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FAMILY LIFE ADAPTATIONS TO  
OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EMPLOYMENT

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## SUMMARY

This Study, funded through the Environmental Studies Revolving Funds, documents the responses of families living in Newfoundland to the rotational patterns of work associated with offshore oil and gas employment. Based on the reactions and adjustments that families presently make, recommendations are offered to alleviate a number of problems identified.

The approach used began with a literature review of family adaptation to spousal absence. This assisted in the development of questionnaires that were sent to 203, or approximately 40%, of the married offshore work force and their spouses resident in Newfoundland in July 1985. One hundred fifty responses (74%) were received from the female spouses, and 101 responses (50%) from the males. Based on an analysis of these returns, detailed personal interviews were undertaken with 23 couples and 8 individuals from among those who had received questionnaires.

The results of the analyses indicate considerable levels of positive feeling towards employment offshore and the rewards and family life-styles which are likely to accompany it. However, these attitudes must be considered in the context of an economy in which there are few alternative employment opportunities; furthermore, for some, separation or divorce may represent a method of dealing with this problem, but this option was not examined in this study.

Comparison of responses between different groups do, however, reveal significant variations. Women in general are less satisfied or reconciled to the work patterns than men, and while all women can be said to be "coping," in the sense that their partner continues to work offshore and that the relationship is still intact, there is a marked distinction between those who view the work and the work pattern positively from those who view it negatively.

For all women there is a need to adjust both to the practical aspects of having an intermittent spouse - organizational, child care, domestic and other routines that are affected by the work cycle - and to the needs and demands of the partner while he is onshore. Coping with any problems that may arise were viewed by our respondents as primarily the duty of the female.

The concerns of the men are essentially with the job and the work place rather than the family. Attitudes



towards the work and work pattern were generally positive but there is a group of men with very strong negative feelings. The single most important variable explaining these differences appears to be whether the job held is on a supply vessel or on a rig. Supply vessel workers are much more positive about the physical and social environments within which they work and these feelings are often reciprocated by their wives.

However, both men and women are, to varying degrees, ambivalent about the work. Even those who are the most positive articulate some negative attitudes. The main areas of difficulty for both men and women are the tensions and anxieties of partings and reunions, and the mood changes that occur between the times when the worker is offshore and when he is onshore. In many cases these tensions and anxieties result from concerns about the dangers of the work and for the safety of the worker. For women there are the problems associated with the double adjustment to the husband's absence while he is offshore, and then coping with a different role when he is onshore. For men the main difficulty is the transition between rig and home cultures. For both men and women communication is a problem area, whether it be onshore-offshore communication while he is away, or communication about work or family issues when he is at home.

To address these difficulties, sixteen recommendations in seven categories are proposed:

**Information:**

- (i) Information Packages
- (ii) Heliport Arrival and Departure Times
- (iii) Rig Visits

**Counselling:**

- (i) Worker and Family Orientation Programmes
- (ii) Management Orientation Programmes
- (iii) Counselling Services

**Telecommunications:**

- (i) Offshore-Onshore Telecommunications Links

**Work Practices:**

- (i) Shift Pattern
- (ii) Shift Organization
- (iii) Safety

**Industry Practices:**

- (i) Code of Good Industrial Practice

**Work Culture:**

- (i) Management Awareness of Work Culture Issues

**Research:**

- (i) Long-Term Effects of Offshore Work Patterns
- (ii) Adaptations by Other Oil Workers
- (iii) Family Adaptations in Other Industries
- (iv) Rig Culture

The underlying theme of these recommendations is the need to recognize the continuities that exist between home and work. Offshore work will always require absence of a spouse and the location of the work will always remain potentially hostile and dangerous. However, for those involved in such work, either directly in the case of the worker, or indirectly in the case of the families, reduction of the contrast between home and work may significantly help in the adjustment to offshore oil and gas employment.

## RESUME

Cette étude, subventionnée par les Fonds Renouvelables pour les Etudes de l'Environnement, réunit pour des familles qui demeurent à Terre-Neuve les réponses au rythme de travail en rotation associé aux emplois dans l'industrie de gaz et de pétrole en mer. Basées sur les façons actuelles de réagir aux exigences et de s'en accommoder, des recommandations sont offertes pour alléger quelques-uns des problèmes identifiés.

On a commencé par revoir les études existantes sur l'accommodation des familles à l'absence d'un époux ou d'une épouse. Ceci nous a aidés à développer des questionnaires que nous avons envoyés à 203, soit 40% environ, des employés dans l'industrie en mer et à leurs époux(es) qui habitaient à Terre-Neuve en juillet 1985. On a reçu 150 réponses (74%) des épouses et 101 (50%) des époux. A la suite de l'analyse de ces réponses, des interviews détaillés ont été entrepris en personne avec 25 couples et 8 individus choisis parmi ceux qui avaient reçu le questionnaire.

Les résultats des analyses indiquent une attitude fort positive envers les emplois dans l'industrie en mer et envers les bénéfices et le train de vie familiale qui y vont probablement de pair. Pourtant, il faut tenir en esprit que ces attitudes se manifestent dans le contexte d'une économie où le choix entre emplois est très limité; d'ailleurs, pour quelques individus, la séparation ou le divorce peut représenter une façon de résoudre le problème, mais on n'a pas examiné cette option dans notre étude.

Comparer les réponses reçues des différents groupes révèle pourtant des variations significatives. Les femmes en général se déclarent moins satisfaites ou réconciliées au rythme de travail que les hommes, et tandis qu'on pourrait dire que toutes les femmes savent en tirer leur compte, dans le sens où leur partenaire continue à travailler en mer et que leur relation est toujours intacte, il y a une nette différence entre celles qui envisagent le travail et son rythme d'un point de vue positif et celles qui l'envisagent sous un jour négatif.

Toutes les femmes ont besoin de s'ajuster aux aspects pratiques d'être sans époux de temps en temps--organisation, soins des enfants, routines domestiques et autres qui se trouvent modifiées par le rythme du travail de leur époux--et de s'ajuster aux besoins et aux demandes du partenaire pendant qu'il est à terre. En venir à maîtriser

les problèmes soulevés par cette situation est, à l'avis de nos répondants, du domaine de la femme.

Les soucis des hommes tiennent essentiellement du travail et du milieu de travail plutôt que de la famille. Les attitudes envers le travail et son rythme sont d'une façon générale positives, mais il existe un groupe d'hommes qui manifestent des sentiments négatifs très marqués. Le seul variable important pour expliquer ces différences semble être le lieu du travail--soit sur un bateau d'apprivoisement, soit sur une plateforme. Les ouvriers sur les bateaux d'apprivoisement manifestent une attitude bien plus positive envers le milieu physique et social de leur travail, et ces sentiments se font voir souvent parmi leurs femmes.

Pourtant et les hommes et les femmes ont, à des degrés variants, une attitude ambivalente envers le travail. Même les plus positifs donnent voix à des attitudes négatives. Les domaines difficiles pour les hommes et les femmes sont l'angoisse et les tensions créées par les adieux et les réunions, et les changements d'humeur qui se manifestent entre les périodes où l'ouvrier est en mer et celles où il est à terre. Dans beaucoup des cas, cette angoisse et ces tensions sortent des soucis pour les dangers du travail et pour la sauveté des ouvriers. Pour les femmes il y a les problèmes créés par l'accomodation double, et à l'absence de l'époux pendant qu'il travaille en mer, et à un nouveau rôle quand il revient à terre. Pour les hommes la difficulté principale c'est faire la transition entre la vie sur plateforme et la vie au foyer. Pour les hommes et les femmes, le domaine de la communication pose des problèmes, soit la communication entre terre et plateforme, soit la communication personnelle à propos du travail ou de la famille quand l'époux ou l'épouse rentre au foyer.

Pour résoudre ce difficultés, seize recommandations en sept catégories se proposent:

#### **Renseignements**

- i) ensembles de renseignements
- ii) heures d'arrivée et de départ au hélicoptère
- iii) visites aux plateformes

#### **Conseils**

- i) programmes d'orientation pour l'ouvrier/l'ouvrière et sa famille
- ii) programmes d'orientation pour les cadres
- iii) services de conseil

### **Télécommunication**

- i) liens de communication entre terre et mer

### **Pratiques de travail**

- i) rythme du travail
- ii) organisation du rythme de travail
- iii) sauveté

### **Pratiques dans l'industrie**

- i) code de la bonne pratique industrielle

### **Culture dans l'emploi**

- i) prise de conscience par les cadres des problèmes dans la culture dans l'emploi

### **Recherches**

- i) effets à long terme du rythme de travail en mer
- ii) accomodations faites par d'autres ouvriers dans l'industrie pétrolière
- iii) accomodations faites par les familles dans d'autres industries
- iv) culture de la plateforme

Le thème sousjacent de ces recommandations fait voir le besoin de reconnaître la continuité entre le foyer et le travail. Le travail en mer demandera toujours l'absence de l'époux ou de l'épouse, et l'endroit où se poursuit le travail sera toujours prêt à se montrer hostile et dangereux. Pourtant, pour ceux que touche ce travail, soit directement dans le cas de l'ouvrier/l'ouvrière, soit indirectement dans le cas des familles, réduire le contraste entre le foyer et le travail aidera beaucoup aux accomodations que demandent l'emploi dans l'industrie de gaz et de pétrole en mer.

## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 STUDY BACKGROUND

The Canada Oil and Gas Act, proclaimed in March 1982, provides sources of funding through the Environmental Studies Revolving Funds (ESRF), administered within the federal government, for environmental and social studies. The topics funded are designed to yield necessary information for decision makers respecting health, safety and environmental protection matters relevant to petroleum activities. This study, on Family Life Adaptations to Offshore Oil and Gas Employment in Newfoundland, is one of a number of social studies funded through the ESRF.

Several studies have suggested that the rotational schedule of work for offshore employees presents special adaptational issues for family life.<sup>1</sup> Issues such as potential conflicts over the variable division of authority in the household, alternative parenting strategies for the intermittent spouse household, problems associated with abrupt changes in hours of rest, and mood swings accompanying the departure to, and arrival from, work, are thought to present potentially disruptive influences on family life.

The purpose of this study is to document the experiences of families as they define the problems presented by offshore employment and, where necessary, possible or appropriate, to identify and develop recommended solutions to those problems. What is attempted here is to present an empirically validated definition of the problem from which recommendations are derived that aim to alleviate family disruptions resulting from offshore employment.

### 2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this study, as set out by the ESRF, were to:

- (i) provide an annotated bibliography of research literature on the family adaptation to spousal absence experienced in various industries and at various locations. Industries considered will include, for example, the fishery, the merchant marine, the coast guard, the

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1. See, for example: Cleland Dunsmuir et al. (1985); Fuchs et al. (1983); Socio-Economic Review Panel (1984); Clark, D. et al. (1985); and Solheim, J. (1984).

armed forces, travelling salesmen, long distance truck drivers, and the oil and gas industry. Locations will include marine and land-based, foreign, and the far north;

- (ii) provide a description of the special adaptations of offshore workers' families to rotational scheduling and other aspects of offshore oil and gas work;
- (iii) identify successful adaptational responses of family members to the intermittent presence and absence in the household of the spouse employed offshore;
- (iv) identify social, family and personal service needs which are specific to such families; and,
- (v) recommend suitable mechanisms through which the needs (identified in iv) of offshore oil workers' families are, and can be, met.

### **3.0 METHODS AND APPROACH**

A detailed discussion of the research method adopted can be found in Chapter II. Essentially, the methodology used is characterized by an emphasis on questionnaire and interview surveys of offshore workers and their families who live in Newfoundland. Following a review of possible research methods, the approach adopted was one based on a similar study undertaken by Clark et al. of the Institute of Medical Sociology, University of Aberdeen in 1982.

Questionnaire and interview surveys were preceded by an extensive bibliographic search, the product of which is included as an appendix to this report, and followed by a series of interviews with what are described as "key informants," individuals with particular interest or expertise in this area, as a means of supplementing and reviewing the findings and recommendations.

### **4.0 REPORT FORMAT**

The Bibliography (Appendix E), which comprises a review of about 120 items, provides a brief overview of the subject area, and a synopsis of each bibliographic item where they are available. Items not annotated were not available at the time that the report was presented.

The main report, following this introductory chapter, discusses the research method in detail, including findings from the literature review, hypothesis formulation, questionnaire method and design, the sampling frame and response rates. Chapter III provides an overview of the demographic and work characteristics of the study families, and Chapter IV summarizes the reactions of the families surveyed to the regime imposed by offshore work.

Chapter V draws together a number of issues including the question of what situations offshore families need to deal with and the various responses that are adopted. In addition, those groups that may experience the greatest difficulties with the adjustment process are identified. On the basis of these findings, together with suggestions from offshore workers and their families, Chapter VI presents a series of recommendations that could assist in alleviating any undue family disruptions resulting from offshore employment.



## CHAPTER II - METHODS AND APPROACH

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The process of industrialization in Western societies has often been equated with the separation of work and family life and the emergence of the family as a unit of consumption, rather than production (Goode 1964; Parsons and Bales 1955). Subsequently, the idea that such a separation can and should exist became a powerful element in determining popular beliefs about marriage, the family and domestic life. In recent years, however, some of these beliefs have been called into question by a growing body of knowledge which demonstrates the continuities and linkages which still bind together the apparently separate spheres of work and family (Finch 1983; Morgan 1975, 1985). These continuities are particularly visible in the context of gender differences and are highlighted by the ways in which men and women experience both "work" and "the family" in different ways.

The present study, through a detailed examination of family life in the context of one particular occupational setting, explores these linkages from a variety of perspectives. Data are presented on the experiences of a group of families, in which one of the members is employed in the Newfoundland offshore oil industry, with subsequent analysis of the implications of this particular pattern of employment for the quality and organization of family life. Special attention is given to the consequences of intermittent spouse absence as a result of employment offshore.

The concept of the "intermittent spouse"<sup>1</sup> refers to those situations where one partner, usually the male, works away from home for extended periods of time. The literature cited in the Bibliography (Appendix E) refers primarily to experiences from the "developed" world, and also draws from industries and occupations other than oil, including the fishery, armed forces, the merchant marine, coast guard, travelling salesmen, and long distance truck drivers.

Family separation resulting from institutionalization or incarceration is not included, with the exception of some reference to the literature that deals with military personnel who may be held as prisoners-of-war or who may be missing-in-action. In addition, references to family adaptation to new environments, such as energy boomtowns, are not included as the required adaptations are not specifically concerned with the absence of the spouse.

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1. Originally referred to as the "intermittent husband syndrome"; see Morrice and Taylor 1978.

## 1.1 Overview of the Literature

The literature on families affected by the absence of one of the partners is dominated by material on the separation of military families (see Table 2.1). While this may in part reflect the emphasis of the computer data bases which are predominantly oriented toward North-American and specifically to U.S. sources, it nonetheless appears that this particular issue has received relatively little attention outside of the military context. Much of this military research appears to have been prompted by the separations resulting from the Vietnam war. It therefore tends to be somewhat dated in terms of the methodology and the analytical frameworks that are used (Bach 1946; Dahl et al. 1976; Gonzalez 1970).

TABLE 2.1

Reference by Occupational Category

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Military (general)	46
Navy	15
Airforce	4
Offshore Oil Industry	18
Merchant Seamen	10
Fishing	4
Business	5
Energy	2
Trucking	1
Other	<u>12</u>
Total	<u>117</u>

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Within the military context much of the literature deals with the problems of adjustment to father absence where the fathers are either prisoners-of-war (Hall and Simmons 1973; Hunter 1978; McCubbin et al. 1975, 1977) or missing-in-action (Boss 1975, 1980; Dahl et al. 1976; McCubbin et al. 1974). However, one group that receives particular attention during non-combat related separations are submariners (Beckman 1976; Bermudes 1973; Boynton and Pearce 1978; Glisson et al. 1980; Isay 1968). The perceived dangers of the work for this group and long periods without communication between family members for security reasons, are considered to make this occupation particularly stressful.

As an occupational category, the offshore oil industry has received more attention than others, excluding the military, in terms of published material. However, much of the literature is from two sources only, the Oslo Work Research Institute (Heen 1982, 1984, 1985; Solheim 1983, 1984, 1985) and the Institute of Medical Sociology, Aberdeen (Clark 1985 a, b, c; Morrice and Taylor 1978). Merchant shipping is the only other industry to have received much attention as an occupational category (Forsyth and Bankston 1983, 1984; Gronseth 1957, 1960, 1964; Gronseth and Tillfr n.d.; Rosenfeld et al. 1973; Thorsrud 1982; Tillfr 1958).

Unfortunately for the purposes of this research, few studies draw comparisons between industries in terms of the relative difficulties resulting from spousal intermittence. Of those that do (Fuchs 1982; Forsyth and Bankston 1984; Gramling n.d.) each indicates that offshore oil work is perceived as less disruptive and less alienating than, for example, work in the fishing, construction, seafaring industries or in the military. However, none of these studies were specifically designed as comparative exercises and these conclusions are peripheral outcomes of the main purpose of the research in each case.

Though specific inter-industry comparisons are not a feature of the literature, there are many common themes relevant to the Family Life Adaptation Study. The main themes addressed are: the particular problems resulting from spousal intermittence; the factors that influence the type and severity of these problems; the outcomes from the problems, and; the strategies adopted to cope with both the problems and their outcomes.

In addressing these themes, the emphasis of much of the literature is on the women and children. However, few studies address the issue from the perspective of the working woman, Gerstel and Gross, 1982 and Heen, 1985, being exceptions. Instead, women are most often cast in a passive "waiting" role (Bey and Lange 1974; O'Bierne 1976) and problems arising and the need for adjustment are frequently viewed as theirs and theirs alone (McIntosh 1968).

Children receive a great deal of attention, particularly in the literature dealing with separation and the military family. Of the 65 military related items referenced, some 20 deal specifically with the impact of the military father's absence on the child (Bach 1946; Baker, 1967; Dolzonek 1983; Gonzalez 1970, for example). Much attention is given to the "military family syndrome." Earlier works suggest that the children of servicemen have more emotional and psychiatric disorders than children from the general population (Seplin 1952), however, more recent

evidence (Morrison 1981) calls this conclusion into question.

Spousal intermittence is viewed primarily as problem generating. Few of the items reviewed consider any of the potential advantages such as increased income or leisure time (Clark 1985c) or the possibility that for some couples separation is an option in maintaining a working relationship (Isay 1968). The specific problems examined include such issues as: role conflicts, particularly for the wife (Glisson 1980); role transitions, between the times when the husband is present and absent (Jones and Butler 1980); parenting (Baker 1967; Clark 1985c; Dolzonek 1983); isolation and loneliness (Decker 1978, Heen et al. 1981; Rosenfeld et al. 1973); worries over safety (Dixon et al. 1984), and; difficulties in relationships with family and friends (Orbach 1975).

Those factors considered to influence the nature and severity of the problems encountered include: the length of absence of the spouse (Larson 1977; McCubbin n.d.); the work schedule (Wood 1983), particularly its regularity and predictability (Danowski 1980); the nature and stress associated with partings and reunions (Bey and Lange 1974; Wood 1983); the family "type" and the degree to which separation upsets the family equilibrium (Bonovich 1967); family experience of and preparedness for the separation (McCubbin, Dahl and Lester 1977); individual characteristics, particularly the ability to be alone (Pearlman 1970), and; levels of educational achievement (Dahl 1976b; Dixon et al. 1984; McIntosh 1968; Van Vranken 1978).

The outcomes or results of these problems, which again focus primarily on the women, include: neuroses (McIntosh 1968); depression, insomnia and short temperedness (Bermudes 1973; Isay 1968); anxiety (Clark 1985b); physical ailments (Snyder 1978), and; a tendency toward female centeredness in the family (Riennerth 1977, 1978). Among the children, outcomes are examined in terms of hostility and social introversion (Baker et al. 1967, 1968), deviant behaviour (Dolzonek 1983), insecurity (Gonzalez 1970) and personality conflicts (Gronseth, 1964). Men are considered only peripherally in terms of the boredom and frustrations of being separated from their families (Moen et al. 1981).

