

Chapter 7

The Social Impact of Job Transfer Policy on Dual Career Families in Botswana

Dolly Ntseane

Introduction

As a result of rapid industrialisation, global competition and the development of high technology, the transfer and relocation of employees have become common practice for many corporations and organisations worldwide (Ntseane 2004). In Botswana the implementation of job transfer policy in the public service dates back to the period when the country was still under the British colonial rule. As early as 1890, the British administration established a small public service which was predominantly made up of police officers and magistrates (Temane 1989). As the provision of social services continued to expand, a transfer policy was formulated in 1934 as part of the standing instructions for public officers. This policy made it clear that public servants were to be transferred anywhere in the country and that the exigencies of the service would always be the decisive factor. It further stated that marriage or family would not be treated as ground for exemption when officers get transferred (Bechuanaland Government 1934).

When Botswana attained independence in 1966, the main challenge of the new government was to educate and train local manpower to provide services to the nation. These public officers were expected to be relocated wherever the country needed them. On the 16th September 1982, a cabinet directive was issued making job transfers mandatory for everyone in the public service (Government of Botswana 1982). However, in 1995 the government made a radical policy shift to make some provisions for married couples. Key guidelines in the policy were: to give transferees at least 3 month notice to prepare for relocation; where possible to avoid separating couples; to assist transferees to secure accommodation and finally to transfer public officers during the months of December and January to allow children to complete the school calendar year uninterrupted (Government of Botswana 1995).

D. Ntseane (✉)
University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana
e-mail: ntseaned@mopipi.ub.bw

Despite this new dispensation, married couples in the public service continue to be separated from their families. This chapter presents results of a study undertaken in 1996 to document the experiences of transferred public service officers and their families. The findings are still relevant given that in Botswana (i) the job transfer policy transfer has essentially remained unchanged over the last 18 years, and (ii) no empirical study has been conducted on this subject.

The chapter begins by presenting a brief literature review on the subject. This is followed by the study methodology, and the findings. The chapter concludes by providing short-term and long-term policies and other recommendations that could be implemented by government to minimise the trauma of job transfers and resultant experiences of work-family conflict on dual career families.

Literature Review

Literature on the effects of job transfers on the family in sub-Saharan Africa is essentially non-existent. This review is therefore based on research conducted in North America and Europe. For the purpose of this chapter, job transfer is defined as "...a relatively permanent job reassignment that entails the movement of an employee within an organisation from one of its operating sites to another" (Pinder and Walters 1984, p. 188). For dual career families, job transfers may entail geographic relocation of one spouse. This section presents a brief review on the costs and benefits of geographic relocation on family well-being.

Although past research viewed job relocation as an opportunity for new job challenges and future career enhancement (Marshall and Cooper 1976; Brett 1982), studies show that most employees now view relocation as stressful, especially for couples with working spouses (Taylor and Lounsbury 1988; Friedman 1989; Pinder 1989; Croan et al. 1991; Munton 1993; Riemer 2000). In their investigation of the effects of job transfers on the family, Marshall and Cooper (1976) found that transfer separation is a crisis point in marriage. In their analysis of the attitudes of women towards the move, they found that women adopted a "self-sacrificing attitude towards moving, playing down their own needs in an attempt to ease the way for their husbands and children" (Marshall and Cooper 1976, p. 45).

Analysing the rewards and strains associated with the lifestyle of dual career couples, Gross (1980) found that there was a significant difference between younger "adjusting" and older "established" couples. For example, older couples, those married longer, those who had a working spouse, and those freed from childcare responsibilities found relocation less stressful than newlyweds. Similar findings were arrived at by Gerstel and Gross (1984). In their examination of the impact of relocation on couples who live apart, they confirmed that commuting was likely to be less stressful when: (i) couples had moderate to high incomes; (ii) spouses had intense motivation for career advancement; (iii) couples had been married longer and had older children and (iv) spouses could reunite regularly on weekends.

Using a more comprehensive methodology, Brett (1982) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between job transfer and the well-being of male employees, their wives and their children. Two aspects of mobility were investigated in this study: Frequent mobility, defined as numbers of transfers per years in the work force; and mobility versus stability defined as the number of years of residence in the community. Five hundred employees were selected randomly, 50 each from 10 United States companies. The results of this study revealed that employees and wives in the transfer sample were significantly more satisfied with marriage and family life than were men and women in the quality of life sample.

In 1988, Brett and Reily conducted a follow-up study to examine factors predicting job transfer decisions. This study made a substantial contribution to Brett's earlier (1982) findings. The results of the 1988 study revealed that the decision to accept or reject job transfer is associated with some key variables: demographic, attitudinal and career attributes. For example, they found that: (i) having many children at home lowered an employee's willingness to move; (ii) high job involvement and positive attitudes towards moving raised willingness to move and (iii) employees whose wives were working were less willing to move and actually turned down the transfers more frequently than did those whose wives were not employed. In conclusion, the authors recommend that managers should take note of specific demographic and career attributes such as age, tenure and family stage before they transfer someone. They also advocate strongly that companies should provide job-finding assistance for the relocating spouse.

