & Gramling, 1990) have discussed these predictor variables only as an aside to their research. Interestingly enough, even though many of these researchers mention the development of stress in conjunction with their studies of variables, none suggest that there is a relationship between these variables and the development of stress.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) suggested that age is a critical factor in determining the intensity of reentry shock. The university students they used in their research, experienced more reentry shock than did professors and lecturers. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) reasoned that faculty members tended to be established in their fields of work and could become immediately involved in creative work on their return home and thus experience much less feelings of isolation and alienation. The younger students, on the other hand, were more apt to have readjustment problems because they had not found their identity in their own culture before traveling abroad. As a result of their sojourn experience, younger expatriates became zealously converted to new values and were reluctant to give up this security when they returned to their home culture.

While some researchers have found a similar relationship between age and readjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1990), others have not (Brabant et al., 1990; Uehara, 1986). Black and Gregersen suggest that because older repatriates have more information about their home environment they have less uncertainty when they return. One would expect that the more uncertainty repatriates experienced the more stress they would experience.

In a survey of literature, Martin (1984) posited that reentry research should focus on the influence and relationship of "critical" (predictor) variables to reentry

adjustment as recommended by Brislin (1981) and Church (1982). She suggested that these variables can be broken down and examined in three broad categories:

- * Background variables, which include such things as gender, age, and education level
- * Host culture variables, which include the location and duration of sojourn and degree of interaction with host culture.
- * Reentry variables, which include the environment which repatriates are returning to and the readiness of repatriates to return to the home environment.

Martin (1984) also suggested that in developing theory to explain the problems of reentry, sojourner expectations of reentry difficulties, changes in the home environment, and sojourner awareness of change in the home environment should be considered. Interestingly enough, in a survey of 175 repatriated students, Martin (1986) found no statistically significant relationship for the "critical" variables she had suggested were important to readjustment.

Moore et al. (1987) developed a reverse culture shock scale, RCS, in an attempt to identify reentry adjustment difficulties among adult missionaries. A test was conducted using 255 returning adult missionaries. Variables such as age, marital status, and type of school attended were used as predictors to account for RCS scores which would identify amounts of reentry difficulty. The predictor variables accounted for only 15 percent of the total variation in RCS scores. Moore et al. (1987) did not suggest why these

predictor variables were linked to readjustment difficulties.

Black and Gregersen (1990) found significant relationships between various categories of variables and repatriation work adjustment in a study of repatriated corporate personnel. The most important of these were the relationships between role discretion and clarity in the work place and work adjustment. A positive relationship was found between readjustment and individuals who were allowed to adjust to their work role by changing the role to fit their behaviors. However, a lack of clarity in job responsibilities upon return had a negative impact on work adjustment. Even though these researchers do not suggest a direct link between uncertainty and stress, Black (1990) does make the connection.

Black and Gregersen (1990) suggest that these relationships could be explained by the development of uncertainty repatriates faced when they returned. Repatriates who were allowed to adjust to their work roles by changing the role to fit their behaviors were essentially reducing uncertainty by setting up roles in which they were familiar. By the same token, repatriates who lacked clarity in job responsibilities were uncertain as to what was expected of them. One would expect that this uncertainty would be stressful and would lead to readjustment problems.

Black and Gregersen (1990) also found that non-work variables such as spouse adjustment and housing conditions upon return had a significant relationship to work adjustment. These variables, they found, were potential sources of stress that carried over into the work place and affected readjustment.

In a comparative study between students who had previously traveled and lived abroad and those who had traveled within the national borders, Uehara (1986) found a significant difference and evidence of cultural readjustment for overseas sojourners. She hypothesized that positive cultural readjustment would be greater for those who were (1) younger, (2) stayed overseas longer, (3) had to make the greatest amount of adjustment overseas, (4) were more concerned with international, political, and social problems, (5) had the greatest amount of basic value changes, (6) had a greater desire to return home, (7) and had the least amount of information about their home culture while they were abroad. Uehara (1986) found only one significant relationship between value changes and readjustment which will be discussed in the following section. Last, Uehara did not find any correlation between reentry shock and the length of time since return.

VALUE CHANGES AND CULTURAL READJUSTMENT

Differences in values have long been reported by researchers as a major source of conflict and a stumbling block between cultures (Yousef, 1988; Lustig, 1988; Barna, 1988). Lustig suggests that values develop predictable behaviors which are stable over time for a given culture and lead to roughly similar responses to similar situations. Along the same line, Florence Kluckhohn (cited in Condon & Yousef, 1975) developed the idea that there were universal problems and conditions confronting all cultures and societies. The limited number of possible solutions to these problems are called value orientations. Values are what guide people in different cultures to regard items, situations, and behaviors as good and bad, right and wrong, valuable and worthless, or appropriate and inappropriate (Brislin, 1981; Condon & Yousef, 1975; Lustig, 1988).

According to Lustig (1988), members of a specific culture believe their values to be superior and preferable to others. Misunderstandings often occur when people from different cultures with differing value orientations interact. Since people generally behave almost automatically in a manner compatible with their primary reference group (Brislin, 1981; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963), exposure to new and different value systems, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions contributes to misunderstandings, feelings of uncertainty, the development of stress and

hence, culture shock for the overseas sojourner (Adler, 1975).

As noted previously, culture shock is the result of a distortion and or absence of familiar cues expatriates have come to expect from their primary reference group in their home culture (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Just as these items can create stress and uncertainty for people entering new cultures, exposure to new cultural bias can cause problems for those reentering their home culture (Brislin, 1981; Koester, 1984; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Uehara, 1986). Through exposure to a foreign culture, sojourners become resocialized to the alien culture and acquire new values, behaviors, and expectations. These new patterns are different from those of their home cultures and over time sojourners go through a process of acculturation to the new culture they have entered. If this experience is positive and particularly gratifying, the expatriate may identify rather closely with the new culture (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

Changes in value orientation seem to be linked to cultural readjustment. In a study of 58 foreign exchange students, Uehara (1986) found that the greater the change in basic values the greater an individual would experience reentry shock. The values she found that positively correlated with reentry shock included relationships with friends, achievement-oriented behavior, views about male-

female relationships, views about clothing, and views about individuality. The value orientations which were not significant included relationships with family, views about religion, ways of using money, and career goals.

From the Uehara (1986) study, it is possible to link the development of stress to value orientation. Values which are familiar to the sojourner would be expected to reduce uncertainty and hence, levels of stress. On the other hand, repatriated corporate employees who have changed their values orientations concerning individuality and achievement, might encounter difficulty when attempting to reconcile these value changes in their home culture. The change in value orientations would be expected to make repatriates incompatible with their primary reference group which would thus create uncertainty and stress.

Freedman (1986) describes the reentry experience as the relearning of one's culture because of the immersion into a foreign culture. Returnees experience difficulties because of changes in attitudes, behaviors, and interaction rules to which they were exposed when adjusting to the foreign culture (Koester, 1984). When they return, says Freedman (1986), repatriates are not the same people they used to be. They walk, talk, think, and feel in ways that are strange and perhaps unheard of to the citizens of their native culture. Returnees also perceive themselves as changed and are frustrated when they are unable to talk about their

experiences and newly acquired knowledge with those from their own culture.

Returnees are not the only ones to have changed. Those left behind have also changed (Freedman, 1986; Howard, 1974; Sussman, 1986). As noted in the previous chapter, this is also true for those returning to a corporate environment. The reintegration of personnel into the corporate environment creates a high potential for conflict (Freedman, 1986). This conflict, says Freedman (1986), arises out of the need for people to create their world in ways which are comfortable to them.

People are comfortable when those around them behave in a way that is predictable and corresponds with their expectations. When sojourners return home and confront those they left behind with different behaviors and solutions to situations and problems, the sojourners are no longer predictable and create discomfort for those within their own culture. Using this logic some researchers have suggested that sojourners who travel to cultures that are similar to the sojourners' will experience less uncertainty and readjustment problems (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Others suggest that those who are the most successful in adjusting to the foreign culture would experience the greatest difficulties in readjusting to their home environment (Brislin, 1981; Brislin & Van Buren, 1974; Kohls, 1986; Smith, 1975).

Adler (1981) found neither one of these findings to be true. The country of assignment, she found, had absolutely no relationship to the ease of reentry. In the relationship between adjustment to the foreign culture and readjustment to the home culture, Adler (1981) and Howard (1986), found the contrary. Successful sojourners abroad, both in adjusting to the culture and accomplishing their goals, were more successful readjusting to their home cultures.

Werkman (1986) suggests that the inability of sojourners to adapt overseas may contribute to feelings of defeat and pessimism that will continue to plague them upon their return to their home culture. Successful repatriates, says Werkman, seek out advanced information about the new situation to be mastered. They find "ways to try out the new behaviors and attitudes required, and utilize peer-group interactions to gain support, test out new behaviorisms and learn about values needed in a new situation" (Werkman, 1986, p.14). In other words, successful sojourners develop coping strategies that reduce stress and uncertainty.