While strategies for coping are recognized to vary considerably between families, and while they may change over time (Hill 1949), coping is seen primarily as a female responsibility. Some women, for example, may choose to internalize the situation by putting their lives "on hold" while the husband is away. Some may continue their normal activities by incorporating others into those activities,

while yet other women may choose to change their activity patterns completely (Boynton and Pearce 1978). In extreme cases, such as the missing-in-action husband, wives may close the husband out of their lives completely (Boss 1980). Several writers argue that it is the androgynous women, those who take on both masculine and feminine roles while their husbands are gone, who are better able to adjust (Nice 1978; Patterson and McCubbin 1984). Many authors argue that adjustment is in large part a function of greater levels of independence on the part of the wife (Boss et al. 1979; Clark 1985c; LaGrone 1978; Solberg 1985), which may in turn be a function of experience in other contexts, e.g. having fathers or brothers intermittently absent, or which may develop with experience over time.

Friendships (Nicholson and Robinson 1980), networks of wives (Cohen 1977), or other institutional support systems (Carlson and Carlson 1984; Decker 1978; Van Vranken 1978) may also be important to some in the adjustment process, as is communication between couples (Gerstel 1982; Glisson 1980; Hunter 1978; O'Bierne 1976; Solberg 1985). Communication is important not just in terms of maintaining contact while the working spouse is away, but also in terms of discussion of problematic issues and resolutions of such matters as the allocation of power and responsibility within the family or the division of household labour (Clark 1985c; Fuchs 1982; Solberg 1985; Solheim 1984).

Several authors offer generalized coping models (Boynton and Pearce 1978; Hill 1949; McCubbin and Dahl 1976; Reiss 1980), however, most of these models are based on two major assumptions. First, it is assumed that the intermittent husband absence will pose a threat to the "normal" functioning of families, and that in particular it is the women and children rather than the men who will experience difficulties. Secondly, it is assumed that it is possible to separate home and work place for the purposes of analysis and model building. Given these assumptions, the conclusions of most of the literature to date have been orientated towards the ways and means by which assistance can be given to women and children to help them cope with life at home.

Only some of the more recent Norwegian literature directly addresses the relationships between home and work (Holter 1984; Solheim 1983, 1985). Here the authors contend that the two environments are not separate but highly interdependent. How a worker copes while away, in these cases offshore, will likely be influenced by his home situation, and vice versa. With the added evidence that women often appear to achieve satisfaction vicariously, i.e. if their husband or children are happy, then they tend to be happy (Danowski 1980; Rienerth 1978), there is clearly a much

greater need to address the issue of the intermittent spouse through a broader framework that both integrates the experiences of the men as well as the women and children, and also stresses the continuities between work and the family.

## 2.0 APPROACH

The approach adopted in this study is more in tune with that of the most recent literature on work and the family, to which we have already alluded. In the first place, we seek to stress the continuities between work and the family and the idea that it is not possible to treat them as discrete entities. Not only does men's experience of paid work have a direct impact on family relationships and roles, but the mix of women's work is in large part determined by the interaction between the domestic and public spheres; for example, women may often find their labour "incorporated" into their husband's job, as is the case where wives of military personnel perform the role of confidant or counselor for the families of their husband's subordinates (O'Bierne 1976).<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, men and women will experience family life differently, in large part as a result of their different relations to domestic production and reproduction. Previous writers may be correct in suggesting that women bear the main burden of adjustment to rotational work patterns. However, because the experiences of men and the relationship between work and the family have been largely ignored in the literature, we believe that the explanations of this have been inadequately explored and that previous conclusions and recommendations concentrating on women in the home are therefore deficient.

It is also important that the present study is located in the Newfoundland context, where high unemployment and low family incomes provide substantial incentives for working offshore in a remote and potentially dangerous environment, and for willingly adapting to the work cycle. These factors make the Newfoundland case somewhat different from those treated in the literature. Even though Newfoundland as a society has considerable experience with intermittent husband absence in the fishery, forestry, and merchant marine, we shall argue that this is not always relevant to the specific context of offshore employment.

In attempting to encompass the full range of work/family experience and its manifestations in terms of

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1. See also Finch (1983) and Callan and Ardener (1984) for discussion of this issue.

family relationships and behaviour, we have sought to consider the reactions of men and women through a filter of both occupational and demographic variables (most previous studies have emphasized one or the other) and to go beyond a description of the characteristics of those reacting in positive, neutral or negative ways, to consider the process of adjustment. All the men and women in our sample are adjusting in that they have neither divorced nor left the industry (although both these options may be very problematic when alternative employment opportunities are scarce and where attitudes towards marriage and the family are generally "traditional") but there may well be tensions between men, their spouses, the work place and the home which require identification. We may expect there to be very different reactions and adjustments to offshore work which depend on occupational, social and personal variables that are not readily susceptible to change. On the other hand, an elucidation of the process of adaptation will allow us to identify particular areas of difficulty for both men and women and in turn provide the opportunity to pinpoint both the time and place for ameliorative intervention.

### 3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.1 Introduction

The research design adopted is characterized by an emphasis on questionnaire and interview surveys of the families of offshore workers. After reviewing alternative research designs, the approach selected was based on that used in a similar study undertaken in Scotland. In the light of this decision, David Clark, formerly of the Institute of Medical Sociology, University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and a principal researcher in the Scottish study,<sup>1</sup> was invited to join the study team.

The approach used in this study parallels that used in the Scottish study in that:

- (i) a similar general approach was used, including a questionnaire survey of oil worker spouses supplemented by in-depth interviews of a sub-sample of survey respondents;
- (ii) where possible measurement techniques were replicated, and;

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1. For a description of this research see D. Clark et al. 1985. David Clark is currently Chairman of the Scottish Marriage Guidance Council, Edinburgh.

- (iii) questionnaire data were generated to allow the same response groups to be examined.

At the same time the Scottish approach was modified, principally by examination of a broader population. In particular, the questionnaire survey additionally sought information from the offshore employee. Furthermore, in the present study there is a much stronger emphasis on policy implications than was the case in the Scottish project.

The overall approach consists of four main components:

- (i) a literature review (see above);
- (ii) postal questionnaires;
- (iii) personal interviews; and
- (iv) consultations with key informants.

While each component is discussed here separately, they are inter-related in that, for example, bibliographic information provided input into the design of the surveys and prompted questions that were explored with the key informants. Similarly, key informants provided input into the design of the postal questionnaires and personal interviews. Subsequently, many of the issues raised by the families, and the recommendations that come out of the issues identified, have been further explored through discussions with key informants.

### **3.2 Self-Administered Postal Questionnaires and Personal Interviews**

The objectives of the self-administered postal questionnaires and personal interviews were to:

- (i) describe reactions of offshore workers and their spouses to rotational scheduling and other aspects of offshore oil and gas work;
- (ii) identify those areas of difficulty in the patterns of response by workers and spouses to the intermittent presence and absence of the offshore worker in the household; and
- (iii) identify social, family and personal service needs which were identified in the research process.



The questionnaires and interviews were designed to target offshore workers' families, including both partners and (where possible) children. Consideration was given to interviewing families of onshore workers in order to provide a control group as a base line against which offshore family characteristics and responses could be compared. However, the Scottish research found no significant differences between the offshore and control groups, and the terms of reference for this study were to consider the variations among offshore workers' families only.

In addition, consideration was given to surveying the families of former offshore workers. Such a survey would have provided the opportunity to assess the importance of adaptation issues in decisions to stop working offshore. Such a decision may be considered, in and of itself, a "successful" adaptation, but budgetary constraints did not permit an examination of this group, and hence the family surveys are restricted to those families wherein a spouse is presently working offshore.

Budgeting and time constraints further limited the survey to those who were married or living in a common-law relationship. Those who were single, separated, widowed or divorced were not surveyed. The issues facing these groups may be different in degree and kind from those actually surveyed, but more research would be necessary to establish these differences (see Chapter VI).

In the absence of a complete list of names and addresses of the offshore work force, members of the target group were identified through a variety of routes. A combination of "snowballing" (especially through the Ocean Ranger Foundation) and informal sources of information enabled a sampling frame to be generated. A sample frame established by these methods is not perfectly random and while there are no grounds for supposing that the sample is biased or unrepresentative, this cannot be conclusively demonstrated. This caveat should be borne in mind in the data analysis which follows. In principle, statistical criteria in the selection of a sample should override any convenience criteria, but in practice this proved not to be entirely possible because of the unavailability of a complete list of workers from industry or government.

As the target population was identified, an initial two stage survey was undertaken as follows:

(i) Telephone Interviews: These were used to establish the usual rotational schedule, marital status and the willingness of at least one spouse in each family to complete a postal questionnaire.

(ii) Postal Questionnaires: These were sent separately to the male and female partners in all those families where a willingness to respond was expressed in the telephone interviews. These questionnaires contained a broad range of questions on oil work and family life. Reactions were assessed primarily by use of vignettes (see Chapter IV) describing positive, neutral and negative responses to the offshore life-style. Questions on the socio-demographic characteristics of the family were included to determine information on such variables as the presence/ absence of extended family, length of offshore experience in this and other occupations, and the presence/absence of children.

Questionnaires also elicited data on specific feelings (primarily through a measure of mood change) about offshore work, and behaviour (through questions about patterns of social activity, parenting, domestic tasks and decision-making). These data, together with the personal interviews, identified areas of difficulty and patterns of adaptation.

More specifically these questionnaires were designed to address the following issues:

1. That certain groups might be distinguished by type of reaction to the offshore life-style; that these reactions will be different for men and women; that these reactions will be different in their consequences.
2. That certain groups might be further distinguished by combinations of: (a) specific structural or independent variables (viz age, length of partnership, presence/absence of young children, education, spouse's employment, previous experience of intermittent absence, length of experience in the oil industry, work cycle); and (b) certain outcome or dependent variables concerning mood change and attitudes to the nature of the work, including danger, shift patterns and medium-term involvement.
3. That certain areas of difficulty for individual and family life might emerge in relation to offshore employment. These might include: problems associated with partings and reunions, parenting, domestic

and household management, self-image and personal conflict.

4. That specific patterns of adaptation might be identified, and that these might vary between men and women such that the burden of adjustment falls differentially on them, and that patterns of adjustment will vary within gender groups.

The mail-out questionnaires were developed with the assistance of key informants who were spouses of present or former oil workers. A pilot survey of fifty families in St. John's was then carried out to further pre-test the survey questions and to enable an estimate of return rates to be made.

Following the return and analysis of the postal questionnaires, the third stage of the family survey was to undertake personal interviews.

(iii) Personal Interviews: While the postal questionnaires yielded quantitative information about the sample as a whole, much of the detail of personal feelings and responses is lost by this method. Consequently, as a way to follow up and supplement the findings of the postal questionnaire, a number of intensive open-ended, face-to-face interviews were carried out with a sub-group of couples and individuals who indicated a willingness to participate further in the study. These interviews were carried out in the homes of the selected families by three trained female interviewers using a structured but informal interview format. The interview schedules were designed to probe specific feelings and behaviour during the course of a complete work cycle.

The design of the questionnaires and interviews was clearly of critical importance to the project. Any study which examines family relationships necessarily ventures into very sensitive areas, requiring discussion of interpersonal feelings, attitudes and responses. To minimize the difficulties that the intrusion of an outsider asking personal questions might cause, a number of safeguards were adopted to maximize the sensitivity of the research approach, the instruments used, and the volume and quality of data collected. These included:

- (i) use of the proven questionnaire design from the Scottish study, modified to reflect differences in the approach and cultural context;

- (ii) a hierarchial interview procedure in which those willing to answer more detailed personal questions self-select themselves;
- (iii) use of trained local female interviewers familiar with the topic under examination; and
- (iv) assuring the respondents of the confidentiality of individual responses and the reporting of aggregate findings only.

The need to ensure confidentiality, while essential, posed several constraints on the research. For example, male and female postal questionnaire returns could not be linked in such a way that reactions of couples could be analyzed. Similarly, particular issues or suggestions raised by individuals in the postal questionnaire could not be pursued with those individuals because of the anonymity of the returns.

### 3.3 Sample Sizes and Return Rates

#### 3.3.1 Population and sample sizes

The population of offshore workers from which the sample was drawn was restricted to those rig and supply boat workers working offshore Newfoundland and living in Newfoundland at the time of the survey, i.e. July-August 1985. The size of the offshore labour force at any point in time depends on the number of operators and rigs. At the time when this survey was undertaken, the estimated offshore work force was about 1,756 with approximately 1,018 or 58% of these workers resident in Newfoundland. Of these, approximately 502 or 49% were estimated to be married.<sup>1</sup> Of this target population of about 500, 203 "families" i.e. male and female spouses, or approximately 40.4% of the total population, that were contacted indicated a willingness to receive

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1. The Government of Newfoundland, Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies (1985), Offshore Summary Report, July, indicates that, excluding seismic vessel crews, total offshore employment was 1,756, of whom 9.7% were classified as Newfoundland employees. Based on Scarlett and Storey (1981), it was assumed that approximately 12% of the non-Newfoundland work force were also resident in the Province, and, based on the same survey, that 50% of the Newfoundland and 44% of the non-Newfoundland resident work force were married.

the postal questionnaires. These population and size characteristics are summarized in Table 2.2.

### 3.3.2 Response rates: postal questionnaire

The 203 questionnaires mailed to female partners resulted in 150 responses, while 101 of the 203 sent to the men were returned, giving 74% female<sup>1</sup> and 50% male return rates. While not every question on all questionnaires yielded a useable response, the number of unuseable responses was negligible. These response rates represent approximately 30% of all female spouses of offshore families and 20% of all male spouses of offshore families.

One factor influencing the return rates was thought to be the good will generated by the association with the Ocean Ranger Foundation. Another was the use of an initial telephone contact in which the project was explained and interviewees asked if they would be willing to complete a questionnaire. Those to whom questionnaires were sent were again contacted by telephone to ask if they had received the questionnaire and if they had returned it. The often extensive responses to open-ended questions (especially by women) also suggest that a high degree of respondent interest in the topic was a major contributor to the return rates. Typically, female response rates to questionnaires are higher than male rates; however, in this situation the men were away from home half of the time and hence the lower return rate for males (50%) was not unexpected.

No returns were received from female offshore workers. At the time of the survey, only 23 women were working offshore of whom only about 10 were married.<sup>2</sup> Two married female workers were identified through the "snow-balling" exercise, but no questionnaires were returned. Accordingly, in the subsequent discussion, "male respondents" refers exclusively to offshore workers while "female respondents" refers to their spouses onshore.

### 3.3.3 Rig and supply vessel response rates

No particular distinction was drawn between rig workers and supply boat workers in our questionnaire

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1. The return rate from the women in the Scottish study by Clark et al. was 70%.
  2. Based on Baird, 1985, 4.

TABLE 2.2  
Population and Sample Size Characteristics

Population/Sample	Size	% of Total	% of Previous	Source
Population, Offshore Labour Force	1,756	100	n.a.	Government of Newfoundland, Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies
Population, Newfoundland Resident Offshore Labour Force	1,018	58.0	58.0	Government of Newfoundland, Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies (derived)
Population, Newfoundland Married Resident Offshore Labour Force	502	28.6	49.3	Based on Storey and Scarlett (1981)
Telephone Respondent Sample (Families)	203	11.6	40.4	Community Resource Services (1984) Ltd.
Self-Administered Survey Respondent Sample:				
Female	150	8.5	73.9	Community Resource Services (1984) Ltd.
Male	101	5.7	49.7	
Interview Respondent Sample (Families)	31	1.8	15.3 <sup>1</sup>	Community Resource Services (1984) Ltd.

1. Percentage of telephone respondent sample families.

surveys. Subsequent analysis of the returns indicated significant differences in several of the independent variables measured for each of these occupational groups and in some of the responses of these groups. An estimated 62% of the offshore work force who are married and resident in Newfoundland work on the rigs while 38% work on supply vessels.<sup>1</sup> In fact, our final returns over-represented the proportion of supply boat workers. In the case of female respondents, 50% indicated that their spouses worked on supply vessels and 50% on the rigs, while for male respondents 53% indicated they worked on supply vessels while 47% worked on the rigs.

### 3.3.4 Geographic distributions

There is little published information on the current geographic distribution of the offshore work force by place of residence. Data from the 1981 survey of all offshore workers identified (married, single, etc.) by region of residence is compared with the distribution of married workers in the present survey (Table 2.3). While recognizing that the geographic distribution of workers could have changed since 1981 and that the two samples are not of exactly the same type, it is the case that there is no

TABLE 2.3

Geographic Distribution of Offshore Work Force:  
Current Survey and 1981 Survey Distributions

	1981 Survey	(%)	Current Survey	(%)
Avalon Peninsula	559	(73.2)	150	(73.9)
Bonavista Peninsula	42	(5.5)	13	(6.4)
Burin Peninsula	36	(4.7)	17	(8.4)
South Coast/Central/ Notre Dame Bay	98	(12.8)	14	(6.9)
West Coast/Labrador	22	(2.9)	9	(4.4)
	764	(100.0)	203	(100.0)

1. Based on Government of Newfoundland, Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies (1985) and Scarlett and Storey (1981).

significant statistical difference between the geographic distributions as represented by the two samples.<sup>1</sup>

Table 2.4 indicates female respondent return rates for the present survey. The mean rate of return by region for females was 74% with the range between 100% and 57%. Only the South Coast/Central/Notre Dame Bay Region showed a relatively low rate of return, with all other areas exceeding 62%. There was, however, no significant difference in the regional pattern of mail outs to returns, nor was there any significant difference in the pattern of male and female responses.

TABLE 2.4

Mail-Outs and Return Rates by Region: Female Respondents

	Mail Out Frequency	Return Frequency	Return Rate %
Avalon			
St. John's CMA	85	54	63.5
Southern Shore	19	13	68.4
Conception Bay South/West	21	15	71.4
Isthmus of Avalon/Placentia	25	18	72.0
Burin Peninsula/Fortune Bay	17	17	100.0
Bonavista Peninsula	13	10	76.9
South Coast/Central/ Notre Dame Bay	14	8	57.1
West Coast	8	5	62.5
Other/Unspecified	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>N.A.</u>
	203	150	$\bar{x} = 73.9$

### 3.3.5 Family response rates

As will be seen in the description of study families (see Chapter III) the demographic and occupational

1. In all the tables which follow, only those differences between distributions which are statistically significant at  $p = .05$  are noted. Unless otherwise specified, a 2-tailed chi square test has been used. This test demonstrates that there is only one chance in twenty that these are random or chance differences, but that, rather, there is a strong probability that they are the product of some factor.



characteristics of males and females show no significant differences, indicating that the samples were drawn from the same population. Though the nature of the survey precludes a precise determination of the number of couples from which both partners responded, at a minimum 47% of male respondents will be the partners of female respondents,<sup>1</sup> and in all likelihood the figure is significantly higher.

Establishing that this is so is important because, as will be seen in Chapter IV, in a number of cases male and female reactions to the work pattern are significantly different. This implies that if the individuals that comprise a couple perceive the outcomes of the work pattern differently, and as a consequence react differently, additional stress may be placed on those individuals and the family unit. This issue is further explored in Chapters IV and V.

### 3.4 Interviews

As previously noted, personal interviews were undertaken both to supplement the postal questionnaire data and to pursue some of the findings identified in the analysis of those questionnaires. A total of 31 interviews were carried out, of which 23 were with both male and female spouses, 7 with the female spouse alone, and 1 with the male spouse alone. Initially, the interview sample was designed as a random stratified sample. For logistical reasons, only those to whom questionnaires had been sent and who were living on the Avalon Peninsula were selected as potential interviewees (i.e. the sub-sample was drawn from 74% of the original sample). This group were then subdivided into rig and supply boat worker families. Based on the 62% rig and 38% supply boat split indicated earlier, names were selected at random and interviews requested. Thirty-one interviews, of an average duration of three hours, were completed, of which 23 (74%) were with rig workers and/or their spouses and 8 with supply boat workers and/or spouses. Of the interviews, 12 (38%) were carried out in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area.<sup>2</sup> The remainder of the interviews were

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1. Of the females, 150 completed the questionnaire and 53 did not. If of the 101 males responses 53 were from families where the female did not respond, the remaining 48 male responses, or 47% of all male responses, must have come from families where both spouses replied.
  2. Forty-one percent of the postal questionnaires had been sent to families in this area.

carried out on the Southern Shore, the Isthmus of Avalon, the Placentia area and along the western side of Conception Bay. Families exhibited a wide range of characteristics in terms of demography, occupation and work experience.

They also closely mirrored the questionnaire respondents in these areas; thus, for example, the male interviewees had a mean age of 33.4 years (compared to questionnaire respondents' mean of 33.6 years) while the females averaged 30.6 years (30.8). In both the questionnaire and interview samples 16% of couples had no children, while the average number for those that had them was slightly higher (1.9, as against 1.75) among the interviewed couples. The average number of years the interviewed couples had spent together was 9.6 years, slightly higher than was reported by female questionnaire respondents (9.1 years) and about the same as for the males (9.5 years).