In the same vein, Taylor and Lounsbury (1988) in their study of dual career couples and geographic transfers found that the ratings of geographic transfers were significantly affected by the couples' prior attitudes towards the move as well as the current presence of a commuter marriage. Using a sample of 151 executives, the authors found that the majority of the executives did not favour the idea of separating spouses because they feared that this would lower their productivity level. Other respondents feared that a commuter marriage would result in either a divorce or a decision to leave the company (Taylor and Lounsbury 1988).

Further, Friedman (1989) conducted an exploratory examination of the aftermath of job transfers among executives and their families at a multi-national high tech Fortune 500 firm. This study was the first of its kind to compare data from transferred executives, promoted executives and a control group of executives and their families who had not experienced either transition. The findings of the study revealed that for both employees and their spouses, the promotion group reported greater satisfaction with family life, followed by the control group. On the other hand, the transfer sample reported the least satisfaction with the quality of family life. Friedman argues that "promotions seem to correlate with increased quality of marital satisfaction whereas transfer events are more stressful and correlate diminished satisfaction" (Friedman 1989, p. 175). Friedman suggests that the history of mobility as opposed to the experience of a recent transfer event is a far superior predictor of job-related, health-related and family-related outcomes. He postulates that the long-term effects of multiple transfers are more significant and pronounced than ramifications of a recent transfer event (Friedman 1989, p. 234).

Supporting Friedman's findings, (Munton 1993) using a sample of employees throughout the United Kingdom, found that 75 % of the respondents rated relocation as a very stressful life event. Secondly, families moving over a considerable distance reported that they experienced more difficulties. The findings of the study confirmed Brett's (1982) observation that loss of social networks is a significant source of stress for those families that relocate.

Pinder (1989) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the financial, social and psychological effects of transfers on a sample of 800 managers and their spouses. Consistent with previous findings, Pinder found that transfers have tremendous effects on family life and family structure. Most people in his sample reported that their marriage suffered because of the transfer. Secondly, there was an overall consensus that transfers were disruptive to the extended family structure. Pinder posits that a combination of three factors seem to exacerbate the problem: (i) a sudden and unprecedented call to transfer late in one's career; (ii) a degree of existing marital discord before the transfer and (iii) a spouse's forced resignation from a desired job as a result of the employee's transfer (Pinder 1989, p. 55). Evidence from this study suggests that there are some areas where commuting couples report more costs than do dual career couples living together. These costs are primarily in the couples' relationships and in the families. For example, commuters in this study indicate that they are less satisfied with their relationship with their partner and less satisfied with their family life. Further, they report that they were less satisfied with life as a whole than were single-residence dual career respondents.

The notion that a commuting lifestyle can have both rewards and costs is also supported by Gerstel and Gross (1984). Their study suggests that the major costs of commuting include lack of regular deep and open communication; joint leisure activities; physical affection and unhurried regular sex. She points out that in missing such interactions, commuters experience some frustration and those who relocate for work often face forced self-reliance, a lack of family support and an increase in family demands. The study further confirmed that relocation costs money, takes time away from family, and is potentially damaging to the family structure (Reimer 2000, p. 211). Finally, a more recent study conducted in the Netherlands by Brummelhuis et al. (2010) showed that work and family demands increase time and energy deficits. The authors argue that energy deficits due to heavy demands result in feeling of distress among dual earner couples.

A number of studies selected from the military literature examine the impact of military induced separation on quality of family life. Orthner et al. (1980) examined the needs married and single parent families in 16 sites of the United States Air Force (AF). A sample of 657 subjects were used in this cross-sectional study. The results of the study revealed a more positive picture about Air Force life. For example, when respondents were asked about the major disappointments with Air Force life, more than one half (58 %) the AF husbands, 52 % of the AF wives and 57 % of civilian wives indicated that they were satisfied with moves in the AF; two-thirds of single parents (67 %) expressed satisfaction with the move (Orthner et al. 1980, p. 81). Satisfaction with base assignment was related to high

job morale among both AF married women and AF single parents. Although respondents expressed concerns regarding the effects of moving on children, there was an overall consensus that moves did not disrupt family relations.

On the contrary, Lavee et al. (1985) showed that relocation has a negative impact on the family. Using a sample of 288 families, Lavee and colleagues examined variables that buffer or moderate the impact of relocation strains on the adaptation of US army families to an overseas relocation. The authors identified four major life events which intensify the level of relocation stress: the birth of a child; financial problems; illness; and death of a family member. Drawing from the findings of this study, the authors recommended that concerted efforts needed to be made to strengthen families, improve communication channels and promote their level of social support.