RELATIONSHIPS AND CULTURAL READJUSTMENT

As noted in the previous section, Uehara (1986) found that changes in some of the sojourner's basic value orientations positively correlated to problems of readjustment to the home culture. One of the strongest correlations, Uehara found, between reentry shock and

changes in basic values, dealt with relationships. Uehara suggests that communication satisfaction with members of one's family, friends, co-workers, and supervisors may have some bearing on the degree of readjustment problems experienced by the repatriate. In an earlier study, Uehara (1983) found that there was a positive correlation between the level of satisfaction with family and friends and reentry shock. The more returnees were dissatisfied in their relationships with family, friends, and professors, the greater reentry problems they would experience.

Martin (1986) successfully outlined the role of communication in perceptions of change in reentry relationships among college students who had gone overseas in foreign exchange programs. Martin found in this study that while relationships with parents and siblings had changed positively for repatriates, relationships with friends after return were more complex and changed more negatively. More specifically, she noted, that the sojourn experience had so changed repatriates' values, world view, and expectations that relating to friends who had not undergone similar experiences was problematic for repatriates. Family members, it appeared, were more willing to share in the overseas experience with repatriates. This attention increased satisfaction and lessened reentry shock for repatriates.

One would expect that problematic relationships would be stressful and would lead to readjustment problems. Repatriates, it would seem, would develop feelings of uncertainty as a result of dissimilar experiences from their friends and or co-workers. Repatriates who were able to share their overseas experiences with family members would have more defined relationships, would be expected to have less uncertainty, and thus less stress.

Other researchers have found that gender has an influence in the reentry process (Brabant et al., 1990; Gama & Pedersen, 1977). Gama and Pedersen found that relationships between returning females and their families were problematic. Brabant et al. (1990) reported that females were more likely than males to report problems with family and daily life and to find their friends had changed.

The amount of communication and connection to the home environment while overseas also appears to be important in repatriation adjustment (Adler, 1981; Brabant et al., 1990) especially in readjusting to the corporate work place. Adler found that expatriates who were regularly informed of changes and new developments in their home offices had fewer reentry problems. These results are supported by Brabant et al. (1990) who found that repatriates who had returned home frequently for visits experienced fewer readjustment problems than those who did not.

One would expect that the amount of communication and connection between the corporate expatriate and the home office would be an indicator of readjustment stress.

Expatriates who received regular information about their home offices while abroad would be expected to encounter less uncertainty when they returned. As suggested earlier, the more repatriates are able to reduce uncertainty, the less stress they will experience on return.

Adler (1981) also found that the more repatriates were able to share their overseas experience with their peers and the more their peers were interested in their overseas experiences, the fewer readjustment problems they experienced. Repatriates are usually excited about their overseas experience and often wish to share their experiences and adventures with the people back home (Brislin, 1981). The people back home, however, are usually disinterested in these adventures and uncomfortable about the changes that have taken place in cross-cultural sojourners. The people to whom repatriates return would rather talk about items closer to their own lives than the experiences of repatriates.

This lack of interest on the part of the home culture has serious repercussions for the organization and sojourner returning to the home office in the United States. Returning corporate employees are not debriefed, their advice is not sought, and their newly found skills are not utilized

(Adler, 1981; Moran, 1988a; Tucker & Wight, 1981). Not only do repatriates feel excluded, but they watch their organizations repeat the same mistakes over and over again in the countries to which they were assigned (Moran, 1988a).

Here again, one would expect that the lack of interest on the part of the home culture would produce stress in repatriates. Repatriates who are unable to relate to their co-workers and supervisors, whose advice is not sought, or who are unable to utilize the skills they developed overseas would feel a loss of control over their environment. This loss of control would be stressful and lead to adjustment problems for repatriates.

HYPOTHESES

The dimensions of cultural readjustment appear to be large and varied. The review of the literature suggests that many researchers have reached similar conclusions regarding reverse culture shock. Several researchers (Black, 1988, 1990; Brett, 1980; Feldman & Brett, 1983) suggest that the problems inherent in cultural readjustment are a function of stress which is created by uncertainty of outcome, ambiguity, and loss of control. Variables therefore that reduce stress are hypothesized to facilitate reentry adjustment while variables that increase stress would inhibit adjustment.

On the basis of the discussion presented in this chapter, the following 14 hypotheses were formulated. The variables included in each hypothesis are expected to have either a positive or negative relationship to repatriate work adjustment. Table I summarizes the expected relationship between the different stressor variables and readjustment.

The first variable, age, is expected to have a positive relationship to readjustment. Researchers suggest that older repatriates readjust more easily than younger repatriates because older repatriates are more established and can become more involved in creative work upon their return home (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Older repatriates also have more information, experience, and knowledge about the home office. This serves to reduce stress which creates uncertainty and ambiguity upon the return home (Black & Gregersen, 1990).

Hypothesis 1: The age of returnees relates positively to readjustment.

The second variable, length of stay abroad, is expected to have a negative relationship to readjustment. The longer expatriates are overseas the less information they have concerning changes in and with their home offices (Adler, 1981, 1991; Clague & Krupp, 1980). Consequently, the less information repatriates have regarding these changes the more stress they will experience when they return (Harvey,

TABLE I
EXPECTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STRESSOR
VARIABLES AND READJUSTMENT

Variables	Readjustment
1 Age at Time of Repatriation	Positive
2 Length of Stay Abroad	Negative
3 Time Back in U.S.	Positive
4 Number of Overseas Assignments	Positive
5 Interest Expressed by Home Personnel in Repatriate's Overseas Assignment	Positive
6 Relationship Between Repatriate and Home Personnel	Positive
7 Readjustment Support Given to Repatriate On Return	Positive
8 Use of Job Skills Learned Overseas	Positive
9 Amount of Connection Between Expatriate and Home Office	Positive
10 Attitude towards Corporation	Positive
11 Expatriate Adjustment Abroad	Positive
12 Overseas Autonomy	Negative
13 Level of Job-Status on Return	Positive
14 Amount of Overseas Contact After Repatriation	Positive

1983). Length of stay overseas is defined as the amount of time returnees spent overseas during their last assignment.

Hypothesis 2: The length of stay overseas relates negatively to readjustment.

The third variable, length of time since repatriation, is expected to have a positive relation to adjustment. Several studies have suggested that over time there is a gradual readjustment to the home work environment (Adler, 1981; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Moran, 1988b). The more time repatriates spend in the home office after an overseas assignment, the more knowledge they gain concerning what is expected and appropriate. As repatriates become familiar with their surroundings, uncertainty and ambiguity is expected to decrease.

Hypothesis 3: The length of time since return from an overseas assignment relates positively to readjustment.

The fourth variable, number of overseas assignments, is expected to relate positively to readjustment. Even though studies were not found to support this, several researchers suggest that the more sojourners move the more familiar they become with the readjustment process (Adler, 1981; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Howard, 1986). Sojourners develop strategies for dealing with uncertainty (Brislin, 1981) and each subsequent move overseas produces less stress. The sojourner often comes to expect the unexpected and has a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity (Werkman, 1986).

Hypothesis 4: The greater number of overseas assignments relates positively to readjustment.

The fifth variable, interest (i.e. questions and opportunity to share the overseas experience) expressed by home office personnel concerning repatriates' overseas assignments, is expected to relate positively with readjustment. Repatriates who are unable to share their overseas experiences with others feel alienated and separate from the group they are returning to (Adler, 1981, 1991; Brislin, 1981; Sussman, 1986). The more repatriates feel estranged and alienated from the group they work with, the more stress they will experience. Home office personnel is meant to include supervisors and co-workers.

Hypothesis 5: Greater levels of interest expressed by home office personnel in repatriates' overseas assignments relate positively to readjustment.

The sixth variable, relationship between repatriates and home office personnel, is expected to relate positively to readjustment. Relationship is defined as perceived feelings repatriates report between themselves and home office personnel. Researchers suggest changes occur in expatriates while overseas as well as in people in the home office (Adler, 1981; Freedman, 1986; Howard, 1974; Uehara, 1986). Repatriates who have changed their value orientation, behaviors, and attitudes overseas (Uehara, 1986) will find those they left behind unpredictable (Freedman, 1986). The more unpredictable repatriates and home office personnel find each other the greater the potential exists for stress.

Hypothesis 6: Relationship between repatriates and home office personnel relates positively to readjustment.

The seventh variable, adjustment support upon return to the home office, is expected to relate positively to adjustment. Support is defined as overall assistance repatriates received from their corporation in readjusting to their home office environments. Assistance includes financial, logistical, psychological support in readjusting after returning. The more assistance repatriates receive from their organizations in resettling into the home office the less stress they will experience. Repatriates who are introduced to new products, employees and procedures upon their return will have more knowledge and less uncertainty as they attempt to reintegrate into the home office (Howard, 1974).

Hypothesis 7: The greater amount of support repatriates receive in readjusting to the home work environment relates positively to readjustment.

The eighth variable, use of job skills learned overseas, is expected to relate positively to readjustment. Repatriated managers have reported improved job skills as a result of their overseas sojourn (Sussman, 1986). These new skills are seldom utilized because of negative reactions from co-workers and supervisors (Adler, 1981; Harvey, 1970; Moran, 1988a). One would expect that the less opportunity repatriates have to use the skills they have developed for

coping in work situations, the more stress and alienation they would experience.