#### 4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the questionnaires were coded and compiled as a computer file. Frequency distributions of responses were generated and variables cross-tabulated in order to:

- (i) explore the issues referred to in Section 3.3;
- (ii) generate and test additional questions suggested by the frequency distributions;
- (iii) identify particular patterns of adaptational responses; and
- (iv) identify, where possible, those situations in which individuals are most likely to face particular problems of adjustment.

The data from the personal interviews and key informant consultations are in the form of face sheets and tape recordings (where the interviewee(s) were agreeable to this). As previously noted, the primary use of these data are to:

- (i) pursue and further articulate those issues and responses generated by the postal questionnaires;

- (ii) allow individuals to further articulate issues, responses and needs;
- (iii) provide a check on the interpretation of postal questionnaire responses; and
- (iv) deepen understanding of the nature and dynamics of inter-personal relations and the process of adaptation.

## 5.0 KEY INFORMANT CONSULTATIONS

Key informants are those persons with specialized knowledge and expertise with respect to the issue of offshore work and family relations. Specifically, the groups consulted during the course of this study, and the objectives and methods of consultation used, were as follows:

(i) A panel comprised of members of the families of offshore workers. This panel was established with the assistance of the Ocean Ranger Foundation. Through group discussion it served to: aid identification of the target family population; provide advice on the sensitive issue of the form and content of questionnaires and interviews; help identify suitable interviewers; and assist in the review of the findings and recommendations of the research;

(ii) Selected human service and industry professionals, including social workers, and operator and contractor personnel. Through structured-informal interviews, they addressed the policy implications of the research in terms of family and personal needs, and the mechanisms required to meet them; and

(iii) A group of researchers and policymakers who attended an International Conference on Women and Offshore Oil held in St. John's in September 1985.<sup>1</sup> In conjunction with this Conference, which was organized by two of the principal researchers of the present study, a workshop was convened at which preliminary findings from the study were presented and discussed in relation to experience in other locations and contexts. In this workshop special attention was paid to the mechanisms required to meet the needs of offshore families.

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1. Researchers from Canada, Norway and the United Kingdom attended the Conference and the subsequent workshop.

## 6.0 IDENTIFICATION OF ADAPTATIONAL RESPONSES AND FAMILY NEEDS

Adaptational responses are those actions consciously or unconsciously taken by family members, either jointly or independently, to address the social and psychological problems that spousal intermittence generates. These responses were identified in part through the literature review and consultations with key informants, but especially through the personal interviews.

Family and personal needs related to these adaptations were identified through the bibliographic review, the family surveys, and the key informant consultations. The Scottish research showed that while relatively few of the women studied needed specific medical treatment in order to cope with spousal intermittence, maintenance of an acceptable quality of family life may require that a variety of needs be met.

Mechanisms to meet the needs of offshore oil workers and their families are in large part derived from analysis of the needs themselves. The concluding chapter of the Report thus summarizes the overall findings of the research and proposes measures:

- (i) that will enable the problems and issues identified to be prevented;
- (ii) that serve to mitigate the negative consequences of the absence of, or inappropriate, adaptive responses; and
- (iii) that will serve to enhance already successful adaptive responses.

## CHAPTER III - CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY FAMILIES

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter provides a summary of a number of characteristics of the families surveyed based on data obtained from the mail-out questionnaires. Two broad groups of characteristics are described. Demographic characteristics, which include factors such as age, sex, and number of children at home, are examined for male and female respondents. Secondly, work characteristics are described, including information on the type of offshore work, work experience, and recent work history of the men, and the current occupation of the women.

### 2.0 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

#### 2.1 Age and Sex

Of the 203 self-administered questionnaires distributed, responses were received from 150 (74%) of the females and 101 (50%) of the males. The age groups into which these respondents fall are indicated in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1

Age

Years	Female Respondent (%)	Male Respondent (%)
20-24	19 (12.8)	2 (2.0)
25-29	49 (33.1)	26 (26.0)
30-34	47 (31.8)	33 (33.0)
35-39	20 (13.5)	24 (24.0)
40-44	9 (6.1)	9 (9.0)
45-49	4 (2.7)	2 (2.0)
50-54	0 (0.0)	4 (4.0)
	148 <sup>1</sup> (100.0)	100 <sup>1</sup> (100.0)

1. Non-responses from the 150 female and 101 male returns are not recorded.

The modal age group for females is 25-29 with 33% of respondents in this category. Males were slightly older, the modal age group being 30-34, and which also represents 33% of respondents. For females as a group, ages ranged between 21 and 49 with the mean age being 30.8. Comparable results for males show ages ranging between 22 and 52, with the mean age of respondents being 33.6.

## 2.2 Marital Status

Respondents were initially screened to include only those who were married or living in a common-law situation. Of those surveyed, 144 or 97% of women reported that they were married, as opposed to living with someone, while 95 of the men, also 97%, reported similarly.

Table 3.2 indicates the length of time the partners had been together. In both cases, the modal category is 6-10 years with the mean time for females 9.1 years and for males 9.5 years. These results show no significant differences in responses for males and females.

TABLE 3.2

### Length of Time Living with Partner

Years	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
< 1	2	(1.3)	2	(2.0)
1 - 2	20	(13.4)	6	(6.1)
3 - 5	29	(19.5)	18	(18.2)
6 - 10	42	(28.2)	37	(37.4)
11 - 15	36	(24.3)	19	(19.2)
> 15	20	(13.4)	17	(17.2)
	149	(100.0)	99	(100.0)

## 2.3 Number of Children

Respondents were asked how many children, by sex and age, they had who were presently living at home (Table 3.3). Only 16.2% of both male and female respondents indicated that they had no children. Of those with children at home, the mean number per family is 1.75, with the mean age for girls being approximately 8.4, and for boys 7.6. The distribution of children by age category indicates the

relatively youthful age of the parents, as only 10% of the girls and 12.8% of the boys were over the age of 15.

TABLE 3.3

Number of Children Living at Home by Age of Child

Years	Female Respondents		Male Respondents	
	Total	(%)	Total	(%)
< 1	13	(4.9)	7	(3.9)
1 - 4	79	(29.7)	54	(30.2)
5 - 9	85	(31.9)	56	(31.3)
10 - 14	62	(23.3)	39	(21.8)
15 - 19	26	(9.8)	21	(11.7)
> 19	<u>1</u>	<u>(0.4)</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>(1.1)</u>
	266	(100.0)	179	(100.0)

2.4 Place of Birth and Present Residence

Respondents were asked whether they were born in Newfoundland. Table 3.4 indicates that though a somewhat higher percentage of female respondents were born in Newfoundland compared with males, this is not a significant difference. The data do confirm, however, that individuals in the sample are predominantly of Newfoundland origin.

TABLE 3.4

Place of Birth

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
Born in Newfoundland	142	(95.3)	91	(91)
Born Elsewhere	<u>7</u>	<u>(4.7)</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>(9)</u>
	149	(100.0)	100	(100)

In terms of type of community in which respondents currently live there is again no significant difference in

the distribution of male and female respondents, even though Table 3.5 shows slightly higher proportion of males reporting that they live in an outport whereas more females report that they live in a town. It should be noted that the definitions of outport, town, and city were self-determined by respondents.

TABLE 3.5  
Type of Community Lived In

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
Outport	53	(35.8)	39	(38.6)
Town	62	(41.9)	33	(32.7)
City	33	(22.3)	29	(28.7)
	148	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

The geographic distribution of respondents again shows no significant difference in terms of males and females (Table 3.6). Respondents were predominantly from the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and elsewhere on the Avalon Peninsula, with numbers declining dramatically from east to west across the Province. While those contacted may not necessarily be representative of the geographic distribution of offshore workers in the Province, this distribution is similar to that found by Scarlett and Storey (1981) in a previous study of the offshore work force, suggesting that there has been relatively little change in the spatial distribution of residence of offshore workers within Newfoundland since that date.

About 20% of respondents have changed their community of residence in the last five years. Of these, only 17% of the females but 38% of the males gave offshore work as the reason for moving (Table 3.7). While there are significant differences between males and females in terms of this response, the absolute numbers involved, 5 women and 8 men, are very small.



TABLE 3.6

## Geographic Distribution of Place of Residence

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
Avalon Peninsula				
St. John's CMA	53	(35.3)	30	(29.7)
Southern Shore	13	(8.7)	9	(8.9)
Conception Bay South/ Conception Bay North	15	(10.0)	11	(10.9)
Isthmus of Avalon/ Placentia	18	(12.0)	14	(13.9)
Burin Peninsula <sup>1</sup>	17	(11.3)	10	(9.9)
Bonavista Peninsula <sup>2</sup>	10	(6.7)	10	(9.9)
Central Newfoundland/ Notre Dame Bay/ South Coast	4	(2.7)	8	(7.9)
West Coast	5	(3.3)	4	(4.0)
Other/Unspecified <sup>3</sup>	<u>15</u>	<u>(10.0)</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>(5.0)</u>
	150	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

1. Includes Fortune Bay.

2. Includes Clarenville.

3. Includes other Newfoundland and Labrador.

TABLE 3.7

Changes in Community of Residence Since Working  
Offshore/Partner Working Offshore and Reason for Change

Changes in community of residence since working offshore/  
partner working offshore:

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
Change of community	29	(19.3)	21	(20.8)
No change of community	<u>121</u>	<u>(80.7)</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>(79.2)</u>
	150	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

Reason for changing community of residence.

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
Offshore work the reason	5	(17.2)	8	(38.1)
Offshore work <u>not</u> the reason	22	(75.9)	11	(52.4)
Unspecified	<u>2</u>	<u>(6.9)</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>(9.5)</u>
	29	(100.0)	21	(100.0)

## 2.5 Education

Table 3.8 indicates the highest level of education  
achieved. Combining grades 10-13, university degree complete

TABLE 3.8

### Highest Level of Education Completed

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
≤ Grade 9	22	(14.8)	15	(15.0)
Grade 10-11	55	(36.9)	40	(40.0)
Grade 12-13	2	(1.3)	1	(1.0)
University Degree Complete	10	(6.7)	3	(3.0)
University Degree Incomplete	4	(2.7)	2	(2.0)
Post Secondary Complete	52	(34.9)	37	(37.0)
Post Secondary Incomplete	<u>4</u>	<u>(2.7)</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>(2.0)</u>
	149	(100.0)	100	(100.0)

and incomplete, and post secondary complete and incomplete, there is no significant difference in the levels achieved by male and female respondents.

The majority have completed grade 10 or 11, with more than a third completing some form of post-secondary programme.

### 3.0 OCCUPATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section describes the occupational work experience of males, and current occupation of females. Males and females were asked to state how long the husband<sup>1</sup> had worked offshore, the type of current job, the current shift pattern, and other recent work experience. Males were also asked whether they had another paid job when onshore. Females were asked whether they presently had a paid job at the time, if so, whether it was full or part time, and the nature of the job. The following sections describe the responses for first, the male and second, the female.

#### 3.2 Offshore Work Experience

Table 3.9 indicates male and female responses to the question, "How long have you/has your partner worked in

TABLE 3.9

#### Length of Time in the Offshore Oil Industry

Years	Female Responses (%)	Male Responses (%)
< 1	1 (0.7)	2 (2.0)
1 - 2	32 (21.3)	16 (15.8)
3 - 5	46 (30.7)	34 (33.7)
> 5	<u>71 (47.3)</u>	<u>49 (48.5)</u>
	150 (100.0)	101 (100.0)

1. At the time of writing, there were only 23 females working offshore of whom, it is estimated, 10 were married. (Based on Baird 1985, 4). Only two married female workers were identified through the telephone screening but no questionnaires were returned.

the offshore oil industry?" The results indicate that about half of the male respondents have less than five years' experience in the offshore oil industry.

### 3.3 Offshore Work Cycle

The majority of men reported a 30 day on/30 day off shift cycle (Table 3.10) which, being the typical work cycle for supply vessels, reflects the over-representation of supply vessel workers in the sample. Once again, there was no significant difference in the work patterns reported by male and female respondents. Relatively few respondents indicated work patterns other than 21 or 30 days on/off.<sup>1</sup> For the most part those in other categories were specialized service or operator personnel, some of whom may be required to work offshore on an as-needed basis. For this small group, the work pattern may, therefore, be quite irregular, and might be expected to pose significantly greater problems for successful adaptation.

TABLE 3.10

Present Work Pattern of Offshore Workers

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
14 days on/14 days off	4	(2.7)	2	(2.0)
21 days on/21 days off	63	(42.3)	41	(40.6)
30 days on/30 days off	74	(49.7)	54	(53.5)
Other	<u>8</u>	<u>(5.4)</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>(4.0)</u>
	149	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

### 3.4 Offshore Jobs

Table 3.11 lists the range of jobs held by the offshore workers. The over-representation of marine personnel is again evident, although a broad range of offshore occupations is represented within the sample. This range includes occupations for which training and experience are essential,

1. Unlike the British North Sea Sector where the typical work schedule is 14 days on/off, and the Norwegian Sector where the pattern is 14 days on/21 days off.

e.g. masters, drillers, as well as jobs with lower skill/experience requirements, such as roustabouts and roughnecks.

TABLE 3.11

Job Held by Offshore Workers

	Female Respondents	Male Respondents
Ballast Control Operator	1	0
Bosun	2	2
Cook	5	3
Crane Operator	8	5
Derrickman	5	5
Driller	5	4
Dynamic Positioning Operator	0	1
Electrician	1	0
Engineer	26	12
Floorman	1	1
Maintenance Man	6	3
Master	6	5
Mate	9	5
Mechanic	2	3
Motorman	1	1
Mudwatcher	1	0
Oiler	2	2
Roughneck	10	5
Roustabout	12	8
Sample Catcher	1	1
Seaman	26	23
Steward	3	2
Storekeeper	1	1
Subsea Engineer	0	1
Thruster Tender	1	0
Watch Stander	0	1
Welder	7	5
Wire Line Operator	3	2
Unspecified/No Response	6	0
	150	101

The types of occupations and the numbers of respondents in each category reflect two of the present characteristics of the offshore oil industry in Newfoundland. First, offshore activity remains at the exploration stage and hence we have not yet seen the broader range of occupational

categories associated with development and production of offshore oil. Secondly, the relative infancy of the industry in the Province in terms of local labour participation is also reflected in terms of both the numbers of Newfoundlanders as a proportion of total offshore employment as well as the low numbers of Newfoundlanders in senior positions.

In this regard, while exploration offshore Newfoundland dates back to the early 1960's, it was not until the passage of the 1977 Newfoundland and Labrador Petroleum and Natural Gas Act, and the associated Regulations, that there was any legislative base that would allow preference to be given to the hiring of Newfoundlanders. It was not, however, until the early 1980's that these Regulations were strictly enforced. Thus in 1980 an estimated 56% of the work force on the Grand Banks were Newfoundlanders, while in 1982 the figure had risen to 71% (Storey 1982).<sup>1</sup> The increase in the absolute number of Newfoundlanders working offshore associated with the increase in exploration activity in the early 1980's, plus a rise in the proportion of Newfoundlanders on each rig, has resulted in the present situation of a larger pool of more experienced workers than was the case five years ago. However, the number of Newfoundlanders occupying senior positions, though it continues to increase, is still limited by the relatively short period during which there has been the opportunity to gain offshore experience.

No attempt was made to compare male and female responses as job classification may not be a simple process. This is perhaps best indicated by the fact that six female respondents failed to specify their spouse's job, while none of the males failed to respond to the question.

### 3.5 Other Work Experience

In terms of other work experience, respondents were asked to record up to three other jobs held by the male partner since they had been together as a couple. Fifty-six percent of female and 51% of male respondents reported that they had held no other jobs in this time, implying that for at least half of the respondents there could be no basis for comparison of the impact of the work pattern on family life, between offshore work and any other activity.

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1. It must be added that the proportion of Newfoundlanders working offshore in July 1985 was only 58%.

For those who had held other jobs the range of occupations is, as might be expected, quite broad. The aggregate response (up to three jobs could be noted by each respondent) from female respondents is indicated in Table 3.12. A variety of occupations broadly designated as labouring jobs, particularly construction work, dominate the picture, together with marine occupations of a variety of types. Technically skilled occupations, including electricians, plumbers, and cabinet makers, and students form the third and fourth largest groups respectively.

TABLE 3.12

Other Jobs Held by Offshore Worker Since the Couple has been Together

	Female Respondents <sup>1</sup>
Labourer	36
Marine Related	34
Technically Skilled	26
Student	24
Fisherman	16
Oil Related	10
Military	5
Driver	5
Unspecified	4

1. A different question was asked of the men (see Table 3.13).

Men were asked a slightly different question; namely, whether he had held a job, since the couple had been together, which took him away from home on a regular basis. Table 3.13 indicates that almost half had held such jobs. By far the largest employment category were fisheries and other marine-related experience which supply boat workers in particular tended to exhibit.

Few male respondents had any previous oil-related experience and of the female respondents who indicated that their spouses had some form of oil-related experience many had worked in refineries and were not required to be away from home other than on a regular daily basis.

TABLE 3.13

Other Jobs Offshore Worker has Held that Included Regular  
Work away from Home

	Male Respondents <sup>1</sup>	(%)
Held such jobs	48	(48.5)
Never held such jobs	<u>51</u>	<u>(51.5)</u>
	99	(100.0)

Jobs Held:<sup>2</sup>

Marine related	24
Fishermen	13
Labourer	9
Oil related	4
Military	4
Technically skilled	4
Other	6

1. A different question was asked of the women (see Table 3.12).
2. Up to three jobs recorded per respondent.

### 3.6 Onshore Work

A final question asked of offshore workers was whether they had a second job during the time that they were onshore. Of the 99 males responding, only one stated he had a regular onshore job, while 14 indicated that they sometimes worked. Fishing and carpentry were the two occupations noted by more than one respondent. Clearly a formal and/or regular second occupation is not common among offshore workers, which is not surprising given the limited opportunities for employment in the Province and the constraints posed by the offshore job.

### 3.7 Paid Employment of Offshore Worker's Spouse

Only females were asked about jobs held by women and, as indicated in Table 3.14, one third indicated that they had a paid job. Of these, 75% worked in full-time



occupations, the largest categories being secretarial and clerical positions.

TABLE 3.14

Paid Employment of Offshore Worker's Spouse

	Female Respondents (%)	
Not in paid employment	101	(67.3)
In paid employment	<u>49</u>	<u>(32.7)</u>
	150	(100.0)
Type of Employment:		
Full Time	37	(75.5)
Part Time	<u>12</u>	<u>(24.5)</u>
	49	(100.0)
Job Held:		
Secretary		10
Office Clerk		9
Nurse/Nursing Assistant		8
Store Clerk		4
Fish Plant/Fisherwoman Work		4
Federal Employees		4
Teacher		2
Cook		2
Other		<u>6</u>
		49

Compared with married women in the 20-44 age category in the Province as a whole, of whom 48% are employed, employment among wives of offshore workers is significantly lower. For this group regular paid work may be problematic as the husband is both home and away for extended periods, a matter that is considered further in Chapter V.

As indicated in Table 3.15, it is those women with the higher levels of educational achievement that are in paid work, with those with some level of post-secondary education more likely than others to hold jobs.

TABLE 3.15

Paid Employment of Offshore Worker's Spouse by  
Highest Level of Education Completed

Level of Education	Respondent Has Paid Work		Total
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
< Grade 9	3 (6.2)	19 (18.8)	22
Grade 10-13	13 (27.1)	44 (43.6)	57
Post Secondary Complete/ Incomplete	25 (52.1)	31 (30.7)	56
University Complete/ Incomplete	<u>7 (14.6)</u>	<u>7 (6.9)</u>	<u>14</u>
	48 (100.0)	101 (100.0)	149

$\chi^2 = 11.8$     D.F. = 3    Significant difference at  $p = .01$

## CHAPTER IV - REACTIONS TO OFFSHORE WORK

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the offshore work patterns as described by male and female respondents and selected sub-groups. We began with certain hypotheses regarding the sorts of variables that might be associated with good/bad adjustment. In fact this was too simplistic. All the people in our sample had adjusted in so far as they remain in the industry and in their marriages. As has already been seen (see Tables 3.9 and 3.2), the mean number of years of offshore experience is approximately five years and on average couples had been together just over nine years.