Croan et al. (1991) study supports the findings advanced by Lavee et al. (1985). Their study explored the impact of relocation on US army members and families using a sample of 8,976 subjects. In general, the findings of Croan et al. study indicated that relocation is a cost to family life and that the people who are likely to experience more difficulties are couples with children, and those who are older. The results suggest that support services, like pre-move and post-move information, may significantly decrease the hardships that are associated with relocation.

Methods

This research is based on data collected during a study conducted to examine the effects of job transfers on the family well-being. The study was conducted among a sample of Botswana teachers who had experienced job transfer, and this study utilised exploratory and descriptive designs. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research approaches—namely a survey, documentary review, informal discussions, participant observations, conference presentations, focus groups—was used to address the research objectives. The qualitative component of the study provided insights into the experiences of dual career families and ascertained internal validity. Aware that qualitative research has a potential problem with reliability, a survey questionnaire and the resultant quantitative data were used to counteract this weakness.

Data Collection

A structured mailed questionnaire was administered among 361 transferred teachers nationwide. A list of teachers was obtained from the Ministry of Education. Using multi-stage probability sampling technique 361 out of 486 questionnaires were returned. For the qualitative phase, a sample of 20 married couples ($n = 40$) was interviewed through face-to-face technique in their homes. This

sample was selected from the South Central region of the country through purposive sampling technique. The reason for selecting this region is that it has a high concentration of dual career couples. Throughout the data collection process ethical standards of anonymity, voluntary participation and confidentiality were adhered to.

Data Analysis

Data from the survey were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Univariate statistics were used to provide the general description of the sample. Frequency tables provided useful percent summaries of respondents in each variable category. Bivariate statistics was used to test for the existence of a relationship between each independent variable and dependent variable. Hyper-Research—a computer programme that can be used by qualitative researchers for the analysis of qualitative data—was used in the analysis of qualitative interviews (Hesse-Biber et al. 1991). Open-ended questions from survey data were also analysed separately using this technique.

Results and Discussion

Sample Description

As stated earlier, a total of 361 secondary school teachers participated in the quantitative component of the study. Of these, a little over half (53 %) were male and the rest (47 %) were female. This sample is fairly representative of the transfer population. For example, most transfers are affected on promotion to higher level positions. There are also a higher proportion of men occupying higher level positions. Consequently, this explains why in this sample we have a higher percentage of men than women despite the fact that the teaching profession is dominated by women. From this sample, 20 respondents were selected for the qualitative interviews. Through contact with them, their spouses were identified and located. In total, therefore, a sample of 40 individuals were used for the qualitative component of the study.

With respect to age, most respondents in quantitative sample (53 %) fell under the 31–40 year age range. The mean age was 29 years. Two-thirds of the respondents (64 %) were married. One-third (31 %) were single; the rest fell into the following categories: Divorced (3 %), separated (1 %) and engaged (0.3 %). There seems to be a reasonable balance between younger and older couples. For example, a quarter of the respondents (26 %), had been married for between 3 and 6 years. A third of the sample (32 %) had been married for 7 years or more.

A small proportion (8 %) was newlyweds. Slightly more than half (53 %) had one or two children; a quarter (25 %) had three to four children, 7 % had five children or more; whilst 15 % had no children.

In terms of educational qualifications, two-thirds (66 %) of the respondents had completed 3 years of university or college education. A third (29 %) had completed degree programmes and the rest (5 %) were master's degree holders. In line with this, most respondents participating in this study (62 %) held fairly high positions in the teaching field. Seemingly, there was a corresponding trend in income. Majority of married transferees (71 %) lived in separate residences from their spouse. Information pertaining to distance between transferees and spouse reveals very interesting findings. Almost a third of transferees (30 %) lived further than 152 km apart. On average, these couples lived 300 km apart.

Out of the 40 couples selected for the qualitative component of the study, half the sample was males and the other half females. Their spouses came from different professional backgrounds including the teaching field. Concerning their educational background, two-thirds of the respondents had completed 3 years of university or college education and hence were teaching in either community junior secondary schools or senior schools. On average, couples in the qualitative component were also living 300 km apart.

Factors Affecting Willingness to Relocate

Once a transfer decision has been finalised by a government department, the potential transferee is notified in writing. Normally, the transfer letter does not specify the underlying reasons behind the transfer except to mention that the officer is transferred to "carry out the exigencies of the service". In this study, 72 % of participants reported that they did not know the underlying rationale behind their relocation. Surprisingly, over half of the sample (59 %) indicated that they were given at least 2 weeks to prepare for relocation. More than a third (39 %) said they were given 3–6 weeks to prepare and only 1 % said they were given 6 weeks or more to prepare for relocation.