Hypothesis 8: Repatriates' frequent use of job skills learned overseas relates positively to readjustment.

The ninth variable, the amount of perceived connection between expatriates and the home office in the United States, is expected to be positively related to readjustment. Perceived connection is defined by how connected to or a part of their home organization expatriates perceived themselves to be while they were overseas. Adler (1981, 1991) found that overseas employees who were kept regularly informed of developments and changes in the home office experienced fewer adjustment problems when they returned home. Repatriates who have knowledge of current operations, personnel changes, and products and/or services will encounter less stress and uncertainty upon their return to the home office (Howard, 1974).

Hypothesis 9: A greater level of perceived connection between expatriates and their home offices relates positively to readjustment.

The tenth variable, attitude towards the organization, is expected to relate positively to readjustment. Overall positive attitude is defined by how repatriates feel towards their organizations before and after their overseas sojourn.

A positive or negative attitude towards the organization is associated with the degree of satisfaction and alienation (Clague & Krupp, 1980; Tucker & Wight, 1981). One would

expect repatriates who reported positive feelings towards their company would also feel less stress and uncertainty.

Hypothesis 10: Overall positive attitude towards the organization relates positively to readjustment.

The eleventh variable, adjustment overseas, is expected to relate positively to readjustment. Researchers suggest that expatriates who adjust successfully overseas are more successful readjusting to their home cultures (Adler, 1981; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Howard, 1974). Successful repatriates reduce stress and uncertainty by seeking out advanced information concerning where they are going and what to expect (Werkman, 1986).

Hypothesis 11: Adjustment overseas relates positively to readjustment.

The twelfth variable, level of overseas autonomy, is expected to relate negatively to readjustment. Level of autonomy is defined as the amount of responsibility, decision making, and independence repatriates perceived they had overseas in comparison to the amount they have in their home office environments. Because of their distance from the home office, expatriates often are given a great deal of independence, responsibility, and freedom in decision making (Howard, 1974; Smith, 1975). When they return home, repatriates often find that they have much less independence, responsibility, and freedom to make decisions. The sudden absence of these elements would seem to

contribute to increased amounts of stress in regards to the role repatriates have in the home office.

Hypothesis 12: A greater level of overseas autonomy relates negatively to readjustment.

The thirteenth variable, a greater level of job status on return, is expected to relate positively to readjustment. Job status on return is defined as the job position repatriates were assigned when they returned to the home office environment. The process of going overseas usually entails an increase in job status (Clague & Krupp, 1980; Sussman, 1986). Returning to a job with less status than the one held overseas, increases anxiety for repatriates (Clague & Krupp, 1980). The new expectations which are related to lower job status create stress and dissatisfaction (Black & Gregersen, 1990).

Hypothesis 13: Greater level of job status on return relates positively to readjustment.

The fourteenth variable, continued contact with the country or area of assignment after repatriation, is expected to relate positively to readjustment. Overseas contact is defined as the amount of contact through their organizations repatriates have with the countries or regions they were assigned. Researchers have found that the act of going overseas increases the awareness of expatriates and gives them new perspectives on ways of handling situations (Adler, 1981; Brislin, 1981; Moran, 1988b; Tucker & Wight, 1981). Repatriates thus face a complete set of new

possibilities that are unfamiliar and have the potential of creating stress. Repatriates who are connected, through their work, to the country or region they were assigned to, would be expected to experience more certainty and familiarity in their work.

Hypothesis 14: Greater levels of overseas contact after repatriation relates positively to readjustment.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE INVESTIGATION

OVERVIEW

This chapter outlines the scope of the investigation and the methods used to collect, organize, and analyze the raw data generated by this study. This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section outlines and describes the design of the survey questionnaire used to collect the raw data. The second section describes the recruitment and selection of the 25 respondents used in this study. The third section describes the interviewer's qualifications. The fourth section describes the pilot test that was conducted to examine any problems inherent in the survey instrument and the last section describes the methods used to produce and analyze the data.

DESIGN OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher employed an interview survey instrument to obtain data concerning repatriates' experience reentry into the corporate environment. The interview setting allowed the researcher to clarify ambiguous answers and explore dimensions not considered. The survey interview was introduced with a letter explaining the nature, purpose, and

expected results of the research (see Appendix). The letter of introduction assured participants that their answers and identities would remain confidential.

The researcher employed a two part interview survey instrument. The first part of each question asked respondents to rate different items that related to their overseas and reentry experiences on a seven interval Likert scale. The second part of each question asked respondents to elaborate on the first part of each question. There were several reasons for eliciting this elaboration on each question. One reason was to ensure reliability (Barker, & Barker, 1989). Open follow-ups to closed-ended questions would also reveal flaws and provide valuable guidance and elaboration in the analysis of quantitative data (Converse, & Presser, 1986). Last, the open-ended questions would generate response alternatives for future research (Tucker, Weaver, & Berryman-Fink, 1981).

Each survey interview took 20 to 30 minutes to complete. While there is little research that outlines the correct length of time for interviews, researchers found that interest in subject and questions have an effect on survey results (Converse & Presser, 1989). In consideration of the fact that most of the participants in this survey were at work the researcher attempted to limit the interviews to 30 minutes.

SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

Sample

Companies participating in the study were selected from the Indiana business directory. Parent companies outside the state were also contacted. Only those companies with international operations were contacted. No size limitations were placed on the companies selected for participation. Because of the small number of research subjects available for interviews, no attempt was made to randomly sample multinational companies or repatriates. A proposal to share the findings of the research was extended to the companies as an inducement to allow their employees to participate in the survey interviews.

A total of 18 multinational corporations were approached with the research project proposal and asked to participate. Four corporations agreed to let their repatriates be interviewed. Seven corporations were not interested in the project, four thought the survey would invade the privacy of their repatriates and add to their repatriation troubles, two could not work within the time parameter of the study and one company was already conducting a reentry study with another researcher. The four organizations surveyed were involved in insurance, banking and heavy and light manufacturing. The companies ranged in size from a couple hundred employees to over five thousand employees.

From the four corporations which agreed to let their repatriates be interviewed, a list of 28 names was compiled and called to set up interviews. Twenty-five of the 28 people who were contacted responded for a response rate of 89 percent. Of those who did not participate, two could not participate within the time parameters of the survey and one person declined to be interviewed.

The average age of the respondents at repatriation was 40 years old and the average stay overseas was four and a half years. The length of time since return ranged from one half year to ten years. A third of the respondents had been home under a year, a third had been home between a year and a half and four years, and a third had been home between four and ten years. A majority of the respondents (64 percent) reported having had only one international assignment, while the remainder (36 percent) had two or more assignments abroad averaging three assignment each. Eighty-eight percent (22) of the respondents were male and 12 percent (3) were female. The interviews lasted between 16 minutes and one hour with an average of 35 minutes each.

Selection and Recruitment

The subjects selected for this study consisted of U.S. corporate employees who had returned from living and working in a country outside the United States. Since cultural values and behaviors vary across cultures (Condon & Yousef, 1975; Hall, 1976), situations and elements that create

stress would also be expected to vary. Results of this study are not generalizable to other cultures. Therefore, only those born and educated in the United States were interviewed and participated in the study.

The term "corporate employee" is defined to mean a person working in or for a private or public company or business. This excluded those who work for any body of the government including the military, Peace Corps, trade delegations, or foreign governments. Also excluded were those affiliated with missionaries, universities, and foreign operated businesses in the United States.

Selection of research subjects based on what constituted a cross-cultural living experience as opposed to a visit was also considered. Uehara (1986) found a distinct difference in the reentry shock experienced between sojourners who lived overseas and those who traveled abroad. Only individuals who lived and worked outside the U.S. as opposed to those who may have been just visiting were selected.

How long it takes a person to adjust or become familiar with a foreign culture is a point that has not been well defined in past research. The amount of time it takes an individual to adjust to a foreign culture is unknown and varies across individuals (Brislin, 1981). Hoopes (1979) noted that not every person who lives in another culture will adjust and adapt in a similar fashion. Some researchers

suggest that it takes approximately six months to adjust to a foreign country (Adler, 1981; Arnold, 1967; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Based on these studies, subjects were selected who had lived and worked at least six months abroad. In the case of subjects who had spent less than a year abroad, they were asked if they felt they lived abroad or were merely visiting.

Researchers suggest there is not a conclusive relationship between the amount of reentry shock a person experiences and the length of time since a person has returned (Corey, 1986; Uehara, 1986). While a few studies have found that repatriates gradually readjust to the home environment (Adler, 1981; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) other researchers suggest that this adjustment can not be generalized across groups (Brislin, 1981; Church, 1982). As mentioned above, some individuals never are able to readjust and end up seeking employment elsewhere after six months (Tucker & Wight, 1981). Since one of the purposes of this project is to examine the intensity of reentry over time, no limit was placed on the length of time since a repatriate had returned.

Enlisting repatriates' participation was not a problem in this study. One of the biggest complaints from repatriates has been the lack of interest friends, superiors, and co-workers have shown in their overseas experience (Austin, 1983; Moran, 1988a; Sussman, 1986).