In general, the research yielded a fair amount of evidence of positive reactions to offshore work. For example, in responding to open-ended questions asking what advice they would give to an imaginary married friend who was soon to be involved with offshore work (either as a worker, or the spouse of one), the most common response was to advise the imaginary friend to accept the job (Table 4.1).

TABLE 4.1

Advice Given to an Imaginary Married Friend, with Young Child, Who/Whose Spouse has Just Accepted an Offshore Job

	Female Respondents (%) <sup>1</sup>		Male Respondents (%) <sup>2</sup>	
Accept the job	46	(37.1)	34	(38.6)
Financial benefits/issues	40	(32.3)	9	(10.2)
Adjustment to work pattern	39	(31.4)	40	(45.4)
Enjoy time at home	29	(23.4)	6	(6.8)
Need to assume responsibility	37	(29.8)	2	(2.3)
Need other interests	26	(21.0)	1	(1.1)
Important to communicate with spouse	13	(10.5)	1	(1.1)
Need to get outside help	12	(9.7)	1	(1.1)
Benefits of time alone	8	(6.4)	3	(3.4)
Other	20	(16.1)	1	(1.1)
Negative feelings toward job	13	(10.5)	25	(28.4)
Total Responses	283		123	

1. n = 124.

2. n = 88.

Also, while more women than men expressed reservations in replying to the question, "Do you hope you/your partner will be working offshore in three years time?", only 19% of women and 18% of men responded, "No" (Table 4.2).

TABLE 4.2

Do you Hope You/Your Partner will be Working Offshore in Three Years Time?

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
Yes	63	(42.6)	59	(58.4)
No	28	(18.9)	18	(17.8)
Depends	<u>57</u>	<u>(38.5)</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>(23.8)</u>
	148	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

$\chi^2 = 7.1$     D.F. = 2    Significant difference at  $p = .05$

There is also evidence that on a number of important issues relating to the quality of family life, the majority of men and women did not perceive any major difficulties. For example, in terms of the amount of time couples are able to spend together, the majority find it just about right (Table 4.3). Likewise, more than half of the fathers

TABLE 4.3

Degree of Happiness with the Amount of Time Spent with Partner

	Female Respondents (%)		Male Respondents (%)	
Time spent together just about right.	106	(73.1)	65	(64.3)
We do not see enough of each other.	28	(19.3)	20	(19.8)
At times we tend to get under one another's feet.	<u>11</u>	<u>(7.6)</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>(15.8)</u>
	145	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

find that their absence presents no disadvantages in terms of their dealings with their children (Table 4.4), though few considered it to provide any advantages. Finally, in reply to a question about whether the absence of the man lead to confusion in family decision-making, Table 4.5 indicates that this is not generally felt to be the case.

TABLE 4.4

Existence of Advantages and Disadvantages of Absence  
in Dealing with the Children

<u>Disadvantages:</u>				
	<u>Male Respondents (%)</u>			
Yes			39	(45.9)
No			<u>46</u>	<u>(54.1)</u>
			85	(100.0)
<u>Advantages:</u>				
	<u>Female Respondents (%)</u>		<u>Male Respondents (%)</u>	
Yes	13	(10.8)	5	(5.9)
No	<u>107</u>	<u>(89.2)</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>(94.0)</u>
	120	(100.0)	84	(100.0)

TABLE 4.5

"Offshore Work Creates Confusion About who Makes the  
Decisions in our Family."

	<u>Female Respondents (%)</u>		<u>Male Respondents (%)</u>	
Agree	30	(20.0)	20	(21.0)
Disagree	<u>117</u>	<u>(80.0)</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>(79.0)</u>
	147	(100.0)	97	(100.0)

However, while the individuals in our sample are both "coping"<sup>1</sup> and have expressed positive feelings and attitudes in reply to a number of questions asked in the questionnaire, there are some men and women who are experiencing difficulties in getting used to and liking offshore work. In the case of the men, it appears that only a small minority have not managed to get used to the offshore work pattern, while the proportion of females is significantly higher.

### 1.1 Male and Female Response Types

The primary measure of reaction to offshore work used in the study was a self-classification scheme based on three male and three female vignettes. These are given in Tables 4.6 and 4.7. Each set of vignettes, one for male and

TABLE 4.6

#### Male Vignettes

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**JIM** can't get used to the work pattern. He dislikes being away from his family. He occasionally gets lonely and depressed.

**MIKE'S** life seems to carry on pretty much the same whether he is at home or away. He has no strong feelings about being away from his family and his time offshore doesn't cause any great changes in his moods.

**FRED** likes his pattern of work. He accepts being away from his family but recognizes the benefits of the time he can spend at home.

Thinking of all 3 men, which one is most like you? (Check one box only).

JIM

MIKE

FRED

- 
1. The concept of coping was used by Hellesoy (1981) in his study of the Norwegian Statfjord Field, and was defined as "the ways people seek to manage or master stressful experiences so that a state of psychological equilibrium is established and maintained" (p. 13). However, Hilary Graham (1982, 1984) has identified "coping with crisis" as an activity which underlies much of women's work in the family. She analyses the ways in which it is essentially self-help and how the idea of "unobtrusive competence" serves as a yardstick by which women measure their own performance. Thus in Graham's analysis coping can be health-threatening as well as health-sustaining.

one for female respondents, was designed to capture negative, neutral and positive feelings about the offshore work pattern. Respondents were asked to choose the vignette that came closest to describing their feelings. The reaction of the panel comprised of offshore workers' wives to this question was extremely positive. It also elicited a high questionnaire response rate, with only two men and two women failing to classify themselves.

TABLE 4.7

Female Vignettes

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**ANN** can't get used to his pattern of work. She feels life is incomplete when he is away from the family. She occasionally gets lonely and depressed.

**JUDY'S** life seems to carry on pretty much the same whether he is at home or away. She has no strong feelings about him being away from the family and his time offshore doesn't produce any great changes in her moods.

**MARY** likes his pattern of work. She enjoys both the time he is away and when he is at home. She can follow her own interests and has more confidence in herself.

Thinking of all 3 women, which one is most like you? (Check one box only).

ANN

JUDY

MARY

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Vignette responses were cross-tabulated with a number of variables, such as education, geographical location, number of children and occupational experience, in order to build up a picture of positive, neutral and negative respondents. The vignette responses were also cross-tabulated with replies to other questions about feelings, perceptions and behaviour in respect to offshore work.

As discussed earlier, male respondents are offshore workers and female respondents are the wives of offshore workers. Within each of these groups, however, there are principal sub-sets. JIM(-ve) and ANN(-ve) types can be viewed as not having got used to the offshore work shift pattern, whereas at the other extreme, FRED(+ve) and MARY(+ve) types express positive feelings about the pattern

of work. Table 4.8 summarizes the frequency distributions of the male and female responses. The males predominantly classify themselves in the FRED(+ve) category (76 of 99) while the females are almost equally divided between the ANN(-ve) and MARY(+ve) categories (58 and 56 of 148 respectively).

TABLE 4.8

Male and Female Vignette Self-Classification

	Male Respondents (%)		Female Respondents (%)	
Jim(-) <sup>1</sup>	18	(18.2)	Ann(-)	58 (39.2)
Mike(0)	5	(5.1)	Judy(0)	34 (23.0)
Fred(+)	<u>76</u>	<u>(75.2)</u>	Mary(+)	<u>56</u> (38.6)
	99	(100.0)		148 (100.0)

1. To facilitate identification of the vignette character types, whether they reflect a generally positive, neutral or negative response is indicated on this and subsequent tables.

The vignettes proved an effective measure in discriminating between positive and negative feelings for both men and women. It appears that many more females have difficulty in getting used to the work pattern than males and given that many of the responses are from couples, as discussed in Chapter III, it is also the case that many more women have difficulty getting used to the work cycle than do their partners. However, some caution should be exercised in interpreting these results. First the vignettes are a measure of self-image rather than of any objectively defined criteria. Second, it would be incorrect to equate male and female response types; for example, of JIMs(-ve) with ANNs(-ve), or FREDs(+ve) with MARYs(+ve). As will be argued later, men and women experience offshore work and the difficulties associated with adjustment to the work pattern very differently and these differences will be reflected in their feelings and perceptions, and in their self-image.



## 2.0 MALE AND FEMALE REACTIONS

### 2.1 Men

As noted above, only a small minority of men (the 18 JIMs) have not managed to get used to or do not like the offshore work pattern. Over 75% of men classified themselves as FREDs.

#### 2.1.1 Demography and work experience

When the self-classifications were cross-tabulated by age and education of the respondents, with the number of years lived with their partners, and with the ages of children living at home, no significant difference was found between the negative (JIMs), neutral (MIKEs) and positive (FREDs) groups. Similarly, as Table 4.9 indicates, there was no statistically significant difference between positive, neutral and negative response groups in terms of geographical location.

TABLE 4.9

Type of Community Lived in by Male Character Type

	Jim(-)	Mike(0)	Fred(+)	Total
Outport	6	0	32	38
Town	5	2	26	33
City	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>28</u>
	18	5	76	99

Table 4.10 shows, however, that there was a significant difference in the number of years of experience of offshore work possessed by JIMs and FREDs, a larger proportion of FREDs (just over half) have been in the industry for more than five years, as compared with JIMs who are more likely to be novice workers and in lower status occupations. For example, 39% of all JIMs were roughnecks and roustabouts (indeed 54% of all roughnecks and roustabouts categorized themselves as JIMs), while other JIMs included stewards, welders and cooks.

TABLE 4.10

Length of Time in the Offshore Oil Industry, by Male  
Character Type

Years	Jim(-)	Mike(0)	Fred(+)	Total
< 1	0	0	2	2
1 - 2	7	0	9	16
3 - 4	6	2	25	33
> 4	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>48</u>
	18	5	76	99

$\chi^2 = 6.41$       1 Tailed Test      D.F. = 2  
Significant difference at  $p = .05$  between JIMs and FREDs

### 2.1.2 Offshore work and family life

The 18% (JIMs) who have not got used to offshore work are distinguished from FREDs chiefly by their feelings about the work itself. The extent to which JIMs talk to their partners about danger suggests this is an important concern (Table 4.11). As one wrote, "Money doesn't mean much on a stormy night in February." Most want to work a shorter shift than they currently do (Table 4.12), only 1 of 18 wants to be offshore in three years (Table 4.13), and all would take an onshore job if it were offered at the equivalent pay (Table 4.14).

TABLE 4.11

Frequency of Talking to Partner about the Dangers of Offshore  
Work by Male Character Type

	Jim(-)	Mike(0)	Fred(+)	Total
Often	4	0	2	6
Sometimes	9	0	42	51
Never	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>42</u>
	18	5	76	99

$\chi^2 = 7.2$       1 Tailed Test      D.F. = 2  
Significant difference at  $p = .05$

N.B.: Jim/Mike categories combined; 2 expected values <5.

TABLE 4.12

Current and Preferred Work Cycle by Male Character Type

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Current Cycle:

	<u>Jim(-)/Mike(0)</u>	<u>Fred(+)</u>	<u>Total</u>
21 Days on/off	18	21	39
30 Days on/off	<u>3</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>54</u>
	21	72	93

$\chi^2 = 21.35$       1 Tailed Test      D.F. = 1  
 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

N.B.: Data for other cycles (6 respondents) is not included in this analysis.

Most Preferred Cycle:

<u>Cycle</u>	<u>Jim(-)</u>	<u>Mike(0)</u>	<u>Fred(+)</u>	<u>Total</u>
7 Days on/off	1	0	0	1
14 Days on/off	12	1	14	27
21 Days on/off	2	2	19	23
30 Days on/off	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>46</u>
	17	5	75	97

$\chi^2 = 17.4$       1 Tailed Test      D.F. = 2  
 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

N.B.: 7 and 14 day cycles combined and Jim/Mike categories collapsed.

Least Preferred Cycle:

<u>Cycle</u>	<u>Jim(-)</u>	<u>Mike(0)</u>	<u>Fred(+)</u>	<u>Total</u>
7 Days on/off	4	3	50	57
14 Days on/off	1	0	2	3
21 Days on/off	0	0	0	0
30 Days on/off	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>33</u>
	17	5	71	93

$\chi^2 = 9.98$       1 Tailed Test      D.F. = 1  
 Significant difference at  $p = .025$

N.B.: 7 and 14 day cycles combined, 21 day category excluded, Jim/Mike categories combined.

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The men who wrote comments in reply to either the open-ended questions or when asked to give advice to an imaginary friend entering the industry concentrated entirely on work-related, rather than family-related issues, although as a few respondents remarked, the conditions experienced by the men working offshore may well have direct impact on the way they behave onshore and therefore on their families. All the JIMs expressed extremely negative feelings about the work. One wrote, "Never go offshore because it isn't meant for humans." FREDs were generally more positive, often pointing out the financial rewards and concentrating on giving their imaginary friends concrete advice on exercise routines, safety precautions and equipment. Seventy percent of FREDs still wanted to be working offshore in three years' time (Table 4.13).

TABLE 4.13

Do you Hope to be Working Offshore in Three Years' Time?

	Jim(-)	Mike(0)	Fred(+)	Total
Yes	1	3	53	57
No	10	1	7	18
Depends	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>24</u>
	18	5	76	99

$\chi^2 = 24.3$       1 Tailed Test      D.F. = 2  
 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

N.B.: Jim and Mike categories combined.

TABLE 4.14

Would you Take a Local Onshore Job Which Offered the Same Pay as your Current Job and Three Weeks' Vacation Per Year?

	Jim(-)	Mike(0)	Fred(+)	Total
Yes	18	3	35	56
No	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>38</u>
	18	4	72	94

$\chi^2 = 15.35$       1 Tailed Test      D.F. = 1  
 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

However, it should be noted that there is some variability in the questionnaire responses, particularly among FREDs. Of the 22 FREDs offering written comments on the questionnaire, even though they are generally positive about the work, 7 were negative about particular aspects of the job (pay and security especially); a large majority think about danger (Table 4.15) even if they do not talk about it (Table 4.11) and about half would take an equivalent onshore job if one was available (Table 4.14).

TABLE 4.15

How Often do you Think About the Dangers of Offshore Work?

	Jim(-)	Mike(0)	Fred(+)	Total
Often	7	0	9	16
Sometimes	10	1	46	57
Never	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>26</u>
	18	5	76	99

There is clear evidence that, among the men, supply boat workers were more likely than rig workers to be positive about their work. The typical hitch for rig workers is 21 days on/off, and for supply boat workers 30 days on/off. Sixty-seven percent of FREDs are thus in all probability supply boat workers, while 94% of JIMs are rig workers. This is supported by Table 4.16 which indicates that supply vessel

TABLE 4.16

Years of Offshore Experience by Type of Offshore Employment

Years	Rig	Supply Vessel	Total	(%)
< 1*	0	1	1	(0.7)
1 - 2*	26	6	32	(21.5)
3 - 5	25	21	46	(30.9)
> 5	<u>24</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>(47.0)</u>
	75	74	149	(100.0)

$X^2 = 18.2$  D.F. = 2 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

N.B. \*Indicates categories combined.  
Rig workers under-represented in >5 year category.  
Rig workers over-represented in >2 year category.

1. Based on female questionnaire responses.

workers are considerably more experienced in terms of off-shore work and Table 4.10 which showed FREDs to have considerably more experience in the industry than JIMs. Comparing these occupational groups, 37% of male supply boat workers reported that they never thought about the dangers associated with the work, while only 13% of rig workers never thought about danger. Correspondingly, only 4% of supply boat workers often thought about the dangers of the work, while the figure for rig workers was 32% (Table 4.17). It also appears from Table 4.12 that supply boat workers are happier with the shifts they work. Fifty-six percent of all FREDs most prefer the 30 day on/off cycle. Eighteen of 21 JIM/MIKES are rig workers on a 21 day on/off cycle but only 2 of 17 respondents indicated that this was the cycle they most preferred. Thus there appears to be a strong association between occupation and contentment with the work and work pattern. The pattern is confirmed by the interviews where the supply boats are seen as less alienating, more familiar and more familial work places than the rigs (see Chapter V, Section 2.0), and as a result they are perceived as more acceptable places to work by both the men and their wives.

TABLE 4.17

Frequency of Thinking About the Dangers of Offshore Work,  
by Type of Offshore Employment

	Male Respondents			
	Rig	(%)	Supply Vessel	(%)
Often	15	(31.9)	2	(3.7)
Sometimes	26	(55.3)	32	(59.2)
Never	<u>6</u>	<u>(12.8)</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>(37.0)</u>
	47	(100.0)	54	(100.0)

$X^2$  male = 17.7      D.F. = 2  
Significant difference at  $p = .001$

### 2.1.3 Mood changes

Responses to the vignettes were also cross-tabulated with a measure of mood change. Respondents to

the questionnaire were asked to check as many adjectives as they wished from the list shown in Table 4.18 to describe how they felt during the period offshore. Elsewhere in the questionnaire they were asked to check adjectives from the same list to describe their feelings when onshore. The list was balanced between positive and negative feelings and frequency distributions for the number of positive and negative responses were recorded. Each respondent could record from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 11 positive and negative words for each situation. The mean response scores

TABLE 4.18

Adjective Check List<sup>1</sup>

afraid	_____	nervous	_____	secure	_____
calm	_____	joyful	_____	terrified	_____
desperate	_____	panicky	_____	steady	_____
cheerful	_____	loving	_____	upset	_____
fearful	_____	shaky	_____	peaceful	_____
contented	_____	pleasant	_____	worrying	_____
frightened	_____	tense	_____	relaxed	_____
happy	_____				

1. Adjectives derived from Zuckerman and Lubin (1965).

N.B.: Male and female respondents were to check as many adjectives as they feel are appropriate in describing their feelings when he is offshore.

for JIMs, MIKEs and FREDs are shown in Table 4.19. These are graphically displayed in Figure 4.1. JIMs are more likely to

TABLE 4.19

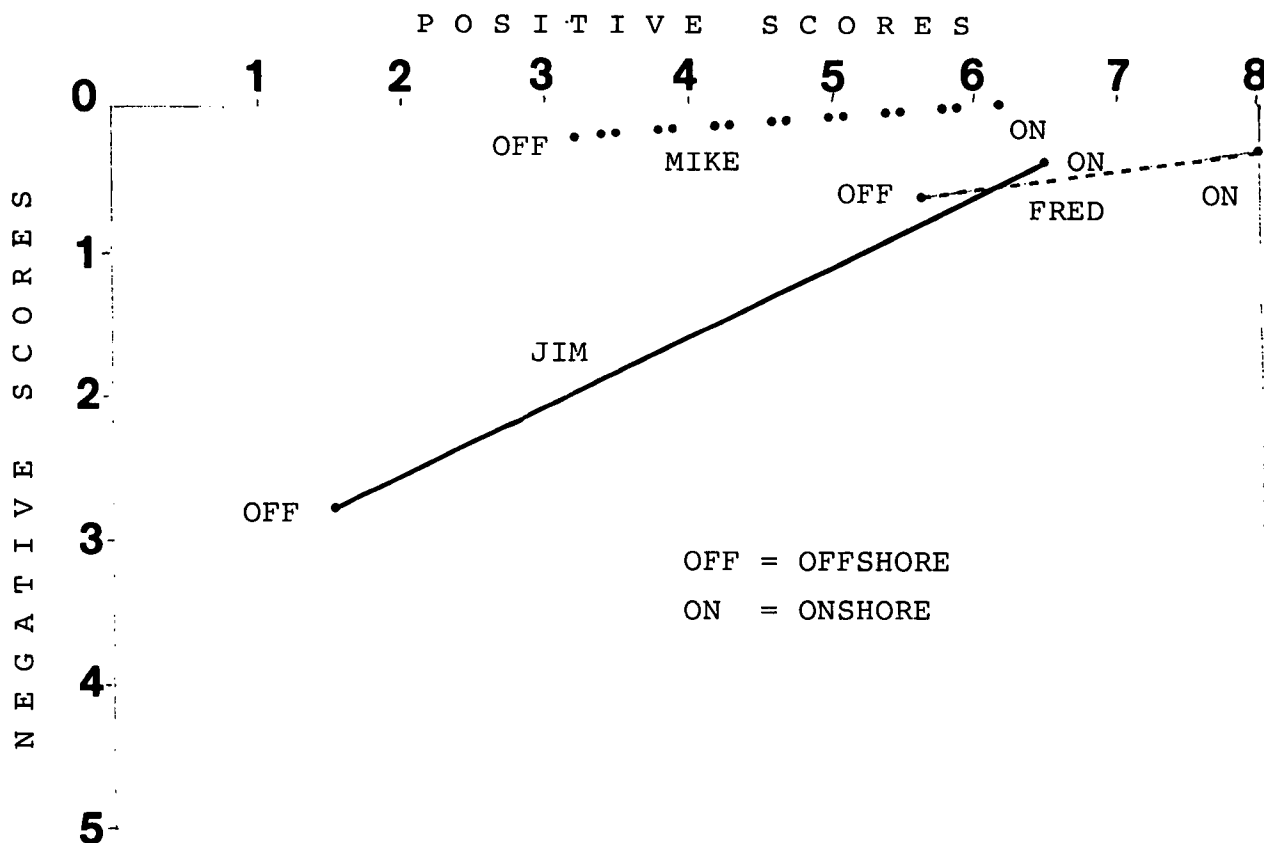
Mean Adjective Frequencies by Male Character Type

Situation/Feelings	Jim(-)	Mike(0)	Fred(+)
Offshore/positive	1.5	3.2	5.6
Offshore/negative	2.7	0.2	0.7
Onshore/positive	6.5	6.2	8.0
Onshore/negative	0.4	0.0	0.3

have negative feelings while offshore than are FREDs or MIKEs, and to experience much greater mood changes between the period onshore and the period offshore; however, this did not translate into significant differences in medical consultation rates. All men experience predominantly positive feelings while onshore, but the FREDs experience relatively little change in mood between their periods off and onshore.