Asked to indicate why they accepted a transfer that entailed separation from family, majority of respondents reported that they had no choice because a transfer decision is mandatory. Having secured their jobs, they cited career advancement as another important consideration. For most participants, a rejection of a transfer decision automatically jeopardises one's career path unless the teacher has an additional qualification from another professional field. For similar reasons, spouses of transferees also expressed concern that if they followed their trailing spouses, they too would forfeit chances to advance their career goals. One woman described her career goals with these words:

I feel that my career should advance. The family should not be an excuse. Our culture makes us feel that we should and must take care of the family. Most women are not

prepared to go anywhere because this will jeopardise their family life...they believe "mosadi ke mosalagae" [meaning a woman's role is in her house]...I used to feel that I'm the only one who can hold the family together...I felt that my career shouldn't advance at the expense of my family. I don't feel that anymore.

Another woman spoke in similar terms about the importance of her job:

My job and family are equally important. However, in the final analysis, I wouldn't compromise my job for my marriage. I don't know what will happen to this marriage. I don't even understand the extent to which my husband is investing in this marriage...the marriage might break...so I need to concentrate on my job.

Besides career advancement, the need to become financially independent was also a factor that was frequently cited as a motivation for accepting a transfer. Majority of women in the study resisted the idea of resigning from their jobs to join their transferred husbands because they aspired to have a regular wage. In sum, these findings confirm earlier studies that career attributes are significant predictors of job transfer decision (Brett and Reily 1988; Friedman 1989; Lee and Johnson 1994; Deding and Filges 2010).

Acceptance of transfer, however, automatically alters family roles and responsibilities. Before transfer, all dual career families interviewed reported that their roles and responsibilities were less complex. Both husband and wife went to work in the same town or village and then reunited with the family either during lunch time or in the evening. Although women still carried a heavier load of childcare responsibilities, all couples reported that they made some effort to enhance the quality of family time through, for example, budgeting together; planning and making joint decisions; running errands and providing emotional support.

Experience of Work-Family Conflict and Dilemmas

Through probing, it emerged that most couples experienced a sense of collegiality and competence. With geographic transfers, however, these roles and responsibilities changed drastically. The couples started to face work-family conflict and dilemmas normally experienced by dual career families. These include: role overload, role cycling, identity and normative dilemmas (Rapoport and Rapoport 1976).

Role Overload Dilemma

Role overload dilemma occurs when dual career families attempt to balance two major roles: their jobs as well as family responsibilities. Normally, such physical exhaustion and strains are felt by wives since they take on the extra burden of domestic responsibilities (Sekaren 1986). Interestingly, in this study both men and

women experienced role overload dilemmas since they both had to take care of domestic responsibilities. For men, this was even more burdensome because of lack of adequate socialisation in this area. One man remarked:

The stress of taking care of the family is increased...the running of the household which used to be done by two adults is done by one, single-handedly. I really miss meals that my wife used to prepare.

Another man made this statement about his new role:

When your wife is not there, there is a tendency for people to want to help you. This could cost you a lot. You then start comparing the services rendered. I mean for example, if the woman cooks better than your wife, this may shake you a little. Lady friends come genuinely to prepare lunches...before you know it, you have made a mistake of falling for her.

It is interesting to observe that unlike men, women did not receive any sympathy about their additional responsibilities. There was a cultural expectation that they could handle their respective roles. Women, in turn, internalised and perpetuated this culture and gender bias. For example, with respect to childcare, all women in the study felt that it was their responsibility to take care of children. When situations did not permit, some women felt frustrated that their husbands had to assume this role:

Generally, separation is painful. I find it difficult to concentrate. I keep thinking about children and wondering if they are ok. I also worry about their protection. I feel that if I was around, I could do something to help.

Another woman expressed similar sentiments about helping her husband to deal with their teenage daughter:

We have three children, the girl is a teenager. She has come to a stage where she needs me around. I am really worried about her because she has started to go through a lot in her life. Her father is good, but I believe he needs me to deal with this situation.

It follows from the sentiments presented above that despite the changing family structure, the societal norms and values about women's roles have not radically changed.

Role Cycling Dilemmas

In addition to role overload, dual career families in this study experienced role cycling dilemmas. According to Rapoport and Rapoport (1976), role cycling dilemmas occur when dual career couples are compelled to make decisions about various issues that arise at different stages of their cycles. Chief among these are decisions regarding career goals, the ideal time to start a family, the size of the family, and other pertinent areas of the family well-being. In addition, these couples have to make major decisions about the impact of separation on the well-being of the children such as who will take care of childcare responsibilities, choice of

schools, children's academic performance, children's health, as well as relationships with friends and other family members. Throughout their career paths, these couples go through a continuous battle of sorting out trade-offs between work and family demands.