Participation in this survey gave repatriates an opportunity to share experiences they have not been able to share before. Koester (1984) found that even though returning students claimed they did not need the reentry training she was offering, they were very eager to share their overseas experiences with her. In the case of reentry into the corporate work place, the notion of Tucker et al. (1981) that the respondent would be willing to cooperate because the survey experience would be cathartic, is very applicable especially if respondents are dissatisfied with their work environment. The survey provided a non-threatening means of verbalizing feelings and complaints.

INTERVIEWER QUALIFICATIONS

Interview surveys have the advantage of higher response rates than do mail surveys (Babbie, 1990). People are more likely to throw away a mail survey than to turn down an interviewer. In addition, research has shown that people are less likely to give "don't know" answers to interviewers conducting surveys.

Since most of the interviews were conducted by telephone, due to the unavailability of subjects locally, it was important to speak in a clear, professional, and concise manner. This entailed not wasting the respondents' time with unnecessary instructions, chatter, or irrelevant conversation. For this project, it was also important to

explain the research project in a manner which did not use vernacular or ideas that were too technical and unfamiliar to respondents. The principal investigator was qualified to conduct this survey because of his survey experience with the Oregon Research Institute and his experience working with the Indiana University Center for Survey Research in Bloomington, Indiana. The investigator also had practice constructing and conducting interview surveys through a sociology course at Portland State University.

PILOT TEST

The pilot survey contained 31 questions. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with three subjects who were minor acquaintances of the principal investigator. All of the subjects had been back in the United States at least four years. Two of the subjects no longer worked for the companies they represented overseas. This fact did not appear to influence their decisions to participate in the interviews or their answers.

The pilot interviews lasted approximately one hour. Even though the participants were warned in advance about the length of the interview, they still appeared to become concerned about time after 30 minutes. After 30 minutes the interview was interrupted by phone calls, short conversations with supervisors and co-workers, and business that needed to be attended to.

There were also problems with the format of the survey instrument. The original instrument asked respondents to comment on their feelings about a certain item then rate their responses on a Likert-type scale. Utilizing this format appeared to hinder the flow of the interview. Respondents tended to change their answers several times then skip back to the open-ended question part to explain what they meant.

To shorten the length of the interview, the survey was redesigned to contain only 22 questions. Several questions were rejected outright and a few were collapsed into the questions that were saved. A majority of the questions which were saved were reworded so as to make them clearer. Rewording some of the open-ended questions added the opportunity to include responses from some of the questions that were rejected. The order of the Likert scale and open-ended questions was also reversed so that the respondent would first rate the intensity of their attitudes and then explain and expand their answers afterwards.

Questions related to job satisfaction and satisfaction with the company before and after repatriation were moved towards the back of the questionnaire. These questions were considered sensitive and some researchers claim that innocuous questions should be asked first to establish a rapport with respondents and put them at ease (Babbie, 1990). During the pilot test, respondents did not appear to

be uncomfortable with the questions concerning job satisfaction or satisfaction with their companies before and after repatriation. However, these questions were moved further back in the survey to increase the flow and naturalness of the instrument. The revised questionnaire was tested on a recently repatriated employee of a middle size industrial manufacture located in the Midwest. The interview was successful and was completed in a reasonable amount of time.

MEASUREMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this research is to describe and examine the variables that are thought to be related to the reentry shock experienced by employees of multinational corporations repatriating to either divisional or corporate headquarters in the United States. Responses to the open-ended questions on the survey instrument were tabulated and analyzed for common and recurring themes. Responses to the closed-ended questions were tabulated, tested for reliability, and statistically analyzed using Pearson's product moment correlations. The above statistical operations were preformed using the SPSSX (1983) software system.

Comments from the open-ended questions were used to further explain and/or expand on the findings of the closed-ended questions. In the tabulation of open-ended questions, an attempt was made to develop categories of responses. The

purpose of these categories was to identify what appeared to be important to repatriates as they attempted to readjust to their work environments.

Operationalization of Variables

Readjustment: Readjustment was operationalized by combining items 19 and 20 on the survey questionnaire (Cronbach alpha= .80). The readjustment variable was created by adding together the responses from item 19 with the responses from item 20 into a single file. The items were developed based on descriptions provided by Adler (1981) to measure readjustment. Item 19 asked the respondents to rate the amount of difficulty they experienced in readjusting to their jobs with "seven" being the most difficult and "one" being the least. Item 20 asked respondents to rate the amount of job satisfaction they had upon return with "seven" being a great deal of satisfaction and "one" being the least. The responses on item 19 were reflected so that they would scale with item 20.

Age: Age was measured by asking respondents to provide their ages in years at repatriation.

Length of Stay Abroad: Respondents were asked how many months they had spent overseas during their last assignment.

Time in U.S.: Respondents were asked how many months they had been in the United States since their most recent international assignment.

Number of Assignments: Respondents were asked the total number of times they had lived and worked overseas with their present company or any other company.

Interest Expressed by Home Personnel in Repatriate's Overseas Assignment: Interest expressed by home personnel in repatriate's overseas assignment was operationalized by combining items 14 and 15 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire (Cronbach alpha= .80). This variable was created by adding together the responses from item 14 with the responses from item 15 into a single file. Item 14 asked respondents to rate the interest of their co-workers in their overseas experiences with "seven" indicating a great deal of interest and "one" indicating no interest. Item 15 asked respondents to rate the interest of their supervisors in their overseas experiences with a "seven" indicating a great deal of interest and a "one" indicating no interest.

Relationship Between Repatriate and Home Office Personnel: The relationship between the repatriate and the home office personnel was operationalized by combining items 12 and 13 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire (Cronbach alpha= .80). This variable was created by adding together the responses from item 12 with the responses from item 13 into a single file. Item 12 asked respondents to rate their relationship with their co-workers when they returned from overseas with "seven"

indicating a positive relationship and "one" indicating a negative relationship. Item 13 asked respondents to rate their relationship with their supervisors when they returned from overseas with a "seven" indicating a positive relationship and "one" indicating a negative relationship.

Support on return: Support on return was operationalized by item 10 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire. Item 10 asked respondents to rate the amount of support they felt they received from their companies after returning from overseas with "seven" indicating a great deal of support and "one" indicating none.

Use of job skills: Use of job skills learned overseas was operationalized by items 17 and 18 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire (Cronbach alpha= .80). This variable was created by adding together the responses from item 17 with the responses from item 18 into a single file. Item 17 asked respondents to rate the amount they were consulted by their companies about questions or problems concerning the country or region they were assigned to with "seven" indicating a great deal and "one" indicating none. Item 18 asked respondents to rate the amount they were able to use the skills they acquired overseas in their present position with "seven" indicating a great deal and "one" indicating none.

Connection while overseas: Connection while overseas was operationalized by item 7 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire. Item 7 asked respondents to rate the amount of connection they had with their companies while they were overseas with "seven" indicating a great deal of contact and one indicating none.

Attitude towards the Corporation: The overall attitude towards the corporation was operationalized by items 8 and 9 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire (Cronbach alpha= .80). This variable was created by adding together the responses from item 8 with the responses from item 9 into a single file. Item 8 asked respondents to rate how they felt about their companies before they went overseas with a "seven" indicating positive feelings and a "one" indicating negative feelings. Item 9 asked respondents to rate how they presently feel about their companies with a "seven" indicating positive feelings and a "one" indicating negative feelings.

Adjustment overseas: Adjustment overseas was operationalized by item 4 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire. Item 4 asked respondents to rate the amount of difficulty they experienced in their adjustment overseas with "seven" indicating a great deal of difficulty in adjustment and "one" indicating a minimal amount. Item 4 was reflected during analysis so that it would scale with the other items on the questionnaire.

Amount of autonomy overseas: The amount of autonomy overseas was operationalized by combining items 5, 6, and 11 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire (Cronbach alpha=.80). This variable was created by adding together the responses from items 5, 6, and 11 into a single file. Item 5 asked respondents to rate the amount of independence they felt they had overseas with a "seven" indicating a great deal and "one" indicating not very much. Item 6 asked respondents to rate how much decision making they felt they had overseas with a "seven" indicating a great deal and "one" indicating not very much. Item 11 asked respondents to rate the amount of responsibility they had after repatriation in comparison to their overseas position with a "seven" indicating a great deal of responsibility and a "one" indicating much less. Items 5 and 6 were reflected so they would scale with item 11.

Job status on return: Repatriates were asked if they returned to the same job they had before they left, a job of lower status, or a job with higher status.

Overseas contact: The amount of overseas contact after repatriation was operationalized by item 16 using a seven-point Likert-type scale on the survey questionnaire. Item 16 asked respondents to rate the amount of contact they had with the country or region they were assigned to with "seven" indicating a great deal of contact and "one" indicating none.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The small number of respondents that participated in this study (N=25) poses serious limitations on the analysis of the results. While the results of this study are supported by findings of similar studies (Alder, 1981, 1991; Black & Gregersen, 1990), exaggerated deviate responses skewed the results in some instances.

Pearson Product moment correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the strength of relationships between the 14 stressor variables and readjustment. As shown in Table II, the number of assignments abroad, the ability to utilize job skills learned overseas, and the amount of autonomy overseas, correlated positively with readjustment. It should be noted that this last variable was reflected to scale with readjustment. In other words, this suggests that there is a negative relationship between the amount of autonomy repatriates had overseas and repatriation work adjustment.