FIGURE 4.1

Onshore-Offshore Mood Swings by Male Character Type



2.2 Women

The women are much more evenly divided than men between those who have got used to the pattern of offshore work and those who have not. The vignettes thus proved to have considerable power of discrimination in terms of women's self-image with 38% classifying themselves as MARYs(+ve) and 39% as ANNs(-ve) (Table 4.8).



### 2.2.1 Demography and work experience

When the self-classifications obtained from women replying to the vignette question were cross-tabulated by the ages of children living at home and by whether the respondent has a paid job, no significant difference was found between the negative (ANNS), neutral (JUDYs) and positive (MARYs) groups. Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of age, number of years lived with their partners, years of experience of offshore work and type of community lived in (Tables 4.20, 4.21, 4.22 and 4.23). However, there were more ANNs in the youngest age group (20-24 years), among those married for fewer than four years, and those with partners with fewer than two years offshore experience. In addition, Table 4.24 shows a significant difference in educational levels between the three groups; 63% of MARYs as opposed to 34% of ANNs, have some form of higher education. Finally, more MARYs than ANNs are the wives of supply boat workers, and more ANNs than MARYs the wives of rig workers (Table 4.25). This might have been expected in view of the more positive feelings towards offshore work held by male supply boat workers, described in Section 2.1, and the findings from the interviews which indicate that the feelings expressed by many wives reflect those of their husbands as expressed in statements such as, "When he's happy, I'm happy."

TABLE 4.20

#### Age by Female Character Type

Years	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
20-24	10	3	5	15
25-29	16	11	22	49
30-34	20	10	17	47
35-39	7	7	6	20
40-44	4	1	4	9
45-49	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
	58	34	55	144

TABLE 4.21

Number of Years Living with Partner by Female Character Type

Years	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
0-4	16	8	12	36
5-9	18	8	23	49
10-14	13	10	15	38
> 15	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>25</u>
	58	34	56	148

TABLE 4.22

Years of Offshore Experience by Female Character Type

Years	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
< 1	1	0	0	1
1 - 2	16	9	7	32
3 - 4	13	9	22	44
> 4	<u>28</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>71</u>
	58	34	56	148

ANN and MARY only:  $\chi^2 = 6.62$  1 Tailed Test  
 D.F. = 2 Significant difference at  $p = .05$

TABLE 4.23

Type of Community Lived in by Female Character Type

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Outport	21	13	19	53
Town	27	14	19	60
City	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>33</u>
	57	34	55	146

TABLE 4.24

Highest Level of Education Completed by Female  
Character Type

Level Achieved	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Grade 9 or less	15	3	4	22
Grade 10-13	24	16	17	57
Some/completed Post-secondary	14	15	26	55
Some/completed University	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14</u>
	58	34	56	148

$\chi^2 = 19.8$       D.F. = 6  
Significant difference at  $p = .01$

TABLE 4.25

## Occupation of Partner by Female Character Type

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Rig	31	20	22	73
Supply Vessel	<u>26</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>74</u>
	57	34	56	147

## 2.2.2 Offshore work and family life

ANNs express difficulties in getting used to both the nature of the job itself and its implications for family life: one wrote that she would tell her imaginary friend, "That an increase in income does not compensate for the loneliness, fear, despair, and the absence of her husband." They worry about the danger of the job much more than MARYs (Tables 4.26, 4.27); they feel previous jobs were less disruptive (Table 4.28); and 95% would like the man to take an onshore job (Table 4.29).

TABLE 4.26

Frequency of Thinking About the Dangers of Offshore Work by  
Female Character Type

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Often	38	12	20	70
Sometimes	19	17	36	72
Never	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
	57	33	56	146

$\chi^2 = 11.7$       D.F. = 2  
Significant difference at  $p = .01$

N.B.: "Never" category excluded, insufficient data.

TABLE 4.27

Frequency of Talking to Partner About the Dangers of Offshore  
Work by Female Character Type

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Often	19	5	6	30
Sometimes	35	25	44	104
Never	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>
	56	34	56	146

$\chi^2 = 11.5$       D.F. = 4  
Significant difference at  $p = .05$

The results from the question about whether or not previous jobs were more or less disruptive are interesting. Comparing males and females, 50% of the males, but only 33% of females, felt that other jobs were more disruptive of family life, a statistically significant difference and one that reflects very different attitudes toward work and family life on the part of the couples. But what is implicit from Table 4.28 is that rig work rather than supply boat work

TABLE 4.28

Disruptiveness of Previous Jobs Held by Partner Relative to Offshore Work by Female Character Type<sup>1</sup>

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Other jobs were:				
More disruptive	20	12	21	53
About the same	10	11	23	44
Less disruptive	<u>38</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>62</u>
	68	36	55	159

$\chi^2 = 19.1$       D.F. = 4  
 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

1. Based on a maximum of three previous jobs per respondent

TABLE 4.29

If Partner was Offered an Onshore Job, at the Same Pay and Three Weeks' Annual Vacation, Should he Take it?: by Female Character Type

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Yes	53	21	23	97
No	<u>3</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>42</u>
	56	32	51	139

$\chi^2 = 31.4$       D.F. = 2  
 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

is generally perceived as more disruptive as it is the ANNs who are more likely to be the wives of rig workers. Given that the offshore hitch for the supply boat worker is longer, and notwithstanding the fact that supply boat workers may visit port and see their families during the hitch, it would appear that satisfaction with the type of offshore work is more relevant than length of absence in determining whether one job is more disruptive of family life than another.

With respect to family life, 33% of ANNs find that they don't see enough of their partners (Table 4.30), whereas

TABLE 4.30

Degree of Happiness with the Amount of Time Spent with Partner: Female Character Types

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Time spent together just about right.	37	25	43	105
We do not see enough of each other.	19	4	5	28
At times we tend to get under one another's feet.	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>
	57	32	55	144

$X^2 = 14.9$       D.F. = 4  
Significant difference at  $p = .01$

N.B.: 3 expected values in "At times we tend to get under one another's feet" category <5.

13% of MARYs actually feel that they see too much of him as there are days when the man is onshore when they "tend to get under one another's feet." ANNs also find that much more disruption is caused to their social life and other activities by the shift pattern (Table 4.31); and while like MARYs they agree that they have become more independent (Table 4.32), there is the impression that this is largely because

TABLE 4.32

"Because My Partner Works Offshore, I Have Developed A Greater Sense Of Independence": Female Character Types

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Yes	49	24	50	123
No	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>23</u>
	57	33	56	146

TABLE 4.31

Activities Engaged In Often by Female Character Type by Presence or Absence of Partner

Activity	ANN ( - )		JUDY ( 0 )		MARY ( + )	
	While Partner Is Offshore	While Partner Is Onshore	While Partner Is Offshore	While Partner Is Onshore	While Partner Is Offshore	While Partner Is Onshore
Church	11	9	7	9	16	10
Clubs/bars	1	3	0	0	0	4
Bingo, darts, cards	1	1	1	2	3	6
Visiting relatives without husband	21	5	10	6	27	12
Visiting relatives with husband	NA	28	NA	11	NA	29
Entertaining at home	3	9	2	6	3	6
TV/reading/sewing/knitting	41	21	23	19	37	30
Household work	49	40	25	25	49	44
Sports/driving/skiing	5	9	5	4	8	10
Dancing/movies	1	8	1	1	0	5
Oil related clubs/societies	1	1	0	1	0	0
Outings with children	15	21	11	9	26	26
Going out with the girls	1	0	1	0	2	1

X<sup>2</sup> ANN Off/On = 18.1

D.F. = 7

Significant difference at p = .025

they have had to in order to survive - they find decision making more difficult because the shift pattern stops them being together with their partners (Table 4.33) and they

TABLE 4.33

"Offshore Work Prevents Us From Being Together at Times When We Need to Make Decisions": Female Character Types

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)	Total
Yes	39	17	26	82
No	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>62</u>
	56	33	55	144

$\chi^2 = 6.18$       D.F. = 2  
 Significant difference at  $p = .05$

were somewhat more diffident when asked if they agreed that, in general, the woman "took over" when the man was offshore (Table 4.34).

TABLE 4.34

"When The Man Is An Offshore Worker, It Is The Woman Who Takes Over": Female Character Types

	Neither Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Ann(-)	18	15	16	8	1
Judy(0)	3	12	8	7	2
Mary(+)	<u>20</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
	41	45	39	18	3

$\chi^2 = 13.8$       D.F. = 6  
 Significant difference at  $p = .05$

N.B.: Disagree/Strongly Disagree categories combined.



Like FREDs, MARYs provide other evidence of having got much more used to offshore work and its shift patterns. In advising the imaginary friend, one typical comment was, "Keep a sense of humour and do fun things - the world doesn't stop because he is away." It would seem that MARYs are more willing to act independently, maintaining their own activities while the partner is offshore (Table 4.31) and making decisions by themselves if necessary (Table 4.34).

### 2.2.3 Mood changes

MARYs are also much less prone to mood changes between the times the male partner is on and offshore. These emotional "ups and downs" were measured using the same list of adjectives as on the male questionnaire (Table 4.18). Female respondents were asked to check as many words as they wished from the list to describe how they felt during the husband's onshore period. A further question asked them to check the list to describe their feelings during his offshore hitch.

The mean response of ANNs and MARYs are shown in Table 4.35 and these are graphically displayed in Figure 4.2. ANNs show the largest swings in mood from relatively high frequencies of negative feelings and low frequencies of positive feelings while the husband is offshore, to relatively high positive and low negative feelings while he is onshore. MARYs have much more positive feelings while the man is offshore and score higher positive and negative feelings while he is onshore. However, the ANNs greater propensity to changes in mood does not translate into significant differences in medical consultation rates. It is also noteworthy that as a group men have much more positive

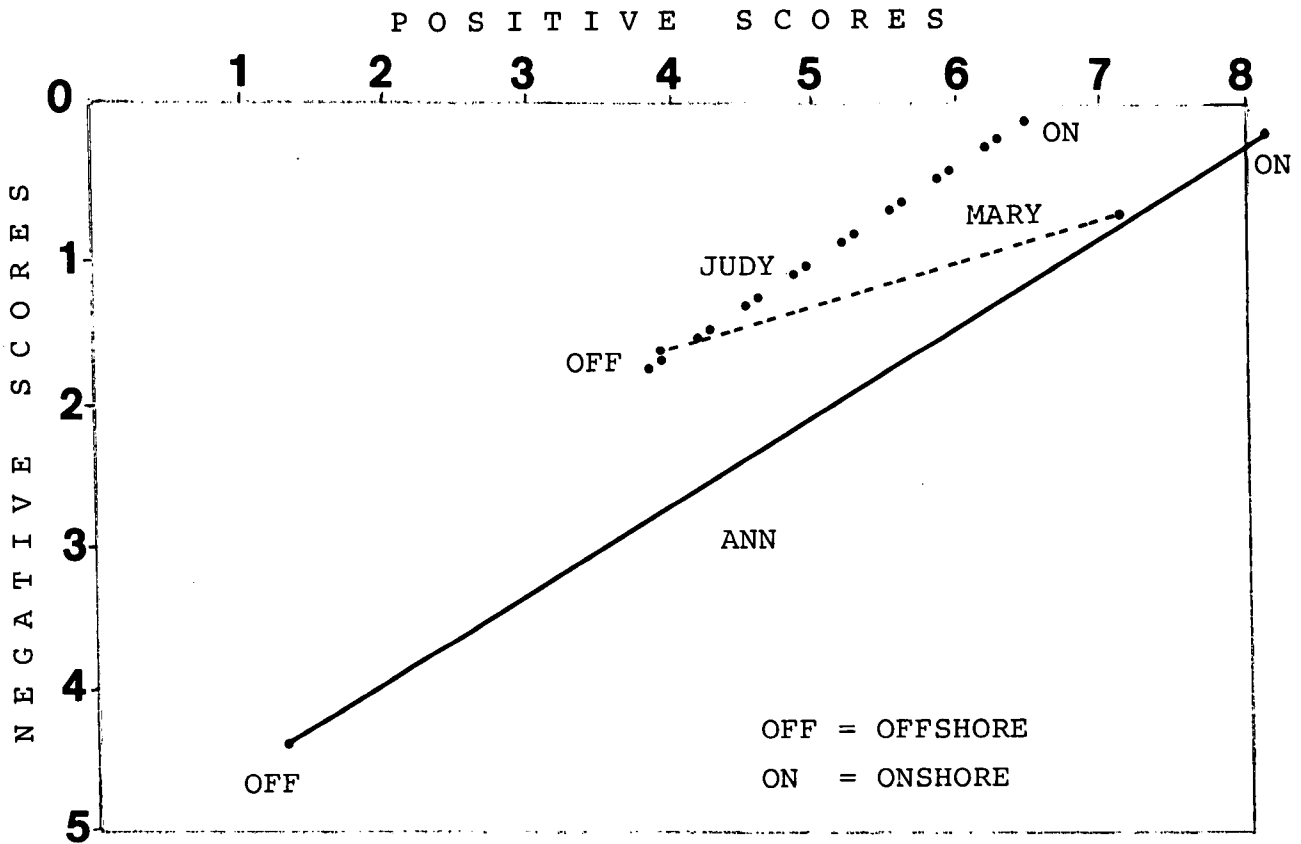
TABLE 4.35

Mean Adjective Frequencies by Female Character Type

<u>Situation/Feelings</u>	<u>Ann(-)</u>	<u>Judy(0)</u>	<u>Mary(+)</u>
Offshore/postive	1.36	3.85	3.88
Offshore/negative	4.46	1.91	1.71
Onshore/positive	8.09	6.59	7.16
Onshore/negative	0.22	0.12	0.80

FIGURE 4.2

Onshore-Offshore Mood Swings by Female Character Type



feelings and far fewer negative ones while they are offshore than do women (Tables 4.19 and 4.35).

2.3 Variations Within Response Types

It is also important to acknowledge variations within the vignette responses. Indeed, it would be incorrect to equate the idea of not being able to get used to the work with having wholly negative feelings about it, or of liking it with wholly positive feelings about it. Such an assumption is probably valid only for JIMs, whose feelings about the work seem wholly negative. The FREDs, who tend to like the work, still bring up numerous negative aspects of the job, especially in reply to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire. MARYs also express some resentment about the additional responsibilities they have to shoulder when their husbands are offshore. As one wrote, "You have to learn to be independent. You have to learn to be a single parent and sometimes do jobs your husband usually does such

as mowing the lawn, banking." This comes across clearly in the advice they offered their imaginary friends and their warnings as to the implications of having a "part-time husband." (Their advice is summarized in Table 4.36). MARYs have got used to offshore work, often after a period of considerable loneliness of the kind that ANNs continue to complain of. Another wrote, "I would tell her that she will find the loneliness the worst...but after a while she will adjust as will her family but it will take time." Their "adjustment" does not necessarily mean that they feel wholly positive about it or necessarily value the greater independence they have achieved.

TABLE 4.36

Advice to the Wife of a New Entrant to the Offshore Oil Industry: Female Character Types

	Ann(-)	Judy(0)	Mary(+)
Accept the job	16	14	15
Financial benefits/issues	18	11	11
Adjustment to work pattern	16	9	13
Enjoy time at home	16	10	10
Need to assume responsibility	8	3	18
Need other interests	13	3	10
Important to communicate with spouse	5	2	6
Need to get outside help	2	2	7
Benefits of time alone	4	1	3
Other	8	3	8
Negative feelings toward job	7	2	4

Similarly in the case of the ANNs, it might be expected that they would hope that their husbands would not be working offshore three years hence, but in fact they demonstrate considerable ambivalence (Table 4.37). Just as many ANNs as MARYs recommend to their imaginary friends that the partner should accept the offshore job (Table 4.36). In part this reflects the benefits, particularly financial, that are generally perceived to accrue from offshore work, and in part, as we shall see in Chapter V, it also reflects the "traditional" nature of the marriage relationship that appears to be the norm among the couples we are considering. Despite their greater psychological dependence on their husbands, ANNs, like MARYs, tend to agree that the choice of job rests primarily with their husbands. While a majority of

TABLE 4.37

Do you Hope your Partner will be Working Offshore in Three Years?: Female Character Types

	<u>Ann(-)</u>	<u>Judy(0)</u>	<u>Mary(+)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	18	13	32	63
No	16	8	4	28
Depends	<u>25</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>57</u>
	59	34	55	148

$\chi^2 = 12.2$       D.F. = 4  
Significant difference at  $p = .05$

women (70% of the total, and including almost all the ANNs) would like their husbands to take an equivalently paid onshore job (Table 4.29), those expressing the opposite view most frequently gave as a reason the fact that the man liked his offshore job. Furthermore, eleven female respondents said that the decision would have to be his (Table 4.38).

TABLE 4.38

Reasons why Partner Should/Should not Take a Hypothetical Onshore Job: Female Character Types

	<u>Ann(-)</u>	<u>Judy(0)</u>	<u>Mary(+)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Home more	35	13	16	64
Onshore safer	7	6	4	17
Other	5	7	4	16
Likes time off	1	3	7	11
Likes offshore job	3	9	17	29
Decision is his	2	3	6	11

$\chi^2 = 28.9$       D.F. = 8  
Significant difference at  $p = .01$

N.B.: Likes Time Off and Likes Offshore Job categories combined, however, 5 categories with expected values less than 5 remain.

Similarly, when men and women considered the possibility of working in the offshore industry three years hence, those 38% of women saying that it "depended" (Table 4.38) seemed to think that it depended to a large degree on whether the man was contented (Table 4.39). No man mentioned the issue of personal contentment with respect to himself or his spouse. Most wives seem to see it as their duty to support their men on and off the rigs. As one woman put it in her questionnaire, "the offshore worker needs emotional support while on or off the rig and the person closest to him has to be the one to provide it."

TABLE 4.39

Factor on Which the Desirability of Offshore Work in Three Years Depends

	Female Respondents	Male Respondents
Availability of job	21	11
Situation at the time	16	25
Job contentment	13	0
Financial situation	9	1
Nature of new job	6	3
Safety and working conditions	5	3
Home life	6	2

Women seem to accept this for a variety of reasons. In the case of supply boat workers' wives, many feel that working at sea "is in his veins." One woman, who identified herself as a "MARY" commented in her questionnaire, "I think the man's attitude about working offshore is very important. My husband works at sea and loves to be at sea. I do not think it would be right for me - his wife - to pressure him or make him feel guilty about being away from home when he enjoys his job so much." In addition, many (56%) have known no other type of work pattern during their married lives and some have had previous experience of rotational work in their families. Others felt strongly that the financial benefits of offshore work were important, especially given the high rates of unemployment in Newfoundland. These women also thought that the husband's willingness to take an offshore job should be seen as willingness to fulfil his obligation to provide for his family. One "ANN" advised her imaginary friend:

...you'll find it hard getting used to your husband being gone but just give it a while. I'd not advise her to tell her husband right away not to take it. It's hard on him being away but he's sensible thinking of the future.

A "MARY" was more forthright:

I'd tell her she is lucky with jobs so hard to come by. She will get used to it in time and it will bring them both closer. I find that you haven't got time to argue and you get to go out more and enjoy yourselves when he do get in.