Identity Dilemmas

The third dilemma that the couples in the study experienced is the internal conflict of trying to establish who they are and what they are becoming. Historically, women were regarded as socially inferior to men, and within customary law were generally treated as minors (Schapera 1955). In recent years, Botswana has made significant progress towards gender equality. Enrolment statistics show that gender disparity in primary and secondary education has been eliminated (Government of Botswana/UNDP 2010). This being the case, more women are now opting to be full-time employees. By choosing a dual career lifestyle, women challenge the gender-based roles and traditional values they have internalised over a long period of time. Inevitably, tension and conflict often arise as they negotiate trade-offs between becoming self-actualised or assuming traditional familial roles. The decision to adopt a commuter lifestyle exacerbates the situation because, in addition to advancing careers, women are now called upon to become temporary heads of households.

Normative Dilemmas

Whereas identity dilemmas arise from internal pressures, normative dilemmas occur as a result of the discrepancies which exist between the lifestyles of dual career couples and the norms and values prescribed by the society (Rapoport and Rapoport 1976). From the qualitative interviews, it was evident that dual career couples experienced normative dilemmas. The findings reveal that their friends, workmates as well as some extended family members were opposed to the commuter lifestyle. Consequently, this created a feeling of shame and guilt as they were frequently asked questions such as "when are you going to join your spouse"?; "who is taking care of the children"?; "how often do you see each other" and so forth. Consistent with these findings, Reimer (2000) revealed from his study in the United States that being away from home was perceived negatively by friends and families. The study shows that family and friends often made long-distance demands that produce both guilt and strain for those who had relocated (Reimer 2000, p. 212).

Perceived Benefits of Living Apart

Despite the above-mentioned challenges and dilemmas, dual career families reported that living apart presented them with some rewards. The three most enriching experiences were: expressiveness and self-worth; collegiality and sense of competence.

Expressiveness and Self-Worth

The ability to pursue a career is a rewarding experience for most Batswana. Educational opportunities are hard to come by and hence everyone wants to make use of the limited opportunities. In addition, the current socio-economic climate requires an educated society. With the current unemployment rate of 17.8 % (Central Statistics Office 2011), coupled with a high rate of inflation, career development is a critical means to survival. Above all, for dual career families, career advancement provides an avenue for accomplishment and creativity. It also offers an avenue for self-actualisation. Batswana women in particular aspire to get their talents and skills recognised. They also want to make a meaningful contribution to nation building. Through enhancing their career goals, they experience enhanced self-esteem and self-worth and gain a greater sense of importance.

Collegiality

Dual career marriages also provide husbands and wives with stimulating academic environments where they can both discuss issues at the same level, thus enhancing and sharpening each other's skills. In this study over 60 % of the professionals in the sample were educators. This similarity in career interests demonstrates how these families desire to have marriages that will further enhance their career development.

Sense of Competence

Commuter lifestyle is very challenging. As noted earlier, the couples are constantly faced with the dilemma of how to balance work and family pressures. It was also evident that they long to live together with their spouses. However, in lieu of their current situations, they have accepted the fact that they have no choice. This ability to persevere and be hopeful provides these couples with greater energy and motivation to face even greater life challenges.

Other Benefits

More than half of the women interviewed valued the freedom that commuter lifestyle provided. For example, they shared how this lifestyle allowed them to have more flexible time schedules, how it motivated them to be autonomous and to have a greater sense of self-esteem and, finally, how they felt relieved from the pressure of taking care of household chores such as: maintaining high levels of cleanliness and cooking special meals for their husbands. These findings confirm related studies (for example Gerstel and Gross 1984; Jehn et al. 1997; Klis and Karsten 2009) that living apart can bring forth substantial enrichment for some couples.

Perceived Disadvantages of Living Apart

Notwithstanding the foregoing perceived benefits, it also emerged that for many, relocation and living apart have had negative impact on marriage relationships, intimacy, parenting, family finances and work.

Impact Marriage Relationships

Past research reveals that job transfer is a source of strain on marriage relationships. Participants in this study reported that the level of marital relationship changed as a result of transfer. For example, whereas 77 % of married teachers were satisfied with marriage before transfer, this figure dropped to 47 % after transfer, showing significant decline in marital satisfaction. Hence, consistent with earlier findings, geographic transfers have a negative impact on marriage. Having established this fact, the factors that may contribute to the decline in marital satisfaction were examined. Using a Chi square test, it was found that two variables were statistically significant at $p < 0.000$: type of residence and distance between transferee and spouse. Results show that 90 % of transferees who lived in a single residence with their spouse were satisfied with marriage, whereas only a handful (10 %) were dissatisfied with marriage. For those transferees who lived apart, over two-thirds of them (71 %), were dissatisfied with marriage after transfer and only a third were satisfied.