Williams (1986) suggests the following as a rough guide in describing the magnitude of a correlation coefficient:

- <.20 slight; almost negligible relationship
- .20-.40 low correlation; definite but small
- .40-.70 moderate correlation; substantial relationship
- .70-.90 high correlation; marked relationship
- >.90 very high correlations; very dependable relationship (p. 132)

TABLE II

CORRELATION OF STRESSOR VARIABLES TO
READJUSTMENT AND SUPPORT OF HYPOTHESES

Variables	Readjustment	Hypothesis
1 Age at Time of Repatriation	-.16	Rejected
2 Length of Stay Abroad	-.36	Rejected
3 Time Back in U.S.	.02	Rejected
4 Number of Overseas Assignments	.44**	Supported
5 Interest Expressed by Home Personnel Repatriate's Overseas Experiences	.28	Rejected
6 Relationship Between Repatriate and Home Personnel	.20	Rejected
7 Readjustment Support Given to Repatriate On Return	.34	Rejected
8 Use of Job Skills Learned Overseas	.59**	Supported
9 Amount of Connection Between Expatriate and Home Office	.09	Rejected
10 Attitude Towards Corp.	.28	Rejected
11 Expatriate Adjustment Abroad	.09	Rejected
12 Overseas Autonomy	-.43*	Supported
13 Level of Job-Status on Return	.30	Rejected
14 Amount of Overseas Contact After Repatriation	.36	Rejected

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

Using Williams's guide (1986) as a reference, the results support hypotheses 4, 8, and 12 (see Table II). A substantial relationship (.44) was found to exist between the number of overseas assignments and positive repatriation adjustment. Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported. Hypothesis 8

was also supported by the results which indicate that the use of job skills developed overseas have a substantial positive relationship to repatriation work adjustment (.59). Last, hypothesis 12, autonomy overseas was found to have a significant negative relationship to repatriation work adjustment as predicted (-.43). Thus hypothesis 12 was supported. The other 11 hypotheses were not supported by the results.

Thirteen additional significant correlations of adjustment variables were also found (see Table III). Of these 13 significant correlations, four were either obvious or made illogical connections. The correlation between age and length of stay abroad (.56) is an example of an obvious relationship. The longer people stayed overseas they would of course be older. Of course the conclusion that younger sojourners remained overseas longer could be drawn from this result, but neither of the above results really pertains to the scope of this study.

The relationship between amount of contact while overseas and the length of time overseas (.51) is an illogical relationship due to the variety of ways it can be interpreted. The relationship between these two variables could be interpreted to mean the amount of communication between the expatriate and the home office is a function of time. In other words, similar to the relationship between length of stay and age, the longer expatriates were overseas

TABLE III
INTERCORRELATIONS OF READJUSTMENT VARIABLES (N=25)

	Reentry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Age	-.16													
2 Stay Abroad	-.36	.56**												
3 Time in U.S	.02	-.14	-.29											
4 Assignments	.44**	-.16	-.21	-.03										
5 Interest	.28	-.23	-.20	-.13	.27									
6 Relationship	.20	.24	.14	-.39	.12	.41**								
7 Support on Return	.34	.10	-.19	-.10	-.30	.09	-.39							
8 Job Skills	.59**	-.17	.04	-.44*	.29	.37	.42*	.28						
9 Communication Overseas	.09	.33	.51*	-.17	.17	.07	.18	.09	.39					
10 Attitude w/Corp	.28	.31	-.05	.20	.22	.02	.04	.09	-.18	.19				
11 Adjust Abroad	.09	.40*	.20	-.02	.30	.02	-.15	.38	-.25	.27	.09			
12 Autonomy Overseas	-.43*	-.15	-.27	-.20	.81**	.25	.04	-.21	.15	.12	.08	.32		
13 Job Status	.30	.15	.17	-.41*	-.23	-.18	.21	.63**	.47*	.35	.09	-.10	-.15	
14 Overseas Contact	.36	-.24	-.11	-.40*	.22	.38	.20	.38	.60**	.27	.09	-.10	.18	.42*

* p < .05

** p < .01

(2-tailed)

the more communication they would have with their home offices. This relationship could also be a function of the ability of expatriates who were overseas longer to develop a stronger communication network with their home offices. In either case, this relationship does little to explain the readjustment to the home environment.

Another relationship which appears illogical is the relationship between the amount of independence, decision-making, and responsibility overseas and the number of overseas assignments (.81). An investigation of the frequency data indicates that one respondent accounts for 37 percent of the total number of assignments. This same respondent also indicated the lowest levels of independence, decision-making and responsibility during the survey interview. The results of this respondent are not really typical of the other respondents and skew the results.

The last significant relationship which is meaningless is the negative relationship between job status upon return and length of time since returning (-.41). This relationship does not really report anything except that the repatriates who have been back the longest appear to be in lower status positions. Since there was no question on the survey which asks respondents about changes in job status since returning, the relationship between these two variables may just be a function of the small sample size. In other words, respondents who returned from overseas to lower status job

just happen to be the ones that have been back the longest amount of time. It does not seem logical that a person's status in a corporation would diminish over time without the person quitting or being terminated.

Significant relationships were found in the following relationships:

- * Change in relationship and the amount of interest shown by co-workers and supervisors (.41).
- * Use of job skills learned overseas and the amount of time since return (-.44).
- * Use of job skills learn overseas and change in relationships (.42).
- * Adjustment abroad and age (.40).
- * Job status and amount of readjustment support (.63)
- * Job status and the use of job skills learned overseas (.47).
- * Continued contact overseas after return and the amount of time since return (-.40).
- * Continued contact overseas after return and job skills learned overseas (.60).
- * Continued contact overseas after return and job status on return (.42).

Tabulating the results of the open-ended questions was extremely difficult because of the wide variety of responses. Since the responses for question 19 and 20 on the survey questionnaire appeared to be convergent, the responses to these two questions were tabulated together and five categories emerged (see Table IV).

The most salient item of difficulty and dissatisfaction listed by respondents was the loss of contact with their

TABLE IV

CATEGORIES OF DISSATISFACTION AND
DIFFICULTIES UPON RETURN (N=25)

Lost touch with company	14%
Under utilized and/or no job on return	12%
Conform to bureaucracy	12%
Loss of status	10%
Difficulty adjusting to job with more responsibility	8%
Other or no response	44%

companies while they were out of the country. This item accounted for 14 percent of the responses to these two questions. Being under utilized and/or returning to no job was listed as the second source of difficulty and dissatisfaction as well as was conforming to the bureaucracy. Loss of responsibility, independence and status was the next source of difficulty and dissatisfaction and length of stay and age, the longer expatriates were overseas adjustment to a new job with more responsibility was considered last.

In response to question 21, which asked if respondents felt they had lost contact with their companies and had missed out on opportunities for advancement, 68 percent answered negatively. Of the 32 percent who said they had lost contact with their companies and missed opportunities for advancement while overseas, 40 percent said that it was

not important and felt their overseas experience was worth it. Another 25 percent felt the move had seriously affected their careers and two respondents said they lost their jobs upon return.

In response to question 22, which asked respondents if given the opportunity would they move overseas again for their company, 84 percent responded positively. Of the 84 percent who responded positively, 36 percent said they would go again because the overseas experience was an opportunity for growth for both them and their families, 16 percent said they would go depending on safety factors in the country they were assigned to, and 12 percent said they would go only if they had a contract spelling out their salaries, length of stay and position upon return. Of the 16 percent who responded negatively, half said their age and families were a major consideration but they would go over again if they were younger.

Respondents indicated a number of variables were important in repatriation work adjustment. Repatriates who reported high satisfaction and little difficulty in their adjustment back to the home office consciously or unconsciously employed numerous strategies for coping with their transfers. Those involved in jobs that required high levels of responsibility and creative energy, as well as those who were assigned to an international division of their company and were in contact with other repatriates reported higher levels of satisfaction during the

repatriation process. Interestingly enough, this first group of repatriates (8 percent of the sample) reported being responsible for their reassignments and actively sought out challenging positions before they returned. This first group also reported connections with other repatriates or foreign nationals even if their jobs did not require this contact.

Not one repatriates reported any conscious attempt by their companies to match their skills or level of overseas expertise with a position upon reassignment. Nor did repatriates report any attempt by their companies to assist them in adjusting to their new positions. Repatriates who reported experiencing a great deal of dissatisfaction and difficulty adjusting to their positions in the U.S. (12 percent of the sample) said they felt totally isolated and alienated from the company and other personnel.

Repatriates reported mixed relationships with co-workers and supervisors. With the exception of two respondents, most returned to new situations where they did not know their co-workers or supervisors. Interest in repatriates' overseas experiences by co-workers and supervisors did show some commonalties. While the levels of interest ranged from very low to very high, a majority of repatriates reported that the high levels of interest by supervisors and co-workers were superficial.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

DISCUSSION

Unlike the majority of past research studies which have treated repatriation adjustment as a unidimensional construct (Black & Gregersen, 1990), this study posited that readjustment is a multidimensional phenomenon. The wide variety of responses to the open-ended questions is indicative of the multifacted and situational nature of repatriation adjustment. The small sample size utilized in this study, however, is a major consideration and calls into question the reliability of the results.