As was noted above, three women responding to the questionnaire summed it up by saying that, "if he's happy, you're happy."

### 3.0 SUMMARY

While all of our respondents are "coping," some are obviously doing rather better than others. It is important to remember that all offshore workers in our sample are participating in the early, developmental, phase of the industry and that just over half the male and female respondents have less than five years experience of work offshore. The sample, therefore, represents the first generation of families adjusting to this particular job and pattern of work.

The vignettes show that feelings about offshore work tend to be polarized among both the male and female respondents. However, these answers should not be accepted at face value. Within each character group there are significant variations; attitudes are not wholly positive or negative. Similarly, the characterizations may well change over time. The comments to the effect that "it takes time to adjust" should be noted. In particular, it is possible that some MARYs(+ve) begin their experience of offshore work as ANNs(-ve). All male and female respondents, with the possible exception of the JIMs, tend to experience a greater or lesser degree of ambivalence about offshore work.

Men value offshore work largely because it provides a well-paid job in a province where over 20% of adult men are unemployed. In the interviews, many men and women expressed an appreciation of the financial rewards to be gained and what they could mean, particularly in terms of paying off mortgages and buying a car or furniture. One man said:

Not everyone on the rigs splurges and wastes and boozes up and fools around and all this kind of stuff...I worked offshore four and half years, and the way I look at it is that when I come onshore, I want to see something for all the nights I spend out there. I want something for it.

Another couple interviewed, who lived in a new split-level bungalow, had a large coloured and framed print of the oil rig on which the husband worked hanging on the wall. However, once the decision to work offshore has been taken, then the worker and his partner will react, it appears often differentially, to the nature of the work and the work pattern, while the financial rewards continue to act as an incentive for both partners. At this point, the couple must either adjust to the situation, or separate, or leave the industry. By definition, the people in our sample have opted to adjust. It seems that the MARYs in the sample are more likely to weigh the disadvantages of offshore work (for example, their resentment about the additional responsibilities they must bear when their partners are offshore) against the difficulties their husbands would probably face in finding an equivalently well-paid job onshore. ANNs are more introverted and are more preoccupied with their problems as individuals and as family members.

## CHAPTER V - PATTERNS OF ADJUSTMENT

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Offshore work and rotational shift patterns require adjustment on the part of men with respect to the contrast between rig and home cultures;<sup>1</sup> on the part of women in adjusting to an intermittent spouse; and on the part of the couple in terms of working out roles, feelings, and obligations to each other and to children.

The tension that men feel about the transition between rig and home and the adjustment women are forced to make to spousal absence are particularly evident at partings and reunions, when high expectations may easily be dashed on meeting and depression may follow separation. The ways in which this crucial period is handled have obvious implications for the marital relationship.

While the husband is offshore, women must cope alone with parenting, domestic labour and in some cases paid labour, with varying degrees of support from kin and community. Thus, men and women must make adjustments to offshore work patterns both as individuals and as couples. This double adjustment, which is particularly acute for women, requires both an enhanced awareness of the respective partners' experience of offshore work patterns, and communication between partners.

### 2.0 MALE EXPERIENCES AND ADJUSTMENTS

#### 2.1 The Work Environment

The focus of the men's responses to questions about adjustments was the offshore work itself, particularly in terms of conditions of safety and pay. Of male questionnaire responses to the advice question, all but two concentrated exclusively on the merits and demerits of the job. "Put home life out of your mind, concentrate on work, take it one day at a time..." was one man's recommendation. For most men, the family is regarded as a relatively unproblematic haven and valued as such. In the interviews, one man stressed the importance of a happy family life for rig workers, and this was also implicit in the dependence on their families many men seemed to exhibit. This dependence was rarely made

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1. Supply boats seem to present less of a contrast in this regard, even though the rotational pattern of 30 days on/off is longer. This is discussed further in subsequent sections of this chapter.



explicit by the men, however, who might acknowledge a litany of necessary adjustments following their return, but who saw these as incumbent upon the spouse and family. Families were expected to adjust to the returning worker, rather than vice versa.

The responses to the open-ended questions on the male questionnaires were full of discussion of safety and job security issues. This preoccupation was also reflected in the fact that 74% of men think about danger sometimes or often (Table 4.15). Men were also concerned about job security, employer/employee relations, benefits, and, at the lower end of the work hierarchy (i.e. those who are relatively inexperienced and unskilled), a sense of alienation from the job, which is expressed in the feeling of "just being a number." In this regard, it is significant that 60% of men stated that they would take an "equivalent" onshore job if it were offered (Table 5.1). Two men interviewed referred to the rig as "a prison" and to their need to "let off steam" when they came home. The culture of the rig is such that men feel that they have to keep their worries to themselves. As one advised, "...don't be a person to be feeling down because this rubs off on fellow workers." Personal problems had to be left at home because the rig was a "different world"; "You must leave home with a happy mind knowing everything is okay. Offshore is no place for someone who has problems at home." Another wrote, "It's not easy to forget about everything while you are out - yet on the other hand you can't worry about everything too."

TABLE 5.1

Should the Offshore Worker Take the  
Hypothetical Onshore Job?

	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
Yes	99	(70.2)	56	(58.9)
No	<u>42</u>	<u>(29.8)</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>(41.1)</u>
	141	(100.0)	95	(100.0)

These themes were further elaborated in the interviews. One man spoke of the need to "live in the head" (sic) on the rig and of his consequent need to relieve tensions at home. Another did not feel he could talk about family

matters to other rig workers, who generally, like him, would not admit to any problems. Yet another said, "I love to grumble when I get home first 'cause I don't have anyone on the rig to grumble at." This man was content with the work, but another, expressing essentially the same sentiment, was not. He felt insecure and commented that you had to be "a good con artist to get ahead" on the rig, the implication being that it is not possible to allow your true feelings to show.

There is also evidence that the rig might indeed be all-absorbing in terms of the workers' mental and physical energies. This came out particularly strongly in the interviews. For example, one man complained that the approach to the work was dominated by the need for speed rather than safety factors, and that the men were not treated like human beings and would sometimes have to work as they ate, or even with broken limbs. Reference was also made to conflict on the drill floor, with no respect accorded to lower status workers and threats of demotion for those who were reluctant to comply. This man summed it up thus, "It's not like going to work anymore, it's like going to war." Another felt that it was not always possible to rely upon fellow workers' experience, "If they need a guy to fill a position and they can't get someone to fill it, they'll take a green guy and put him in there right away and just let him figure it out."

This sense of unremitting pressure was captured by another man who said, "There's times when someone's standing right over your shoulder and keeps telling you to, 'do this, do this, do this.' The individual who's been doing the actual job, who's been doing that job for years, gets a little upset about it and things tend not to be as safe as they should be when that happens." While such comments were typical of those made by many male respondents, perceptions varied considerably and appeared to be related to different company management styles. Another man had not only found useful a preliminary session with his employer in which, "They try hard to inform you about cultural shock, not seeing the family and work," but also reported excellent work mates and high morale. There was also strong emphasis in some interviews on the "buddy system" ("Everybody's got to look out for everybody else"), though one man was careful, when asked to say what he liked best about working offshore, to distinguish, "The people I work with, not the people I work for." Others made favourable comparisons between the work schedule and conditions on the rigs and those found on supply boats, in fishing or other "high risk" occupations, like mining.

In Chapter IV it was shown that opinions about the work cycles offshore varied considerably, but that in general

supply boat workers were more content with their current cycle (30 days on/off) than rig workers who do 21 days on/off. It appears that this is closely related to perceptions of the work environment in each case. The interviews revealed several supply boat workers who gave very positive accounts of their work experience, talking about the benefits of a small work group and the co-operation and friendly relations with the captain ("the old man"). Factors such as this appear to make the 30 day cycle more acceptable, together with the fact that supply vessel crews are frequently in port; a typical pattern being 8 days at sea and 4 days in port.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the daily shift, which for crews appears to vary from 6 hours on/off to 9 hours on/15 hours off (depending on tasks at the time), is generally shorter than the 12 hours on/off worked by the rig crews.

Supply boat workers also seem to find returning to the boat much easier. Three supply boat workers mentioned that the boats were "more like a family" and that there was much less contrast between home and work. Indeed, the tensions of partings and reunions were also eased because when the supply boats are in port during the 30 day work cycle, and wives and children may have the opportunity to see husbands and fathers at these times. Clearly, this is easier for those who live in or near to St. John's but for some families at least, work on the supply boats does not necessarily mean a total separation for the entire 30 day hitch. Several women were also in the habit of going with their husbands to the boat and spending some time with him onboard, drinking coffee and meeting friends and their wives. As a result, they felt more in touch with their spouses' place of work and the conditions. Two women pointed out however that despite visiting the boat in this way, they deliberately did not stay to watch it leave harbour.

By contrast, several rig workers who were interviewed would prefer to work a 14 days cycle in order to reduce the time spent in an environment which they considered hostile and threatening. The third week offshore was seen by these men as particularly tiring, "It's hard work and long shifts, in the third week the men's ability starts to peter out." Some men described how this was exacerbated by a change in shift (from days to nights, for example) for the second half of the hitch. There was speculation that both of these factors might increase the likelihood of accidents.

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1. The pattern may vary if, for example, the vessel is on anchor handling or towing assignments.

## 2.2 The Home Environment

It is very clear, therefore, that coping with the job is uppermost in men's minds and this if anything increases their dependence on the family. As one woman said, "When he's home he demands just as much attention and more than any child." Of those men stating that they would take an "equivalent" onshore job, the main reason given was the fact that they would have more time at home (Table 5.2). Men described in the interviews the psychological excitement of reunion in just as vivid terms as the women - the surge of energy for the one or two days before going ashore, the "butterflies." One man said of this hyperactivity, "The last two or three days I'm out here, everybody knows I'm coming home - I can guarantee you that." Yet on reaching home this man described himself as often "grouchy" and tired.

TABLE 5.2

Reasons Given for Taking/Not Taking the Hypothetical Onshore Job

	Female Respondents	Male Respondents
Reasons for taking job:		
Home more	65	42
Onshore safer	17	3
Other	16	8
Reasons for not taking job:		
Likes time off	11	9
Likes offshore job	29	19
Decision is his	11	0
$\chi^2 = 11.6$ D.F. = 5 Significant difference at $p = .05$		

The majority of men interviewed described their chief need on reaching home as sleep. This was particularly true for those working a full shift immediately before leaving the rig for home and those who live far from St. John's and for whom travel time is much longer. In the words of one of these men "(when I get back) she's rarin' to go and I just wants to sit home." Many men said forcefully that

they did not want to confront household problems or necessarily to talk to their wives, although most were willing to put up with the children's clamour even when tired:

When I comes home from the rig, I'm all winded up...twelve hours a day...you're steady winding up. By the time you get out of there, I'm like a spring that's wind total. When I get home I just want to (unwind)...sometimes I just even want to get drunk and forget about everything and wake up with a big hangover, then slowly break into the life at home. But if I comes home and here's a problem, right away I got to jump into another role - I'm the daddy now. I gotta take care of the son, or the wife needs comforting, or the sink broke down or something!...so you're playing two different roles, I find.

In response to the questionnaire, another advised his imaginary friend to, "Get used to hearing, 'I wish you had been here.'" One man interviewed put it rather more forcefully, complaining about the occasions when his wife started to recount her difficulties during the previous month, "I don't need that. Do you know what I mean? After coming off - I just want to rest for a day or so. I don't need to be hit with something that's her job."

Men working offshore have to do a job that most perceived as dangerous and many find difficulties in the transition between what one termed "the cowboy culture" and home, dealing with it as best they can. Obviously, the shift from a world of men where "you don't say 'excuse me my dear'" to one of women and children is seen as difficult. All looked forward to coming home immensely, and expect the world of home and family to meet their needs and expectations; however, the needs and expectations of their wives may well be different.

After a few days, most men seem to establish a routine that involves fetching the mail (in the case of outport workers), working on some household project, doing things with their children after school, and visiting friends and family. Those who find it difficult to establish a routine, and who procrastinate with regard to home projects, also seem to be those who find the transition from one culture to another particularly problematic and frustrating. The majority of male respondents to the questionnaire found no disadvantages in dealing with children as a result of their offshore work patterns (Table 4.4). However, some men interviewed reported that they had had to give up community

activities, such as dart leagues and vestry meetings, because of their work schedules. This made them additionally dependent on their families for social interaction. One ex-fisherman who was interviewed said that he found, "Off-shore work puts you apart from your friends" and missed helping them with various projects, like house building. Only two mentioned "nights out with the boys," as a frequent onshore activity, which in one case involved socializing with other rig workers.

Most described feelings of irritability during the last few days of their leave. Many found parting from children particularly difficult and one said that this was the main difficulty he faced because of working offshore; before children arrived, the rotational pattern had, if anything, served to relieve the boredom of marriage. Nor does it appear that parting from children gets easier. One man used a sports analogy to describe his feelings, "Every time you go back to the rig it gets harder to get up for the game." Another commented that as his son (4 years) got older, he found it harder to leave him behind; on his last trip the boy had been "screeching" in the doorway and he said to his wife, "You know this is killing me, don't you?" Two men interviewed said that they did not sleep at all on the last night of their leave, staying up until they had to leave for the heliport at 4:00 a.m; once back on the rig, they worked a 12 hour shift, not having slept for 48 hours. Even in the case of workers who do sleep on their last night onshore, the first working day is long. For rig workers, the trip to the heliport and the helicopter ride are sources of additional tension. This may often spill over into the family, for as one woman said in an interview, "The time that is the most stressful for me is on crew change days, because that involves the helicopter ride. I'm tense and on edge until I know the change has taken place safely."

### **3.0 FEMALE EXPERIENCES AND ADJUSTMENTS**

"I don't think you ever really adjust to it - you accept it" (28 year old woman, husband 5 years offshore).

#### **3.1 Offshore Work**

Staying in the world familiar to both spouses, women find that they have a difficult path to tread in managing the kind of tensions generated by the offshore work pattern. In the first place, women experience great anxiety as a result of the nature of offshore work. Of those saying that their partner should accept an equivalent onshore job, 17% gave safety as the reason (Table 4.38). All of the women reported that they thought about the dangers of offshore

work, and almost a half said they often did so (Table 4.26). Furthermore, 21% stated that they often talk to their partner about the dangers of the work in comparison with only 6% of men (Table 4.11),<sup>1</sup> and 17% gave safety as the reason (Table 4.37). All of the women reported that they thought about the dangers of offshore work, and almost a half said they often did so (Table 4.15). This seems to suggest that women have a greater need to express their fears regarding offshore work, a feeling which may not be shared by their partners, but which was a feature of the interviews.

### 3.2 Partings and Reunions

The women interviewed also reported feeling extreme tension, anxiety, and excitement before reunions. One said that she was initially physically sick each time, while another used to break out in cold sweats as she drove to the heliport. Such extreme feelings may diminish over time, but the "butterflies" remain. Many prepared for the husband's return with an orgy of cleaning and baking; one woman, for example, always made, "strawberry shortcake, cookies and a double-layer chocolate cake." Often women's expectations of the partner's homecoming are doomed to disappointment. As one remarked:

Yes, that really pisses me off. Here I am preparing for the great day when he gets home, psyching myself up for a good time and everything else, and then he comes home and all he can do is sleep for the first week. It's like a slap in the face 'cause the week before he gets home I say, Bill gets home in one week, three days, two days - you know, count down. Then he gets home and all he does is sleep.

The man referred to in this quotation worked a twelve hour shift immediately before leaving the rig and found that it took a week before he adjusted to a regular sleep pattern. Most took some two to four days to adjust. This man also realized that many men did not want to find out what their wives had been doing while he had been away if it involved listening to problems, "The attitude is, 'well, I'm out there and I work for four weeks. When I go home I don't want to

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1. Given that our sample appears to be made up largely of matched couples, the disparity in the responses clearly reflects perceived behaviour and concern rather than the frequency with which they actually talk together about danger.

work. My work is done.'" However, in spite of being able to recognize this as a problem he found himself unable to do anything about it.

Most of the women interviewed commented that they "had learned" to respect the needs of spouses returning home for sleep, and to contain their desire to talk for at least a couple of days. For those women who have had to deal with a sick child or other domestic emergency, this may prove a strain; certainly this was the message expressed in three of the questionnaires. All of the women recognized the importance of coming to terms with this problem of tension management if adjustment to the rotational pattern was to be made. One woman commented specifically on the time it had taken, and the importance of sorting out what was expected by her husband on the first few days onshore. In addition to sleep, a desire to get out in the open air and the woods was cited by some women as a typical part of their partners' initial adjustment to the home period. Another acquiesced in her husband's desire for sleep and sex, but still dreaded the first few days he was home. The majority of women responded neutrally to the general statement posed in the questionnaire, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Offshore work improves the sex life," while men tended to agree with the statement (Table 5.3). However, questionnaire responses to such sensitive issues are hard to assess.

TABLE 5.3

"Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder:  
Offshore Work Improves the Sex Life."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Female Respondents	28	44	57	18	1
Male Respondents	16	32	30	11	7

### 3.3 Domestic Life

When respondents were asked about arguments during the period the husband was onshore, 52% of women and 40% of men reported that some of the stay was taken up by "niggling arguments" (Table 5.4). Most of the women stated that these occurred either in the first or last few days of the period onshore (Table 5.5), thus providing further evidence with



respect to the difficulty of partings and reunions. One couple described how they felt during the days before he went away as tense, with a sense of urgency and a need to get things accomplished. They would argue, "over nothing." The woman thought this might be because "you resent that he has to be away for half the time, when a lot of people can have their spouses home every day." However, the relatively small number reporting any difficulty perhaps reflects the degree of accommodation reached, primarily on the part of the women.

TABLE 5.4

"Do you Find that Part of his/your Stay at Home is Taken up with Misunderstandings and Niggling Arguments?"

	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
Yes	75	(52.1)	40	(39.6)
No	<u>69</u>	<u>(47.9)</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>(60.4)</u>
	144	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

TABLE 5.5

Time When Arguments And Misunderstandings Most Commonly Occur

	Female Respondents	Male Respondents
In first few days at home	22	5
Halfway through stay	16	9
Towards end of stay	24	17
No particular time	<u>23</u>	<u>19</u>
	85	50

N.B.: Differences in totals compared with Table 5.4 occur where respondents checked more than one category.

The causes of arguments given by respondents again suggest that it is indeed the wives who are primarily responsible for "adjusting" (Table 5.6). As one woman wrote:

TABLE 5.6

## Causes of Misunderstandings and Arguments

	Female Respondents <sup>1</sup>	Male Respondents <sup>2</sup>
Him adjusting to home	14	2
Children	13	1
Nothing specific	12	20
Him wasting money	6	10
Drinking	6	1
Things that need to be done*	5	2
Bills*	4	0
His male friends*	3	2
Other	14	1

$\chi^2 = 32.1$       D.F. = 6  
Significant difference at  $p = .001$

N.B.: \*Indicates categories combined.

1. n = 75.
2. n = 40.

I find it hard to cope with him at times in the month that he is home. It's a big change. He has just spent a full month doing his own thing with 14 men. Then he comes home for 30 days and he has to spend time with three kids and a wife. We have to change our lifestyle every month.

A majority of women reported that "him adjusting to home" was the main cause of difficulty, whereas most men could not, or were unwilling to, pinpoint anything in particular.

Most women interviewed seemed to see it as their duty to provide emotional support to their men when onshore and offshore. They perceived offshore work as hard and dangerous; even in an interview where the woman had forcefully expressed her own difficulties in dealing with an intermittent spouse, she nonetheless expressed the view that it was "harder for him because he had to go away and leave the family..." Women's perceptions of men's problems were on the whole clearer than the men's perceptions of the problems of women. A particularly marked example of this occurred in

an interview with a woman who was in full-time employment and who felt resentful that for her partner coming home was a change and a break. As she put it, "I'm here day, after day, after day...it's new for him, he gets a break." She thought it would help if she could take a couple of days off work as soon as he came home, but took consolation that his arrival day (Thursday) meant, "Only one more day to get through 'til the weekend."

Women find that they must work out how to deal with what for some is two separate lives. To what extent should they either "carry on" - seeing friends, going out, working - or they put their lives "on hold" when the man is absent? Some, from experience, are reluctant even under very adverse situations to let their partners know about difficulties during the period while they are offshore. As one woman wrote:

Things which happen at home with children or whatever if they have been really sick, the men know nothing of it until they come home, and then everything is over so he doesn't know what you really went through.