Further, distance between transferee and spouse influenced the level of marital satisfaction after transfer. Transferees who lived closer to their spouse (50 or less km) seem to be more satisfied with marriage than their counterparts who live further away. These findings are consistent with earlier findings that geographic transfers are a source of strain for married couples (Marshall and Cooper 1976; Gross 1980; Brett 1982; Taylor and Loundsbury 1988; Friedman 1989; Munton 1993; Hendershott 1995).

Impact on Intimacy and Fidelity

Majority of respondents (65 %) reported that that living apart had a negative effect on their intimacy and sexual relationships. Respondents cited problems such as loneliness, lack of regular physical contact, and infidelity. A husband described his dying passion with these words:

Transfer entailed separation with family and this had a negative effect on the relationship. My wife was moved four times and we have not had a chance to stay together. The relationship is not as close as it was before. There's a lot of mistrust and suspicions. Certainly, this separation has been costly to my relationship with my wife. It decreases the love I have for her. I'm maintaining the marriage because we need to keep the vows. There's no close and active relationship. We are kept close only by children and the property we've acquired together. The children keep us going, but the love is gone.

Another husband echoed the same concern:

Living in separation creates a superficial bond between couples. We were from two different families. We had to learn, accept and accommodate things. We needed to sacrifice for each other. This becomes very difficult when we were apart. We do not have a proper base or foundation. This is not the best option for us. I don't believe that there are many positives when people live in separate residences.

A woman also expressed the same feelings:

This is a hard time for us. We used to be very close friends, now we are slowly drifting apart. Separation puts marriage under enormous strain. This begins with the emotional gap. The only strength is that we love each other and we have the fear of the Lord. The common good is that we have children as well. Separation brings intense things to the marriage. I don't want this to ever happen to a family. I love my family; I find it difficult to stay separated. I cannot cope with this kind of experience. When I'm at work, I get absent-minded. Each time I come home and go the children cry. This makes me feel very bad. The difficulty is that my husband is my best friend. No one wants to part with a best friend.

There was, however, a variation across the sample with respect to the frequency of sexual contact. For example, whereas weekly commuters did not experience a major decline in their sexual contact, those who visited monthly or bi-monthly reported that they experienced a radical decline in the quantity of sexual interaction. However, for some geographic separation rekindled their love relationship. Below are typical comments illustrating how distance made the heart grow fonder:

The fact that we don't stay together increases the longing for one another, when we meet, it is always romantic.

Our relationship gets renewed each time my husband gets home. When he is away, I miss him, but when he comes, our relationship gets rekindled.

Concerning infidelity or extramarital relations, an overwhelming majority of respondents (80 %) stated that job transfers contributed significantly to this problem. Commenting on factors contributing to extramarital affairs, two male respondents made these remarks:

If you are far, you can't see the family regularly...we have constraints, transport, money. You then find yourself a girlfriend and there's a tendency to neglect your home.

We are human, we can't discount that we cannot be involved in adulterous relationships...there are many temptations when you are alone. Women approach you with genuine feelings of wanting to be helpful...this tends to result in a relationship growing.

One man shared how and why he had to literally stay away from his lonely house:

I have fears that I will fall into temptations, as a result, I don't spend a lot of time in the house: I make sure that I'm always with friends and family...my wife was told that I was engaged in an affair, this traumatised our relationship.

Another man said he tried not to focus on this issue:

Temptations will usually come and I fear that I will be unfaithful to my wife. I try as much as possible to resist. I try to have the will power to stand by my vows. But this is difficult. If I were staying with my wife, I will not be thinking this way, but now with separation, a lot of thoughts come through your mind. Separation breeds insecurities...the best way to survive is not to think negatively about the other person...pretend as though everything is ok. If you vow not to get tempted, expect that your partner does the same thing.

Another man expressed similar sentiments:

I've conditioned myself psychologically. I've created room for disappointments. If I hear that she has committed adultery, I will be hurt, but I will forgive her. If you over-trust, you create problems for yourself. My attitude is that my wife is not an angel; she's capable of making mistakes.

Older couples seemed to be more confident about their relationship than younger couples. Overall, they were less anxious about possibilities of extramarital affairs and more trusting of their mates. One woman expressed her feelings this way:

I've come to a stage where I trust my husband. I do not have fears that he has a relationship. We are mature. If being apart is too costly, we will make a radical decision to stay together. My long term goal is to stay in this relationship.

Another woman made the same kinds of remarks about her feelings of security:

We have not reached a stage where we are saturated. I don't have fears that my husband is cheating. I'm very comfortable because I communicate with him a lot. I know that he is taking this marriage very seriously.

Impact on Children

Past research confirm that a job transfer decision negatively impacts on the well-being of children (Gross 1980; Lavee et al. 1985; Wood et al. 1993). Consistent with these findings, respondents were of the view that living apart was a source of strain for children. In addition parents feel helpless and guilty that they are not there at all times to take care of their children. Stroh and Brett (1990) established

that relocation is particularly stressful for adolescents. Mothers in this study had this to say about this situation:

The children miss their father a lot; they feel his absence. But obviously, they're closer to me than their dad. There is a distance between them and him. Sometimes they make remarks like '*Wa ba a tsile*' meaning 'he has come to bother us.' When he is home, he is considered an outsider by the children.