The results of this study suggest that the development of stress is theoretically implicit in repatriation adjustment. Repatriates appear to face similar adjustment problems returning home as do expatriates when entering a foreign culture. Sojourners reentering their own culture are often confronted with ambiguous situations which create feelings of alienation, uncertainty, and loss of control. This experience is often shocking and stressful to repatriates.

In examining the individual stressor variables, the large number of variables and the wide variety of responses

make it difficult to succinctly summarize the results. It is probably best, therefore, to examine each of the hypotheses in the sequence in which they were presented.

The first hypothesis, which predicted that older repatriates would readjust more easily to the United States, was not supported. This finding is not consistent with the findings of Black and Gregersen (1990) and Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) who found that older repatriates had an easier time readjusting because they had more information concerning the home office and were thus returning to less uncertainty. One possible reason hypothesis 1 was not supported was the relatively small age range of the sample. Over 70 percent of the tested sample were between the ages of 37 and 50. In a closer examination of the studies that report significant results for age (Black & Gregersen, 1990; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963), age was not really the factor, but rather the establishment in profession and ability to return to a position where job skills could be utilized. While the establishment in profession may be related to age, it is not necessarily a function of age. If this is true then age is not really an important factor in repatriation work adjustment.

While age did not appear to be a factor of readjustment, there was a significant positive correlation between age and the amount of ease repatriates had in readjusting overseas (see Table III). Older expatriates

seemed to have less difficulty adjusting to their overseas positions than did younger expatriates.

The second hypothesis, which predicted that the longer expatriates remained overseas the more difficult it would be for them to readjust, was not supported by the data (see Table II) and is not consistent with the findings of other researchers (Clague & Krupp, 1980, Harvey, 1983). Hypothesis 2 theorized that a greater length of stay overseas is associated with less information about the home office and thus more stress upon return. Since hypothesis 9 indicated a positive relationship between contact while overseas and readjustment, it is possible that length of stay is not as much the issue as is the connection expatriates feel toward their home offices while they are overseas (Adler, 1981; Clague & Krupp, 1980; Harvey, 1983). When expatriates return, readjustment stress may be more of a function of lack of connection expatriates experienced while overseas rather than the length of time they were gone.

Hypothesis 3, which predicted that the length of time since returning to the U.S. would diminish repatriation adjustment was not supported. Other factors appeared to play a more important role in repatriation than the length of time since return. In an analysis of the open-ended questions, over 70 percent of the respondents reported at some point in the interview that coming back to a job where they felt useful was very important. Adjustment, for a

majority of the respondents appeared to be more of a function of job status and using skills learned overseas than a function of time. Other studies (Adler, 1981; Brislin, 1981; Brislin & Van Buren, 1974) suggested that repatriates never fully readjust but develop a set of coping strategies and an acceptance of their situations. As noted previously, some repatriates never readjust and end up leaving their companies.

Hypothesis 4, which predicted that the number of assignments was positively related to readjustment, was supported by the results and is consistent with the findings of other researchers (Adler, 1981; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Howard, 1986). This finding suggests that sojourners become accustomed to entering new situations and dealing with stressful situations. They become adept at seeking out information that will help them adjust to new situations (Werkman, 1986). Several veterans of multiple assignments reported that moving to a new location overseas and back to the United States was no more difficult than moving to a different assignment and location in the United States. The main concern in relocating, one repatriated manager of multiple assignments reported, "is learning the system--who you need to see and which strings you need to pull in order to get your job done." This concern was viewed as more of a challenge than a problem.

Hypothesis 5, which predicted that interest in the repatriate's overseas experience by co-workers and supervisors would be positively related to readjustment, was not supported by the findings of this study. One reason for this finding may be that repatriates quickly become aware and accept the fact that their co-workers and supervisors are not really interested in what they have experienced. An analysis of the open-ended questions indicated that this may be the case. Over a third of the total sample reported in the open-ended part of the question that any interest shown by supervisors and co-workers was superficial and passing. Two respondents remarked that the people who did seem interested in their overseas experiences, "wanted it in ten minutes." Repatriates reported that they felt they walked a fine line in boring co-workers with stories of overseas experiences.

Hypothesis 6, which predicted that a positive or negative relationship with co-workers and supervisors would affect readjustment, was not supported by the data. A majority of the responses (80 percent) indicated that the respondents had overall a fairly positive attitude towards their co-workers and supervisors upon their return. Responses to the open-ended questions indicated that most of the respondents returned to a new work setting with a new set of co-workers and supervisors. Reasons given for the positive relationship toward co-workers and supervisors were

not elaborate in comparison to the responses to other factors and varied greatly.

Interestingly enough, variables 5 and 6 were found to be positively correlated with each other (see Table III). In other words, a positive relationship with home office personnel (i.e. co-workers and supervisors) was related to home office personnel's interest in the repatriates' overseas experiences. This relationship would seem logical. Repatriates would naturally be expected to perceive a positive relationship towards those who were interested in their experiences.

Hypothesis 7, which predicted that company support upon repatriation would lessen the affect of reentry shock was not supported by the data. This result is consistent with other studies which have also been unable to conclusively demonstrate the effect of company support on repatriation work adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1990). One of the reasons for this lack of conclusive evidence appears to be the ambiguity in what constitutes support. While 46 percent of the respondents in this study reported receiving a fair amount to a great deal of support upon repatriation, most of this support was in the form of logistical and financial help. In response to the open-ended questions, a third of all respondents reported they were satisfied with this support. However, 40 percent of all the respondents reported that even though they may have been satisfied with

the financial package offered by their companies, psychological support in readjusting to their jobs was as much if not more important. Some of these respondents did not even consider the financial package and logistical help a form of support.

It must be noted that none of the companies whose repatriates were interviewed, had any type of formalized reentry training or support programs for repatriates readjusting to their jobs or work place. All of the companies offered time off for their repatriates to settle in and two of the companies offered extensive financial planning services and help on taxes.

Hypothesis 8, which predicted that the use of job skills learned overseas after repatriation would influence repatriation work adjustment, was strongly supported by the results (see Tables II & III). The job skills factor also correlated with four other adjustment factors. These results suggest that the utilization of job skills learned overseas after repatriation is probably the most salient factor in repatriation work adjustment. While the association and relationship between utilization of job skills upon the return home and readjustment is consistent with other research (Adler, 1981; Harvey, 1970), it goes beyond these studies by demonstrating significant relationships between this variable and numerous others.

The negative relationship between variable 3, time since returning to the U.S., and variable 8, utilization of job skills learned overseas, is very logical. A decrease in stress and uncertainty would naturally be expected to occur the longer a repatriate had been home. The need, therefore, to rely on job skills learned overseas would also decrease as repatriates developed new strategies for coping with their home work environment. The positive relationship between variable 6, relationship with co-workers and supervisors and variable 8 is also logical. One would expect that repatriates who were familiar with and felt positive about their jobs would also feel positive about their co-workers and supervisors.

The relationships between variable 8, job skills developed overseas, variable 13, job status on return, and variable 14, overseas contact are all significant and have relatively high correlations. The correlations are also very logical. In an examination of the job positions of repatriates who returned to higher status jobs, many moved from line management to staff management positions in departments or as heads of departments that were connected to overseas plants or offices. Technical people who moved to higher status jobs also were still connected overseas in one way or another. Their skills and overseas expertise were still very much in demand. In other words these people needed very little new information or had very little

uncertainty in order to perform their duties. Stress after return would thus be expected to be less.

Hypothesis 9, which predicted that connection to the home office while overseas would facilitate repatriation work adjustment, was not supported by the study. This finding was not consistent with Adler (1981), who found that expatriated employees who received more information from the home office readjusted more easily because they knew what to expect. In examining the responses to the open-ended questions, it is evident that the amount of actual contact and information between the expatriate and home office is not a predictor of connection to the home office. Many respondents who rated themselves as having very little contact with their U.S. offices were in weekly and sometimes daily contact with those offices via fax or by telephone. When pressed further, these respondents reported that they did not feel connected to their offices despite the regular contact.

Interestingly enough, there was a significant positive correlation between factor 9, connection to home office while overseas, and factor 13, job status on return. In an analysis of the open-ended questions, a majority of repatriates who returned to high status jobs had taken more responsibility for their reassignments while they were still overseas. This was done in several ways. A few repatriates reported that they took advantage of their home leaves to

make contacts and reacquaint themselves with the home office, while others kept in touch with friends, other informal contacts, and the personnel office for possible job openings.

Hypothesis 10, which predicted that overall positive attitude towards the organization would relate positively to readjustment, was supported by the data. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers (Clague & Krupp, 1980; Tucker & Wight, 1981) and suggests that sending employees overseas who are dissatisfied will not bring home successful or satisfied employees.