Another woman faced repeated hospital treatment alone and had found her anxieties and problems increased by the fact that her husband had been penalized for those occasions when he had taken extra time off work.

Certainly, more women than men found offshore work more disruptive than other jobs (Table 4.28). In particular, the absence of their partner posed problems with respect to (a) social life, (b) parenting, and (c) work routines, whether paid or unpaid.

### **3.4 Social Life**

As Table 5.7 shows, women are more likely to visit relatives and friends, entertain at home, go dancing or go to the movies, clubs and bars when their partners are onshore than when he is offshore. When the man is offshore, individual activities, especially those usually confined to the home - TV watching, reading, household work - show increased frequencies. Most women would never visit a bar alone or even entertain at home without their husbands being there, while few women indicate any frequent involvement in organized social activities with other women such as bingo or "going out with the girls."

Many women feel that they cannot attend social events without their partners. Accordingly, the greater the dependency on him for social life, the greater the problems

TABLE 5.7

## Activities Often Engaged In: Female Respondents

	While Partner is Offshore	While Partner is Onshore
Church	34	28
Clubs/bars*	1	7
Bingo, Darts, Cards	5	9
Visiting relatives & friends (alone)	59	23
Visiting relatives & friends (with husband)	Not Applicable	69
Entertaining at home	8	22
TV/reading/sewing/knitting	102	70
Household work	125	111
Sports/driving/skidoing	18	23
Dancing/movies	3	15
Oil related clubs/societies*	1	2
Outings with children	53	57
Going out with the girls*	4	1

$\chi^2 = 38.1$       D.F. = 9  
Significant difference at  $p = .001$

N.B.: \*Indicates combined category

experienced by the woman. Several women depended entirely on their partners for their social life and therefore experienced considerable loneliness during their absence. Women who cannot drive or who have young children may find themselves particularly tied to the home for practical as well as psychological reasons. One woman's children were unable to participate in scouts or other activities because she could not drive. Nonetheless, some women do manage to carry on with church and other social activities while the husband is gone.

Most women seem to rely heavily on relatives for emotional and practical support during the period when their partners were absent. From the interviews, it seems more are likely to visit relatives than friends. Of questionnaire respondents, 68% will sometimes get a relative (often a niece or mother) to stay overnight with them (Table 5.8) and a small minority will go and stay overnight with family or friends (Table 5.9). However, in the case of one woman

TABLE 5.8

How Often do Members of your Family or Friends Stay Overnight with you when your partner is Working Offshore?

	Female Respondents (%)	
Often	15	(10.2)
Occasionally	85	(57.8)
Never	<u>47</u>	<u>(32.0)</u>
	147	(100.0)

TABLE 5.9

How Often do you Stay Overnight with Family or Friends While your Partner is Working Offshore?

	Female Respondents (%)	
Often	5	(3.4)
Occasionally	60	(41.1)
Never	<u>81</u>	<u>(55.5)</u>
	146	(100.0)

interviewed, she had to add the task of calming her mother-in-law's fears about her husband's safety to her own worries and chores.

In terms of general community reactions, three of the women interviewed stressed the amount of jealousy among neighbours over the perceived wealth of oil workers. In addition, one believed that her friends felt resentful about the fact that she saw less of them when her husband returned, and another respondent to the questionnaire felt quite simply that her friends just did not understand the problems raised by her partner's intermittent absence.

### 3.5 Parenting

On the issue of dealing with the children (Table 5.10), 32% of the mothers responding experienced difficulties while the spouse was away, with the main problem being a general one of the children being "more difficult to handle."

TABLE 5.10

Are your Children More Difficult to Cope with  
When your Partner is at Home or When he is Away?

	Female Respondents (%)	
More difficult when away	38	(31.7)
More difficult when at home	11	(9.7)
No change	<u>71</u>	<u>(59.2)</u>
	120	(100.0)
Types of Difficulty:		
Children difficult to handle		13
No breaks for mother		9
Children miss father		9
Children think can get away with things		9
Father lets children off		6
Other		14

That life goes on much as before for most respondents is further illustrated by the fact that 73% of mothers reported that their children gave neither more nor less help with household chores while the partner was away (Table 5.11),

TABLE 5.11

Do your Children Help More with Household Chores  
When your Partner is at Home or When he is Away?

	Female Respondents (%)	
More help when he is away	23	(20.7)
More help when he is at home	7	(6.3)
No change	<u>81</u>	<u>(73.0)</u>
	111	(100.0)

though for many, with younger children, the question may not be relevant.

Children may, however, play a very positive role in the adjustment process. Three women stressed that they took great solace from their children during their husbands' periods offshore, and two childless women felt that children would have helped them to cope better. One wrote, "Because I have no children living with me, time is sometimes long after I get off work. So I must find some hobby to get interested in."

It was reported in the personal interviews that older children could more easily articulate unhappiness about their father's departure, which both parents, but especially the fathers (see Section 2.0) tended to find upsetting. One woman expressed the fear that children would grow apart from their father, as did one man in answer to the questionnaire. Another woman also felt that younger children were afraid of their father, as they would be of a stranger, when he returned, and another said in an interview that, "My children and their father are growing apart from each other since he's been working offshore." Mothers found problems in handling both their own tension and their children's anxieties at partings and mentioned that they experienced a few days' difficulty in dealing with children after the fathers left. One male questionnaire respondent mentioned the problem of discipline and the tendency of men to be too "soft" while at home, but this did not appear to be a major problem.

Much more problematic for most parents was the issue of fathers missing important events in the children's lives like birthdays and particularly Christmas (Table 5.12).

TABLE 5.12

Does Offshore Work Prevent Involvement in Important Events in your Children's Lives?

	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
Often	49	(39.8)	40	(46.5)
Sometimes	67	(54.5)	42	(48.8)
Almost never	<u>7</u>	<u>(5.7)</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>(4.6)</u>
	123	(100.0)	86	(100.0)

One father had been home for only one of the last six Christmases; another had missed the last four, and had therefore never spent a Christmas with his four year old child. Many women found events such as confirmations difficult to attend alone, although while one woman felt unable to attend her daughter's graduation alone another fiercely asserted her right to attend the father/son banquet for her son's sports team.

Some women referred to themselves as "single parents" or "widows" for the period of their husbands' absence. In terms of the community's reactions, the latter would seem to be more accurate. Few women suffered any stigma as a result of their husbands' absence (see p. 78) and most seem to be able to count on a fair amount of kin and neighbour support. Among the women, 86% reported that they would turn to a relative for help if they were sick (Table 5.13). If depressed, 48% would turn to a relative and 49% to a neighbour or friend (Table 5.14). Professional help was

TABLE 5.13

If you Were Ill While your Partner was Offshore, Who Would you Most Likely Turn to for Help with Household Tasks?

	Female Respondents	(%)
Relative	126	(85.7)
Neighbour or friend	19	(12.9)
Other	2	(1.4)
	147	(100.0)

TABLE 5.14

If you were Depressed While your Partner was Offshore, Who Would you Most Likely Turn to for Help?

	Female Respondents	(%)
Relative	69	(47.9)
Neighbour or friend	71	(49.3)
Clergyman, doctor, professional	4	(2.8)
Other	0	(0.0)
	144	(100.0)



considered to be of negligible importance in the latter situation.

Kin and neighbours are the mainstay of women's contacts while husbands were away and were important in helping deal with children. While the vast majority of women knew some other offshore wives (Table 5.15), only 30%

TABLE 5.15

Number Of Other Offshore Workers Wives Known

	Female Respondents	(%)
0	12	(8.2)
1 - 5	66	(44.9)
> 5	<u>69</u>	<u>(46.9)</u>
	147	(100.0)

considered their support to be either quite or very important (Table 5.16). However, interviews with two women who were living in communities where they had no kin and few friends showed that in such cases contacts with other offshore workers' wives could be very important. While there was no great enthusiasm for a formal support network among the women interviewed, most felt that it would be necessary for women

TABLE 5.16

Importance of Other Offshore Workers' Wives in Providing Practical and Emotional Support

	Female Respondents	(%)
Not at all important	47	(35.9)
Not very important	45	(34.3)
Quite important	29	(22.1)
Very important	<u>10</u>	<u>(7.6)</u>
	131	(100.0)

without family support, and one husband thought such a network important for wives. An important informal network does appear to exist among some supply boat men's wives. One outport woman interviewed spoke of a telephone tree network, by which news received in a phone call from one husband was communicated to the other crew's wives. Another woman living in St. John's acted as an informal source of information about boat arrivals and her house provided a base for other crew members families while awaiting the arrival of the boat or for social activities during shore leave.

### 3.6 Work Routines

Those 67% of women who were full-time housewives had to cope with household maintenance, budgeting, etc. while their husbands were away and some obviously found that the responsibility weighed heavily. Other women enjoyed the independence they had when their husbands were away (although a small majority of men and women felt that offshore work stopped them being together when important decisions had to be made [Table 4.33]) and would obviously have assumed the responsibility for the household regardless of the nature of their husband's work. For them problems arose only when husbands were unwilling to assist in babysitting and household chores when onshore in order to "give the wives a break." Fifteen percent of responses to the question about the types of difficulty in dealing with the children focussed on the problem of getting a break from caring for them (Table 5.10). Several women in fact advised their imaginary friend to make sure that they hired a babysitter for a few hours each week while their husbands were offshore to help solve this problem. This must be a particularly severe difficulty for those very few women in our sample whose husbands do not spend considerable time with the children when onshore, for it is clear that as many women go on outings with children when the husband is onshore as when he is offshore (Table 5.7). Two respondents to the questionnaire stated the problem forcefully, "When my husband is onshore I want a break, but he wants it too," and "The man's view is that his time onshore is vacation time..." This woman felt that this was particularly unreasonable when offshore work patterns caused her great disruption in her own schedule.

The 33% of women who worked for wages were glad to do so while their partners were away, but experienced difficulties in dealing with the family situation when they returned. The most successful in this respect was a woman who worked on an "as needed" basis who could, if necessary, refuse work when her husband was onshore, but few others had this flexibility. As we have seen, one woman would have liked to have been able to take two days off when her husband

came home but was unable to do so. Another woman, who enjoyed her work and did not want to give it up, was experiencing considerable tension in her marriage because her husband resented having to do housework and drive the children when he was onshore. All the women interviewed who worked outside the home experienced some tension when their husbands were onshore. One woman who was attending university full-time commented that a lot went on in her student life during a month and it was hard to catch up when her husband returned offshore. Undoubtedly women who lead active lives while their husbands are away may find it more difficult than those who put their lives "on hold" to reintegrate their husbands into their daily lives.

#### 4.0 THE COUPLE

Offshore work patterns also require adjustment on the part of the couple, with respect to the sexual division of labour, power, and decision making within the marriage. It is clear that couples require enhanced awareness of each other's reactions to offshore work patterns and the needs arising from them, while communication between partners both when the man is onshore and offshore was seen by many to be of major importance. Each of these issues is discussed below.

#### 4.1 Sexual Division of Labour

In the majority of cases, men's dependence on the family has been seen to increase as a result of offshore work, but while some do play a more active part in domestic affairs, most are reluctant to assume any greater responsibility for household management. They do interact with children, but the key phrase in most of the interviews is their willingness to "help out" with particular household tasks. Respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that they shared household tasks more equally as a result of offshore work (Table 5.17), and

TABLE 5.17

"Offshore Work Means that we Share Tasks in the Home More Equally."

	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
Yes	61	(42.1)	51	(52.6)
No	<u>84</u>	<u>(57.9)</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>(47.4)</u>
	145	(100.0)	97	(100.0)

whether they agreed or disagreed with the general statement that male offshore workers were more likely to help with housework (Table 5.18). In both cases most men agreed. The women were less positive in response to both questions, with a slim majority disagreeing with the former statement.

TABLE 5.18

"Since they are at Home for Long Periods, Men who Work Offshore are More Likely to Help with the Housework."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Female Respondents	13	60	27	41	7
Male Respondents	9	49	25	15	1

Male activity patterns onshore reported in the questionnaire showed that only 29% did housework often (Table 5.19) and that 60% engaged in activities outside the home while onshore (Table 5.20). There are some men who, in the words of one woman interviewed, "don't know what a household chore is." Interestingly, while 75% of men and 67% of the women disagreed or strongly disagreed with the general statement that "the time onshore is a holiday for the man, but just more work for the woman" (Table 5.21), 15% of men and 20% of women agreed or strongly agreed. While a minority view, this last result undoubtedly reflects the state of affairs in some households and is likely to be responsible for the answers from those women who complain of not getting a break when their husbands come home.

At the other extreme, some women felt that their traditional role as carers and nurturers was undermined by their partners' absence. Two of those interviewed resented the husbands praise for the food on the rig and had sought to reassert themselves by cooking all the things their men most liked on their return. One of these women also resented her husband interfering in the kitchen, which she regarded as her domain, while he was onshore, and described herself "as a bit poisoned" when he came home and started to rearrange things there.

TABLE 5.19

## Onshore Activities Often Engaged In

	Female Respondents <sup>1</sup>	Male Respondents <sup>2</sup>
Church	28	13
Clubs/bars	7	8
Bingo, darts, cards	9	4
Visiting relatives and friends (without/with partner)	23/69	4/26
Entertaining at home	22	22
TV/reading/sewing/knitting	70	38
Household work	111	28
Sports/driving/skidooring	23	33
Dancing/movies	15	9
Oil related clubs/societies*	2	3
Outings with children/family	57	19
Going out with the girls/boys*	1	2

$\chi^2 = 47.6$       D.F. = 11  
Significant difference at  $p = .001$

N.B.: \*Indicates combined categories.

1. n = 146.

2. n = 98.

TABLE 5.20

## Existence of Onshore Activities which Take the Male out of the Home on a Regular Basis.

	Male Respondents	(%)
Yes	58	(59.8)
No	<u>39</u>	<u>(40.2)</u>
	97	(100.0)

TABLE 5.21

"The Time Onshore is a Holiday for the Man, but Just More Work for the Woman."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Female Respondents	12	17	20	66	33	148
Male Respondents	3	12	10	46	28	99

#### 4.2 Power and Decision-Making

A large majority of women (84%) felt that they had developed a greater sense of independence as a result of their partners working offshore (Table 4.32). This is undoubtedly fundamental to coping with the offshore work pattern, and husbands of women who prove unable to do this to some degree are likely to leave the industry or divorce/separate, though we have no data to indicate the prevalence of this. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the general statement "when the man is an offshore worker it is the woman who takes over," 59% of women and 63% of men agreed or strongly agreed (Table 4.34). The interviews indicated that the couples in our sample were, with one exception, in what might be termed "traditional" marriages with "traditional" expectations as to roles and responsibilities. Thus the existence of both the need and the possibility of greater female independence during the partner's time offshore requires adjustment on both sides.

It is clear that men think about the issue of what their wives do when they are away. Some men said that they did not see why their wives should not go out and many advised their imaginary friends to make sure their wives could cope alone, pay bills, and see friends. On the other hand, one woman respondent said that some men expected wives to stay at home and used the fact that they might telephone as an excuse. If a call did come through and the wife was not at home for whatever reason, she then felt guilty. Some men and women raised the possibility of sexual infidelity, also saying, inevitably, that it was not something that worried them personally.

Money management is a key item to be sorted out in the relationship, not least because all are agreed that money is perhaps the chief benefit of offshore work. Most women have to deal with money while the man is away, although some will leave even this until his return. A majority of those interviewed turn the business of bill paying back to the husband when he is onshore. Indeed, the majority of men and women agreed that there was no confusion as to who made the decisions as a result of offshore work (Table 4.5). Nevertheless, while research has shown that there is a wide variety of methods of managing the family economy, very rarely do the partners of workers in other occupations have to reverse responsibilities on such a regular basis, and some tensions may result. One male respondent raised the issue of women spending the husband's hard earned money while he was away, while a female respondent warned her imaginary friend about men's drinking binges while onshore that ate up savings.

While only 14% of men and 15% of women agreed or strongly agreed with the general statement that, "when onshore, offshore workers are more into drink and drugs than other workers" (Table 5.22), the question of drinking and other perceived forms of money wasting may be much more significant than was revealed by this question. In fact, 20% of the causes of arguments reported by females are attributed to "drinking," "him wasting money," and "his male friends," while 35% of male responses are covered by these categories, of which most (25%) are accounted for by "him wasting money."

TABLE 5.22

"When Onshore, Offshore Workers are More into Drink and Drugs than other Workers."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Female Respondents	7	15	17	56	53
Male Respondents	5	9	25	27	33

Eleven percent of women and 12% of men also went so far as to agree or strongly agree with the general statement that "Men who work offshore can be prone to violent outbursts during their time in the home" (Table 5.23). However, this

is a notoriously difficult area to investigate and no further evidence on this issue was elicited either in the open-ended questions on the questionnaire or in the interviews.

TABLE 5.23

"Men who Work Offshore can be Prone to Violent Outbursts During their Time in the Home."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Female Respondents	2	14	21	51	59
Male Respondents	4	8	18	35	33

Both men and women experience difficulty in adjusting to female independence. One man interviewed continued to keep control of particular jobs, for example, fixing the car, forbidding his wife to get repairs done while he was away and thus causing her considerable inconvenience. Some women also expressed the difficulty they faced in adjusting to their own greater sense of independence. The majority undoubtedly felt lonely and bereft, but one wrote the following advice to her imaginary friend:

My advice would be to ask her husband to go to school if possible and train himself for some kind of job on land. They would be together as a family at all times and they wouldn't miss what they haven't got. The only reason for being offshore is the income. But as the years pass I feel that the time will come when I will be so independent that I won't ever want my husband to come home. Right now every time he comes home it upsets everything that I have organized and planned for that month...

Another began with forthright advice to tell the man going offshore that "his time off is not party time" and to get a babysitter for a few hours twice a week to give herself a break, "most of all GET INDEPENDENT - but not," she added, "separate from your husband." There are some interesting messages here about the balance of relationships within a marriage where one of the partners works offshore.



### 4.3 Communications

Offshore work is different both in terms of the nature and place of work, and in terms of the family adjustments it requires. Consequently these need to be "worked out" by the couples involved. Women have no experience and little concept of offshore work, and it is therefore difficult for them to understand the problems of the men's work. Few of those interviewed had been on a rig, and even though all but two of 31 interviewed would like to do so (either for the first time or for a second visit), the work and the environment remain alien to them. One man explained the difficulty in this way:

You can't really explain it (what it's like to work offshore)...(they ask) what's the seas like? The rig was giving out 80-90 knot seas, 'What's that like?' They can't picture it. I told some of them 'The Royal Trust building is 80 foot high - go downtown outside the Royal Trust building, and that's an 80 foot sea. But they just can't picture it - they can't imagine something like that, right?

Some women would like to know more about their partner's work and two expressed resentment that they only learned more about it when their husbands were talking to others. But it is possible that the difficulties in articulating the nature of life on the rig are such that men give up the effort to explain. A few women do not want to know any more about work on the rig, largely for fear of increasing their own anxieties. Many others appear not to talk about work to their husbands, for as one put it, "when he comes off the rig, I figure he just wants to leave it behind him." It appears that most men do indeed wish to do just that (see Section 2.0). Another common experience seems to be that talking about the anxiety does not make it go away, "At first we'd talk about it, but it doesn't really change things or make any difference. It's better just to tell each other that we love and think about each other and not to let anything interfere." This may nevertheless impose greater strains on women, who seem to want to talk more about safety than men do (see Section 3.1).

As has been seen, men often do not want to face domestic problems and responsibilities when they return home and it can be difficult for couples to work out their respective needs. One woman wrote:

It is difficult for (us) to work out the problems that we have like any couple. When he is in we don't want to go into problems.

But then if we start, it seems it never can be solved. Dialogue is cut because he goes away. Everything has to be started all over again, everytime he comes back.

Women who wrote to their husbands were conscious that if they indulged their own feelings after parting and wrote a gloomy letter, it might well not arrive until the middle or towards the end of the husband's hitch offshore and might then cause him to worry, possibly adversely affecting his safety.

Coming to terms with expressing feelings and resolving difficulties as a couple is difficult and this makes communication during the period while the partner is offshore especially important. It would seem to be that women more commonly write more letters, while men are more likely to phone. In the majority of cases this would seem to be for logistical reasons and because the men fear that a call from home means bad news. Nearly all the women expressed some anxiety about safety and very few were happy with the communications systems provided by companies. Most felt that the mail service was inadequate. Fifty percent of women and 37% of men wrote to their partners, with two letters per hitch the most common pattern (Table 5.24).