Another woman expressed how her son misses his father:

My four year old is very sad that my husband is not around all the time. He complains and cries every day. He doesn't understand why his father is away for too long. I think this is really affecting him. Sometimes he asks 'please get me another daddy because my daddy is not coming back.' This really makes me feel overwhelmed.

The second challenging area for mothers was handling their teenage children:

It's very hard to bring up kids single-handedly. His nephew is a real problem. I don't think he wants to stay with me. He refuses to obey and I'm finding it difficult to handle him. If my husband was here, it would be much better.

Another mother expressed similar concerns:

I don't think my children understood why I had to move to another place. The two teenagers have been very difficult especially my 17 year old son. His school work has dropped so much that I'm very doubtful whether he will make it in his final Form 5 examinations [final year of high school].

In response, fathers too were concerned about the impact of their absence on the children. The following statement summarises some of the fathers' feelings about parenting at a distance:

I must admit that it's hard to stay away from the children. I miss them a lot, we used to do a lot of things together, every single day, now I don't have that luxury.

I don't have personal contact with my three children. My children are going to blame me for not being a good father. Now I'm forced to divide my time between work and taking care of them. Before, I was always home, we could play every time. Children depend on us for comfort, love and security. If we are not there for them, children lose out. I really value my children; I have a close bond with them.

Impact on Family Income

Prior to relocation, government provides transferees with assistance to cover relocation costs. This assistance comes in the form of a transfer allowance, transportation, subsidised housing and, where applicable, a remote area service allowance. The latter is a type of incentive provided to all transferees who work in remote areas of the country. Despite these incentives, over 90 % of the couples interviewed complained that maintaining two separate households drained family financial resources. The following costs were frequently cited as burdensome: travel expenses; telephone bills; rent; utilities; food; household goods and services.

Interestingly, those transferred on promotion concurred that despite getting an increase in their salary, living apart was not cost effective. One headmaster made these remarks about family finances: *Although this was a promotion, the money I get doesn't help. The net expenditure ends up being higher.* His wife echoed the same sentiments:

My husband was transferred on promotion. However, we don't really feel the difference in the salary because we spend a lot of money taking care of two homes.

Further, majority of respondents reported that financial hardships in turn strained the quality of the marriage relationship. Articulating some of the stresses in the family, a husband said:

Before the transfer, we had enough money. We therefore didn't care about how it was used. After separating, we started to account for every little expense...justifying for small items made us argue a lot. Lack of trust in each other became a problem. I started to think that my wife was not capable of managing our finances.

Another husband spoke in similar terms about the effects of financial strains:

Maintaining two households is not a joke. Every time we buy two of everything. This strains us badly and sometimes this puts strain in our relationship.

In sum, these results confirm earlier findings that living apart also affects the economic well-being of the family (Gerstel and Gross 1984; Shaklee 1989; Pinder 1989; Hendeshott 1995). Because couples are forced to maintain two separate households, resources are duplicated which makes it difficult for them to have adequate savings. What further compounds this situation is the fact that these couples do not have the luxury to jointly plan and organise their budgets on a regular and consistent manner.

Impact on Work

Most transferred teachers participating in the study reported that they were satisfied with work after transfer. However, a close examination of the married group revealed interesting results. The length of marriage, distance between transferees and their spouse, and the type of residence had a significant effect on the level of work satisfaction. For example, transferees who were married longer (11 years and over) were more dissatisfied with work after transfer than their counterparts who were married for relatively shorter periods. However, all respondents unanimously agreed that living apart was a significant barrier to their work. Commenting on her output level, one teacher remarked:

When you're not happy, output at work is affected. We're both employed by government and we see that the government does not care about our welfare. Half of the time, we talk about frustrations instead of doing work. You spend half a day worrying about your family. Sometimes you're worried about the security in the house. These are bad times, we have burglars at night. This too affects productivity. Generally not being together does not enhance the quality of output. When you go to work, you're not yourself; this threatens productivity.

Another teacher made a similar remark about lack of motivation:

On a scale of 0–100 my productivity level is 30. I don't enjoy my work; I don't derive any pleasure from it. I'm working to earn a living. I have adopted a negative attitude towards my job. Separation from family affects your productivity because you're always thinking about them. My son is asthmatic. Whenever my wife writes to say he's sick, I get worried and lose interest in the job. I only recover when I receive another letter saying he's now fine. It is natural to get affected when your children are not doing well.