Hypothesis 11, which predicted that expatriates who adjusted well overseas would have fewer readjustment problems when they returned, was not supported by the data. A possible reason for this result is that this item does not really relate to the rest of the survey. Even though an item analysis run on this factor indicated a high reliability (.79), it had an extremely low correlation (.06) with the other items on the survey. This result was consistent with the open-ended responses of the participants who listed mostly non-work related items as problems in adjusting to their overseas jobs.

Hypothesis 12, which predicted that the greater amount of autonomy expatriates had overseas, the more difficulty they would have in readjusting to their jobs in the United States, was supported by this study (see Table II). This

finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers (Adler, 1981; Howard, 1974; Smith, October, 1975) who found that repatriates become used to high degrees of independence, decision-making, and responsibility overseas and return home to significantly less degrees. Numerous repatriates in the above mentioned study, reported that when they returned home they felt like "just another cog in a big wheel" or a "small fish in a large pond." It was disconcerting and stressful, many reported, to suddenly find themselves no longer in charge.

Hypothesis 13, which predicted that returning home to a higher job status would relate positively to readjustment, was not supported by the results and is not consistent with the findings of other researchers (Black & Gregersen, 1990). This variable, however, is probably the second most important variable in this study because of the significant positive correlations between it and three other variables in this study (see Table III). As noted in the discussion of variable 8, there is a significant intercorrelation between job status, variable 13, the use of job skills learned overseas, variable 8, and the amount of overseas connection after repatriation, variable 14.

Interestingly enough, the support variable (variable 7) was significant and correlated very highly with the job status variable (see Table III). Repatriates who returned to jobs of higher status indicated higher rates of support upon

their return than those who returned to lower status jobs. This correlation may be mostly psychological. Repatriates who returned to a higher job status felt more connected, more supported, and less uncertainty about their roles in the organization even if the position was a result of their taking responsibility for it. The process of seeking out a satisfactory position requires gathering information which in itself will reduce stress and uncertainty. Naturally those who did not seek out advanced information about job possibilities after returning yet still returned to a higher job status felt more supported.

Hypothesis 14, which predicted that repatriates who maintained contact and continued to have connections with the countries or regions to which they were assigned would experience less readjustment difficulty, was not supported by the data. Variable 14, however, yielded a significant correlation with three other variables in this study. The negative correlation between continued overseas contact and time since return to the U.S., variable 4, was expected. As repatriates settle into their positions, they become exposed to more information about the home office, new people, and new opportunities. The need to maintain overseas connections, it would seem, would be less important. Even if repatriates continued in positions that required them to maintain contact with their countries or regions of

expatriation, they would slowly become re-anchored to their new positions in the United States (Brislin, 1981).

An analysis of the responses to the last two open-ended questions indicate that there are more variables involved in repatriation work adjustment than those examined in this study. While repatriates listed difficulties and dissatisfaction with different aspects of work related readjustment, they also mentioned non-work related variables such as spouses, families, and living conditions on return as equally important considerations. Personal growth, expansion of world view, and the adventure of living overseas were mentioned as being equally important to their careers and professional growth.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

In this study there are several limitations that should be noted. Probably the most important limitation of this study was the small sample size used to examine the 14 variables. The small number of respondents calls into question the results of this study, as well as its generalizability. Another limitation of this study was in the nature of its design. While the study attempted to examine the readjustment process of corporate repatriation from the repatriate's perspective, the study was cross-sectional in design. The reentry process, several researchers agree (Brislin, 1981; Martin, 1984; Uehara,

1986), needs to be examined in a longitudinal study.

Research subjects need to be followed and data collected before departure, while the subjects are abroad, and after they return (Martin) in order to accurately assess causal relationships.

Third, the sample used in this study included only U.S. employees who were repatriating to U.S. corporations. The results may not be generalizable to expatriates returning home to other cultures. For example job status upon return is a more important variable for highly mobile and individualistic cultures that value "getting ahead" (Condon & Yousef, 1975). For more group oriented societies, coming home and fitting back into ones place may be more important.

Fourth, this study did not address the number of times expatriates returned home during their overseas assignment. This variable would logically seem to have a relationship with hypothesis 9 and repatriation work adjustment. The more expatriates returned home and were reacquainted with their home office during their overseas assignment, the more familiar they would be when they repatriated. The repatriation adjustment would thus be less stressful.

The last limitation to this study was the effect of families on repatriate adjustment. Many respondents suggested and another study (Black & Gregersen, 1990) found that the spouse and family were very much a part of the repatriation assignment. One expatriate human resource

manager remarked that the spouse and family were one of the biggest causes of problems in both overseas assignments and reassignments back home.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

OVERVIEW

While this study yielded positive results for three hypotheses, it is important to point out that 11 of the hypotheses failed. This result has serious implications in the findings of this study and must be addressed. The implications of the large number of failed hypotheses has at least two dimensions.

As mentioned previously, the inadequate sample size contributed to low power tests which may also have been responsible for the large number of failed hypotheses. With such a small sample, exaggerated deviate responses to items on the survey questionnaire might have skewed the results and in some cases been responsible for the support or rejection of the hypotheses. A larger sample size would have reduced the effect of exaggerated responses.

Another reason why so many of the hypotheses failed may be due to the lack of developed guiding theory from which to fashion strong hypotheses. As mentioned in the beginning of this study, the theoretical basis for explaining reentry shock has not progressed much beyond a taxonomy. While it is suggested in this study that there is the development of

stress during the readjustment process, stress may not have been adequately measured or represented by the survey instrument. In other words, the theory behind the development of stress does not explicitly or strongly indicate that the 14 variables examined in this study are indeed inherent in the development of stress in corporate reentry.

Several researchers (Adler, 1991; Black, 1990; Brett, 1980) have suggested that the above 14 variables and others are salient factors in the development of stress during the readjustment process. Little of this research, however, is grounded in theory and some of the findings have been contradictory. These contradictory results may be due to a lack of theoretical grounding. Perhaps future research should concentrate more on the theoretical aspects of the development of stress during the readjustment process rather than on variables that are believed to produce stress.

Aside from the above-mentioned problems with this study, the findings of this study are consistent with those of other researchers (Adler, 1981; Black & Gregersen, 1990; Clague & Krupp, 1978; Harvey, 1970, 1989) who found that repatriates of multinational corporations face numerous adjustment problems when they return from an overseas assignment. While past studies have examined the repatriation process from a unidimensional perspective (Black & Gregersen, 1990), it is suggested in this study

that repatriation may be situational and that there are many interconnected variables that influence repatriation work adjustment. There appears to be no single element or factor that can explain problems in repatriation adjustment.

It is also suggested in this study that the utilization of job skills learned overseas upon return is probably the most salient variable in repatriation work adjustment and is interrelated to many other variables. According to one interpretation, the ability of repatriates to utilize job skills learned overseas creates certainty in the repatriates' job positions and thus reduces stress when they return. Black and Gregersen (1990) and Brislin (1981) support this finding by suggesting that individuals who utilize past familiar behaviors reduce the uncertainty and stress associated with a new job and consequently reduce adjustment difficulties.

It must be noted, however, that job skills learned overseas are not the most important variable but are the most salient in this study. The number of assignments and autonomy overseas might also play a role in repatriation work adjustment, as suggested by this study. The results of this study suggest any of these variables by themselves may affect the repatriation process. For example, the number of assignments was shown to have a relationship with repatriation adjustment. As indicated by several responses to the open-ended questions, some sojourners thrive on the

challenges of moving to new locations and working on new projects or assignments. The above mentioned factors are either not an issue or are not very important to sojourners.

For the majority of repatriates interviewed for this study, their overseas experience appeared to have had a major impact on their lives. Respondents appeared eager to talk about their overseas experience, even if it had been negative. The high response rate of respondents' participation (89 percent) is also indicative of the impact this experience had on them and their willingness to share this information. The impact of this experience was especially noticeable in the responses to the last two open-ended questions on the survey. Personal growth, expansion of world view and exposure to different alternatives had become just as important as climbing the corporate ladder.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Based on the inconclusive findings of this study and the contradictory findings of other studies, recommendations for setting up readjustment programs for repatriating corporate employees would be premature. Multinational corporations need to develop a better understanding of the problems faced by their repatriating employees before they invest in readjustment programs or workshops.

While more research on cultural readjustment into the corporate environment may be useful, its usefulness is

limited if the results and recommendations of such studies are ignored. It is interesting to note that not one organization contacted for this study had any type of repatriation program. However, the problem is much bigger than just paying attention to readjustment problems of repatriates, but extends to the utilization of the returnees' experiences and knowledge. If corporations are unwilling or "unable to transfer the know-how and experience of its own executives, they are liable to become prisoners of their own environment" (Moran, 1988a, p.74).

One human resource manager who had been sent overseas to "spruce up" the expatriate department reported that expatriate assignments were not viewed as career building and that 57 year old executives were sent over to "lose their tusks." The manager concluded that, "corporations are not interested in the expertise and skills I developed overseas and when I came back I was consequently treated like a new hire." Expatriate learning does not appear to be integrated into the organization and consequently multinational corporation are doomed to repeat past mistakes.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this study as supported by other studies and are meant only as suggestions or guides for better understanding some of the problems faced by repatriating employees. It is important to note that future examination of employee

repatriation should not be limited to the following discussion.