Some teachers talked about how long distance travel affected their work as well:

I am always late to work due to the fact that I travel long distance. This affects my work. I am not able to help the sport department during the weekends because I have to visit my husband. Even catching up with students' work has to wait until I came back from home. My heart is completely not on the job because I worry about the condition of my family. I have a divided mind.

Another teacher agreed:

You can't be creative and show initiative when your mind is far away. Work gets affected and your professional development gets disturbed. Government loses money because we don't work full hours. On Mondays people come late and leave early on Fridays. Time is also lost on phone calls, which could be avoided if people lived together. Service is also affected because people don't give their best.

Further analysis showed that age and type of residence appear to be the strongest predictors of whether an individual will be dissatisfied with work or not. In essence, older transferees seemed to be more dissatisfied with work than other age groups. Seemingly, transferees who were separated from their spouse were also more likely to be dissatisfied with work than their counterparts who lived in the same location with their family members. In addition, these employees experienced more conflict between work and family.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

It is evident from the findings discussed in this chapter that, as in other parts of the world, geographic transfers have a negative impact on the well-being of dual career families who live apart in Botswana. While not all transferees are dissatisfied with the current transfer system, the findings suggest that it is imperative for the government of Botswana to devise plans to accommodate the needs of public officers who are affected and often inconvenienced by transfers and make the transfer system a rewarding developmental experience for all officers and their families. To this end, two sets of policy recommendations—short-term and long-term—are worthy of consideration.

Short-Term Policy Recommendations

In the short term, the following policy options seem feasible:

- Potential transferees should be given at least 3 months to prepare for relocation. Where possible, couples should be separated only as a last resort. If there is a need to separate couples, the transferring agencies should, to the extent possible, ensure that couples are located within a radius of not more than 80 km.
- To the extent possible, transferring agencies should aim at transferring couples to the same location.
- Where possible, public officer who are older (50–55 years) should be transferred closer to their home towns or villages.
- To enhance productivity, transferees should be kept in remote areas for a maximum of 2 years.
- Transparency should prevail in the transfer decision making process. Dialogue between various government departments and transferees should be promoted to facilitate effective transition for all parties involved.
- Government should assess the possibility of providing more financial incentives for transferees who work in remote areas.
- Given the fact that not all transferees are reluctant to accept a transfer decision, the current transfer system should be made voluntary. Public officers have a free choice of where they want to work.
- Transfer policy guidelines should be documented outlining succinctly, the objectives of the policy and the implementation machinery.

Long-Term Policy Recommendations:

The findings from this study suggest that transferees and their families need to be provided with other assistance beyond transfer allowance, transportation and subsidised housing. This study revealed that transfer policy is a source of strain on marriage and family relations. To this end, the following may be viable intervention strategies:

An Employee Assistance Programme

Private sector companies in many countries are utilising Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) as a way of providing support for families who are relocated. Within the Botswana public service EAP could fulfil the following specific functions:

Preparation and Orientation

- Provision of pre- and post-transfer interviews to determine the needs of the family;
- Counselling and professional support services;

- Transfer stress management;
- Dissemination of resource literature.

Special Assistance for Special Needs

- Connecting the family to a network of resources in a new area such as medical services, schools, social services and other community agencies;
- Identifying job opportunities for the spouse;
- Notifying providers ahead of time about special needs of family members;
- Addressing financial and emotional needs of extended family members.

Public Relations

Findings from this study have revealed that transferees who live apart often experience difficulties adjusting in new communities. The role of EAP in this area would therefore be to: (i) improve public receptivity of relocating families and to enhance their positive image as community contributors and developers, and (ii) develop a database of transferred employees which could be made accessible to other user departments and other transferring agencies.

Resource Implications

Implementation of an EAP has implications for additional resources. Government ministries will need to employ professionals, such as social workers, who are adequately trained to deal with family dynamics. Professionals with social work background will be best suited to implement such an EAP within the Department of Placement and Procurement.

Inter- and Intra-departmental Collaboration

All government departments could join hands in creating a family-oriented work system. Private as well as parastatal organisations would also be encouraged to embrace this philosophy in their workplaces.

Research and Training

Research is needed to guide policy development in the area of work and family in Botswana. To date, no study has been undertaken to address this issue. Social

science and business management/administration curricula at universities and other tertiary institutions in Botswana should be reviewed to sensitize students on issues of work-family interface.

Employment Creation in the Rural Areas

Government has come up with a number of policies to accelerate rural development. Effective implementation of these policies is a key for the diversification of the economy as well as creation of employment opportunities for dual career couples. Currently, most jobs are concentrated in the eastern part of the country. In addition, this is where the best schools, health facilities, telecommunication services and other essential services are located. The reality is that dual career couples want the best for their children. It goes without saying that the long-term solution to minimise the trauma of transfers will be to make rural areas more attractive by providing essential services and improving infrastructural development. Once this goal is reached, employees will not hesitate to relocate with their families.

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