The overseas experience provides for the corporation and the repatriate an opportunity for learning and growth. The corporation can use its overseas assignments as training opportunities for promising and/or rising managers (Howard, 1986). If corporations can utilize and integrate the skills repatriates have developed abroad--which has not happened to a great extent thus far (Adler, 1981)--the result can be positive for the organization and returnees. Organizations which utilize the experiences and expertise of their overseas employees can benefit from intercultural understanding and improved relations with host countries.

For repatriates, culture and reentry shock have traditionally been considered negative because they have been associated with feelings of alienation (Adler, 1975). However, many researchers state that these transitional experiences can be healthy and a learning experience if cross-cultural sojourners "roll with the punches" (Adler, 1975; Bennett, 1977; Moran, 1988a). Cross-cultural transitions can be an important aspect of cultural learning and personal growth as sojourners become more aware of foreign and their own cultures (Uehara, 1986). Repatriated corporate employees, in particular, acquire diverse management skills from dealing with foreign customs and cultural problems and become adept at dealing with

unexpected situations and problems (Adler, 1981; Clague, & Krupp, 1980).

As suggested by this study, utilization of job skills learned overseas is a salient element of repatriation work adjustment. Multinational corporations would do well to utilize and pay attention to these newly developed skills for two reasons. First, corporations would benefit from improved relationships with host countries and more efficient operation of their overseas plants and offices. Second, this study found that repatriates who use their job skills after return, experience less stress, have fewer adjustment problems and more satisfaction. As mentioned in other studies (Adler, 1981; Black & Gregersen, 1990; Clague & Krupp, 1980), repatriates' dissatisfaction with their position is in a large part responsible for their termination after they return and a consequent loss of money for the corporation.

The increase in overseas independence, decision-making, and responsibility appears to be one of the problems in repatriation work adjustment. One personnel director in charge of expatriate affairs said that one of the main problems repatriates face when they return is the lack of freedom and autonomy they enjoyed in their overseas position. Upon their return home, managers and executives find their jobs mundane and lacking in status and authority (Clague and Krupp, 1980; Sussman, 1986). Howard (1974)

suggests that employees need to know that their overseas posting is only temporary, that they will be returning, and what position they will be returning to inside the corporation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research needs to explore the multifaceted and situational nature of readjustment to the corporate environment. Because of the small sample utilized in this study, the results of this study cannot be trusted. This study needs to be replicated with a larger sample. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, the hypotheses that were rejected in this study should not be rejected in future studies. The three hypotheses that were supported should also be re-examined due to the flaws inherent in this study.

While numerous variables were examined in this study, by no means should future studies be limited only to the examination of these variables. A majority of the repatriates interviewed in this study mentioned that family and spouse adjustment was very important in their work readjustment. A study by Black and Gregersen (1990) supports these claims and future studies should include the influence families and spouses have on repatriate work adjustment.

The number of times expatriates return home during their overseas assignment and what they do during their visits, should also be studied as a variable of repatriate

work adjustment. While the lack of connection to the home environment for repatriates who were overseas was not found to have a significant relationship to readjustment, other researchers (Adler, 1981; Howard, 1974, 1986) suggest that bringing expatriates back to the corporate environment for visits once or twice a year would provide a connection and lessen the shock of the eventual return. Annual trips home, says Howard (1974, 1986), would reacquaint expatriates to changes, developments and new personnel within the organization. Expatriates could also start looking for a position they might be satisfied with when they return. Consequently, repatriates who were familiar with the environment they were returning to would experience fewer readjustment problems.

While reentry trainings have not lessened the shock of return (Adler, 1981, 1991), as mentioned previously none of the companies which participated in this study had any formalized reentry training or support programs. Few U.S. companies even provide reentry training (Tucker & Wight, 1981). Before the effectiveness of reentry training can be assessed it would seem that reentry trainings and workshops need to be developed so their effectiveness can be studied.

Several researchers have suggested that a reentry training and reorientation to the corporation would facilitate the adjustment of repatriates to domestic operations and the corporate infrastructure (Brislin & Van

Buren, 1974; Business International Corporation, 1978; Howard, 1974; Sussman, 1986). Finally, long range reentry programs that treat overseas assignments as a whole would give researchers the chance to collect data and study reentry shock in longitudinal studies.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY COVER LETTER AND REENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear Repatriate:

The purpose of this research project is to measure the difficulties you may have encountered readjusting to your company upon returning from working abroad. We are not interested in particular people or companies but rather in identifying problems common to repatriated employees.

Your participation in this research project will help us gain valuable information on reentry problems faced by repatriated employees. This knowledge will be used to develop ways to assist employees readjust to their home work environments after having worked abroad.

Surveys will be conducted at your convenience over the telephone. They should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

At no time will your answers be shared with your employer or any other person. Results of this study will be reported in general terms. There will be no way to connect your answers to the company you work for nor will companies participating in this project be identified.

If you have any questions concerning this survey or would like further information, please feel free to call us collect anytime at (812) 988-2074.

Sincerely,

Steven Locke

REENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

ID _____

 POSITION BEFORE LEAVING
ABROAD

 YOUR POSITION

 LENGTH OF TIME WITH COMPANY
POSITION

 YOUR PRESENT

1. Gender _____ 2. Age at Repatriation _____
3. List the times you were abroad where you stayed over six months including your last stay.

Location	Length of stay months	Date return (mm/dd/yy)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. I'm first going to ask you to please rate the difficulty you had adjusting to your overseas position. On a scale of one to seven with seven being the most difficult and one being the least, how would you rate your adjustment to your overseas position.

Very difficult

Not very difficult

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

List in descending order the situations and items in your overseas position you found difficult to adjust to.

5. Would you now please rate the amount of independence you felt you had in your overseas position on a scale of one to seven with seven being the most independent and one being the least.

A great deal

Not very much

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

List the independence you felt you had in your overseas position in comparison to your present position here in the United States?

6. Would you please rate the amount of decision making you had overseas on a scale of one to seven with seven being a great deal of decision making and one being the least.

A great deal

Not very much

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What decision making did you have overseas in comparison to your present position?

7. Now would you please rate the amount of connection you had when you were overseas with your company here in the United States on a scale of one to seven with seven being a great deal of connection and one being very little.

A great deal

Not very much

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What specific contact did you have with your company in the United States in your overseas position?

8. I would now like to know how you felt about your company before you went overseas. On a scale of one to seven with seven being the most positive and one being the least positive, how would you say you felt about your company before you left.

Positive

Least positive

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

9. Would you please rate how you presently feel about your company on a scale of one to seven with seven being the most positive toward your company and one being the least.

Positive

Least positive

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Why do you think you feel this way about your company or organization?

10. In readjusting back to your work here in the United States, would you rate the amount of support you felt you received from your company on a scale of one to seven with seven being a great deal of support and one being the least.

A great deal

Not very much

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What support were you given in readjusting to your job back in the United States?

11. I would now like to talk about the responsibility you felt you had overseas. In comparison to your overseas position, please rate the amount of responsibility you had upon returning to your work here in the United States with a seven being a great deal and a one indicating not very much.

A great deal

Not very much

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Did you return to the same job?

12. I'm now going to ask you about your relationship with your co-workers. I would like you to rate, on a scale of one to seven with a seven being positive and a one being the negative, your relationship with your co-workers when you returned from overseas.

Positive

Negative

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

In what ways has your relationship with your co-workers changed?

13. I would like you to please rate your relationship with your supervisors when returned from overseas on a scale of one to seven with a seven being positive and a one being negative.

Positive

Negative

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

In what ways has your relationship with your supervisors changed?

14. I would like you to now rate the interest of your co-workers in your overseas experience on a scale of one to seven with a seven being very interested and a one being not interested at all. What I mean by interest is were your co-workers curious about your experiences.

Interested

Not Interested

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What interest did your co-workers show?

15. Please rate the interest of your supervisors in your overseas position on a scale of one to seven.

Interested

Not Interested

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What interest did/do your supervisors show?

16. Please rate the amount of contact you now have with the country or region you were assigned to on a scale of one to seven with seven being the most and one being none.

A great deal

None

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What contact, if any, do you have now with the country you were assigned to? How much?

17. Would you rate the amount you are consulted by your company about questions or problems concerning the country you were assigned to on a scale of one to seven with seven being the most and one being none.

A great deal

None

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

How are you consulted about your experiences in the country you were assigned?

18. Would you rate the amount you are able to use the skills you learned overseas in your present position on a scale of one to seven with seven being the most and one being none.

A great deal

None

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What skills did you pick up overseas and do you feel you can use the skills you learned abroad here in your present position?

19. Would you rate the amount of difficulty you experienced in readjusting to your job here in the United States on a scale of one to seven with seven being the most difficulty and one being the least.

Most difficulty

Least difficulty

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What would you list as your main problems in readjusting to your work situation? What disturbed you the most?

20. Would you rate the amount of job satisfaction you had when you returned on a scale of one to seven with seven being the most and one being the least.

Great deal of satisfaction

Little satisfaction

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

What dissatisfied you the most when you returned?

21. Do you feel you lost contact with your company and missed opportunities for advancement while you were overseas?

22. If given the opportunity to move overseas again for your company you would do it? Why or why not?