TABLE 5.24

Frequency of Writing to Partner per Offshore Hitch

Frequency	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
0	75	(50.3)	63	(62.4)
1	14	(9.4)	9	(8.9)
2	23	(15.4)	11	(10.9)
3	18	(12.1)	9	(8.9)
4	5	(3.4)	5	(5.0)
5	5	(3.4)	4	(4.0)
>5	9	(6.0)	0	(0.0)
	149	(100.0)	101	(100.0)

Letters sent the previous hitch sometimes met the husband coming offshore, and most felt that they could not rely on mail delivery. One woman advised her imaginary friend that she should write a few lines each night "like a conversation," but for many the poor mail service would render such an effort fruitless. Two of the couples interviewed reported

that they could only "talk" about the problems of the job in letters, which made the unreliable mails all the more serious.

In the case of telephone communication, one third of all women, and 39% of men, stated that they did not communicate with their partners by phone at all. For those who did, the typical number of calls per hitch for women was 1, while for men it was 2 (Table 5.25). Table 5.26 indicates the degree of difficulty associated with talking to the partner offshore. Unfortunately, the question posed was subsequently seen as ambiguous. It was posed as, "How difficult is it for you to talk to your partner while he is/you are offshore?" This was intended to address the mechanical difficulties in respect to reaching the partner, being able to hear him/her, etc. The ambiguity arose over the question of "difficulty," which may have been interpreted by some as the difficulty of discussing personal problems when there may be little or no guarantee of privacy. The responses to the question must therefore be interpreted cautiously.

TABLE 5.25

Frequency of Talking to Partner per Offshore Hitch

Frequency	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
0	53	(35.8)	39	(39.4)
1	24	(16.2)	14	(14.1)
2	20	(13.5)	16	(16.2)
3	21	(14.2)	7	(7.1)
4	11	(7.4)	12	(12.1)
5	6	(4.1)	1	(1.0)
>5	<u>13</u>	<u>(8.7)</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>(10.1)</u>
	148	(100.0)	99	(100.0)

In fact, women are likely to find it more difficult to contact their husbands by phone as for those on the rigs the typical pattern is for the women to call the contractor's office in St. John's, who then contacts the rig, where upon the radio operator contacts the husband's supervisor, who in turn relays the message to the husband. It comes as no surprise then to find that husband's prefer their wives not to call, and that a typical male reaction if requested to call home is one of, "What's wrong then"?

TABLE 5.26

## Difficulty of Talking when Partner is Offshore

	Female Respondents	(%)	Male Respondents	(%)
Very difficult	57	(38.2)	21	(21.4)
Somewhat difficult	60	(40.3)	36	(36.7)
Not at all difficult	<u>32</u>	<u>(21.5)</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>(41.8)</u>
	149	(100.0)	98	(100.0)
$\chi^2 = 13.8$ D.F. = 2 Significant difference at $p = .01$				

While supply boat workers seem to experience significantly less difficulty in telephoning than rig workers (Table 5.27),<sup>1</sup> the frequency with which the problem of the mechanical difficulties of contact and the costs associated with telephone communications was raised in the open-ended questions on the questionnaire and in the interviews indicated that this is a serious issue for many of the workers and their partners.

Telephone systems were widely considered to be grossly inadequate. On the rigs it may be typical to have three types of system. MARISAT, which is a satellite communications system currently routed from the rig via the satellite to a receiving station in Virginia or the United Kingdom and then via the normal telephone system to the

1. It may be that visits to port enable couples to communicate via the normal telephone system or even see each other, hence communications becomes less of an issue. Alternatively, the greater experience in the job and the greater degree of isolation of the supply vessels than the rigs with respect to communications may mean that supply boat workers and their families accept the difficulties of land-sea communication better than the "landsmen" rig workers and as a consequence tolerate the problem rather better.

TABLE 5.27

## Difficulty of Talking when Partner is Offshore, by Type of Offshore Employment

	Male Respondents	
	Rig	Supply Vessel
Very difficult	17	4
Somewhat difficult	18	18
Not at all difficult	11	30

$\chi^2$  male = 16.5      D.F. = 2  
 Significant difference at  $p = .001$

destination. Not all rigs give permission for the men to use the system and even when they do, it is very expensive. As one woman said, "My husband has tried several times to reach me ship-to-shore and we couldn't understand what the other was saying...he called me on my birthday by Marisat. We talked for 5 minutes exactly and it cost us \$60. An expensive gift for 5 minutes of happiness on your birthday." Discussions with contractor personnel indicate that at the time of writing the rate had increased from the above \$12.50 per minute to \$17 per minute. Not all rigs have the same type of communications systems, and in many cases the quality of the link leaves much to be desired. The advantage of the MARISAT system is its privacy unlike the alternatives which are VHF or ship-to-shore radio systems. Using these systems, rig and supply boat respondents reported that the quality of the link often leaves much to be desired. It is often difficult to hear or understand the other person, and parts of the conversation may be lost altogether if reception fades. In addition, privacy may be limited, as the radio operator may be in the same room during the conversation, or other operators may be able to listen in.

Many also reported great difficulty getting reliable information on hitch changes. One woman interviewed had three options for getting information about arrival times: the heliport tape, the rig contractor's office, and the dispatcher in this same office who happened to be helpful. One one day in late December 1985 she called and the tape, supposedly valid to 2:15 p.m., said the helicopter could not land on the rig. At 3:30 p.m. she got through to the office and was told that the helicopter had landed and would arrive back in St. John's in 15 minutes. As the flight from the rig to the heliport takes about 1 1/2 hours, plus

some time for loading personnel and refuelling, the recording must have been considerably out of date. Since it takes her 25 minutes to drive to the heliport, her husband had been waiting some time when she arrived.

Another woman told of going into St. John's at 10:00 a.m. (when her husband was due) and waiting until 5:30 p.m. before being told that he would not arrive until 11:00 a.m. the next day. She drove home and came back the next day, and waited until 7:00 p.m. before he eventually arrived. As one man interviewed put it, it should be "a common courtesy" to provide accurate information to families about shift changes. For outport families in particular, coming in to meet a husband and father is a special event involving driving a considerable distance. The children's disappointment if the father does not arrive is great. One woman expressed her anger at the lack of reliable information available in these terms:

To me the people working there (the heliport) are a bunch of pigs and don't really know how much it means to the wives and children to know what's going on. I think there should be a phone on the rigs. A call from your husband once a week would mean an awful lot. I don't think that would be too much to ask.

Some women also wanted better accommodations provided at the heliport, although one man interviewed did not agree with his wife on this, taking the view that it was the men who were doing the job and facilities for women and children were unnecessary. In general, there was a sense that receiving or relaying accurate information about arrival and departure times was too heavily dependent upon informal practices - knowing and being friendly with "the person in the office" and so on - rather than relying on established information systems and procedures.

Almost without exception, men and women were agreed on the need for better communications offshore to help bridge the gap between home and work, but there is no doubt that this issue was more a source of tension for rig workers and their partners. As discussed earlier, supply boat workers are sometimes in port during the four week period away thus enabling men to call if not visit with their families.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

From examination of individual, couple and family reactions to the pattern of offshore work, along with subsequent accommodations and "coping" strategies, it is clear that Newfoundland oil families have faced a double

problem of adjustment to a particular way of life. In the first place, as we have noted, there are the difficulties of adjustment to an industry which is relatively new to the Province and in the second there are the difficulties of adjusting to spousal intermittence. Although intermittent spouse absence is clearly a traditional feature of fishing and seafaring families, it is new to many of the oil families. Also, contrasting reactions of rig and supply boat workers show that there are aspects of the culture of the oil industry which are relatively new or unfamiliar in the Newfoundland setting. The establishment of a repertoire of responses to spousal absence in the oil industry has thus been undertaken by a group of families who, in general, have had little previous experience of either spousal intermittence or oil employment itself. Their reactions and adjustments have therefore emerged *ab initio*, with little in the way of role models or examples of good practice. Given this dual frontier of difficulties, the reactions and adjustments as revealed by the families in our study demonstrate a considerable degree of resilience, innovation and flexibility.

It is also clear, however, that the primary burden of adjustment falls upon the women, rather than the men. Insofar as successful adaptations to offshore employment involve families in the establishment of different forms of organization, power, authority and routine, then it is the women, rather than the men, who are working on the frontiers of innovation. We have suggested that offshore oil employment increases the men's dependence on the family; in so doing it also amplifies the burden of care which falls upon the female partner. Both questionnaires and interviews place great emphasis, for example, on the tiredness of the men when they come onshore. Over the first few days the family regime must revolve around him. There are, of course, good reasons why the man will need care and support at this stage. The corollaries, however, are the needs of spouse and children; it would seem that at this point, these must take a back seat. Whilst this phenomenon is illustrated in the short term by the example of post-reunion adjustments, there is a sense in which it forms the under-tow of life in oil families. Of course, it may be argued that there is no difference here from many other families containing male "breadwinners." Our data suggest, however, that in oil families where the husband/father is employed offshore, these tendencies are exaggerated.

The main adjustment that men make is to the nature of offshore work itself. The questionnaire and the interviews reveal how preoccupied men are with job-related issues and the extent to which they depend on the smooth running of home and family life to provide a secure haven at the end of their hitch offshore. Their reactions to offshore work are

determined almost entirely by their attitude towards the work itself. While most are extremely family oriented, very few seem willing or able to take on additional responsibilities to overcome the domestic strains that may result from their work.

Women make a variety of adjustments to the fact of intermittent husband absence, and to the needs of the spouse that result from this pattern. Women accept it as their "duty" to provide emotional support to their partners, but the nature of the adjustment involved may help to explain why more women than men say that they cannot get used to the pattern of offshore work.

The majority of women seem to lead two separate lives: tending to stay at home and taking on all the responsibility of managing the home and the family economy while the husband is away, and going out more socially and passing back traditionally "male" domestic tasks (such as money management) to him when he returns. The more dependent the woman is on her husband for social life and domestic decision-making and management, the more at a loss she is likely to be while the partner is away. Such women are more likely to experience loneliness and depression while their partners are offshore, and to be particularly reliant on the support of relatives. These are the women who chose to characterize themselves as ANNs (see Chapter IV). A small minority of these women revealed in the course of the interview that they cope only by "shutting out" the nature and conditions of their husbands' jobs, seeking no information about them, about offshore weather conditions, or even about means of communicating with their husbands while he is offshore, for fear of increasing their anxieties.

However, some women manage to lead two separate lives and enjoy both. As one woman interviewed put it, "I enjoy my freedom and I enjoy having him home too." Such women undoubtedly identified with "MARY" in the vignettes. A minority appear to attempt to "carry on" with their own lives, whether in terms of social activities or paid work. At the extreme, one woman interviewed, who worked full-time, did not bother to mark partings and reunions, commenting "it's only work." Such women are the most independent, but this in and of itself does not guarantee an absence of problems in getting used to offshore work patterns. Women engaged in paid employment experience particular difficulty reintegrating their spouses into their lives at 14, 21, or 30 day intervals.

In fact, while the more recent literature on spousal intermittence suggests that women should become more independent, it is clear from the present study that this is



an overly simplistic and inadequate response. This is not to suggest that for many women assuming a greater degree of independence would not help, but rather that this is only one element in the pattern of adjustment, the importance of which is likely to vary greatly between women and which needs to be complemented by similarly appropriate adjustments on the part of the male as an individual, the male and female as a pair, and the industry as the employer.

It is important to reiterate that many respondents felt that offshore work had contributed positively in some important respects to their family life. Most of those interviewed felt that their family relationships were closer as a result of offshore work, both between husband and wife, and between parents and children. Two referred to the "quality time" they could spend with their children, which many considered to be more than if the husband had worked in a nine-to-five job, and many, in their advice to their imaginary friends, referred to the benefits of having a long period at home. Furthermore, the whole sequence of partings and reunions meant that relations between husband and wife tended to be more intense than otherwise might have been the case; a feature of the offshore work pattern which has both positive and negative implications for the relationship.

Pressure points - whether they be partings and reunions, parenting, anxiety over safety, communication between couples or the like - are all potentially problematic for offshore families. The recommendations which follow concentrate, therefore, on ways by which these pressures may be alleviated. While separation will always be a characteristic of offshore work and the physical working environment will always be harsh and potentially hostile, much can be done to reduce the polarities between rig life and home life and thereby to ease the adjustment process.

## CHAPTER VI - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is clear from our data that there are considerable levels of positive feeling towards employment offshore and the rewards and family lifestyles which are likely to accompany it. We have referred on several occasions to financial and material factors as the primary reason for employment in the offshore oil industry, particularly in a Province which offers little by way of alternatives. Though some of our respondents claimed that these factors were exaggerated in the eyes of kin and community, it is certainly the case that offshore work enabled most of the families in our study to enjoy a standard of living which they would not probably otherwise have achieved. There were also less tangible rewards which manifested themselves within the arena of marital and family relations. These included the closeness which spouses might experience during the worker's time onshore, the excitement of anticipation of return, the pleasures of reunion. This carried over into parent-child relations, to include children's excitement at their father's return, and the subsequent opportunities for extended contact which existed during the time onshore for going into the woods, trouting, ski-dooing, or just being together.

When we compare the situations of men and women in the sample, however, certain important negative factors begin to emerge. Using a vignette assessment of self-image and a measure of mood change, it can be seen that some women and some men are adapting to the contingencies of offshore work more successfully than others. In general, these within-sex differences are not readily explained by demographic structural variables such as age, length of marriage and age or number of children. Questionnaire responses, strongly supported by interview material, do imply, however, that women are on the whole less satisfied or reconciled to their present situation than men. This appears to be explained by the double burden of adjustment which falls upon them. Such a burden consists first of adjusting to the practical aspects of having an intermittent spouse - the organizational, child care, domestic and other routines which are affected in various ways by the regular cycle of spouse presence and absence. To this must be added the particular factors of the spouse's needs and demands during his period onshore. For many men the transition from the working environment to the home environment is a difficult one but the burden and responsibility for aiding the transition and coping with any problems that arise are viewed primarily as the "duty" of the female.

So what choices do the women have and what patterns emerge? There appear to be three options. Some women seem simply to "carry-on," trying wherever possible to prevent intermittent spouse absence from interfering with their routines and concerns, perhaps with the support of a close friend or relative. A second option is to try to do everything during the period the spouse is away, including all aspects of "his" role which may require attention; many of these women then go "into reverse" on their partners' return - passing back to him the various duties and responsibilities which in their view are rightly and properly his. The third option is to place one's life "on hold," to minimize all activities and concerns during the offshore hitch in order to activate them fully when the spouse is at home. Although our study can say nothing about them there are, of course, two further alternatives for women who are unwilling to tolerate the way of life at all: they might get their partner to quit the job, or quit their partner.

These patterns of adjustment, however, are by no means so straightforward as they might appear at first glance. The woman's internal conflicts cannot be disaggregated from those of her spouse, or from those which may be present within the family as a whole. She may, therefore, be pulled in several directions at once, by forces which vary in strength and persistence. This is not to deny that other members of the family are placed under similar strains, but the evidence suggests that it is the female spouse/mother who is most active in conflict management of various kinds. Of course, this is a feature of wives in many family settings within our culture. We argue here that it is particularly marked and that in consequence, the notion suggested in the literature, that wives, should develop "coping" mechanisms or become more independent is not appropriate. Reactions and adaptations should be seen as family issues and not reduced to the level of individual (i.e. female inadequacy), still less pathology.

Turning to the men, it is possible to identify certain features of their employment experience which highlight the special case of the oil family. Our evidence, as well as the Scottish and Norwegian literature, suggest that the oil industry is different in its effects from other, traditional occupations like seafaring or fishing, which involve intermittent spouse absence. Most particularly our comparisons of rig and supply boat workers bear this out. Employment on an offshore drilling rig appears to create certain unique experiences, producing individual reactions and adjustments. The men who replied to the questionnaires and who took part in the interviews were much pre-occupied with the pressures of their work; they wrote and spoke little of their family lives. When they did, they referred to their

own problems of adjustment, tiredness and irritability on their return. It should, of course, be recognized that for these men the culture of the work-place, combined perhaps with the prevailing norms of the industry as a whole, are likely to enhance their self-image as "breadwinners" doing an important and dangerous job in difficult conditions, believing that those who engage in such work make personal sacrifices and should therefore be accorded certain family indulgences as a result.

To argue for such a distinction between men and women's responses to offshore oil employment is in no sense to descend into stereotype. Our study found little evidence of beleaguered "oil wives" failing to "cope" with the "intermittent husband syndrome" whilst their partners enjoyed all the rewards of a well-paid job with considerable periods of leisure time. In this sense our findings reflect those of Clark et al.'s Scottish study in which couples portrayed themselves as in the main jointly and pragmatically engaged in a relationship wherein offshore employment was seen as a highly instrumental means to the achievement of certain material and financial ends. The men and women who took part in our study for the most part therefore placed their individual and family difficulties within a context which made considerable sense to them, as part of a package containing both costs and benefits which were readily acknowledged, especially by the women. In these areas, where the overlaps between the worlds of work and family are so clearly evident, there is room for the consideration of a variety of recommendations which could lead to an improved set of circumstances both for those who are "visibly," formally and contractually employed, as well as those women in particular who are the "invisible workers" in Newfoundland's offshore oil industry.

## 2.0 AREAS OF DIFFICULTY

Chapters IV and V reveal specific areas of difficulty for offshore workers and their families in respect to both feelings and behaviour. These may be summarized as follows:

### 2.1 Feelings

(i) Partings and reunions: both men and women experience considerable tension and anxiety at the prospect of partings and reunions.

(ii) Mood changes: it appears that predictable patterns of mood changes are endemic to offshore work no matter how experienced the worker and his family are in the industry. Women experience more negative feelings while the

man is offshore, and the "character types" with negative feelings toward offshore work, the "JIMs" and "ANNs," experience much greater mood swings than "MARYs" and "FREDs" who represent those with positive attitudes.

(iii) Safety and danger: all men and women experience feelings of anxiety and fear, both for themselves and for each other, as a result of the nature of the job in the case of men, and of being left to cope alone at home in the case of women.

## 2.2 Behaviour

(i) Sex roles: women must become more independent while the husband is away. However, decisions have to be made as to how far roles relating to money management and domestic work, for example, will be reversed during the period of husband absence and likewise the patterns to be adopted while the man is onshore.

(ii) Male transition between rig and home culture: men tend to treat their homes as "havens" and to avoid confronting family difficulties on their return.

(iii) Female transition from husband absence to husband presence: women react differently. Some attempt to "carry on" with their social activities; others try to do everything, going into reverse on their spouse's return; some put their lives "on hold." Some experience parenting as additionally problematic; some take solace in their children. Most rely heavily on kin for support.

(iv) Communication between partners: this is problematic in a number of respects. All couples perceive that particular aspects of offshore work and the work pattern (danger, the household division of labour, etc.) require accommodation. Some feel that they cannot discuss certain issues, either because of lack of time or, as in the case of safety, because it increases anxiety to do so. Communication between partners is often more difficult after reunion and before parting, as evidenced by the incidence of reported misunderstandings and arguments.

(v) Onshore/offshore communication: communication between partners while the husband is offshore is of special concern, with mail and telephone services reported as poor, and information about arrivals and departures sometimes unreliable.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 Introduction

The research shows that while some people have more negative feelings towards offshore work than others, there are no obvious "at risk" groups. Rather, it would be more accurate to say that people have different degrees of ambivalence towards offshore work. It therefore follows that needs are diverse. However, it is important to note that offshore workers and their families have considerable incentive to remain in the industry and while many expressed negative feelings to the researchers, their criticism of the industry was, in the main, both specific and constructive. It is in this light that a range of recommendations are proposed.

An over-riding feature of our data is the emphasis which they place upon the complex inter-connections between the family and occupational milieu. Both questionnaires and interviews reveal a web of inter-dependency including men, women, children, community and industry. For these reasons we have argued that "family" reactions and adaptations, still less those of individual members, should not be treated as a discrete problem category. The relationship between work and the family should rather be seen inter-actively, whilst also acknowledging that some family members, particularly women, do feel acted upon at times by the circumstances of their partners' employment. Any set of recommendations should therefore take both of these tendencies into account.

A further dimension of this argument concerns the culture of family life of those in the study group. There have been suggestions (see, for example, Gramling 1985) that for a variety of historical, economic and normative reasons, family relations on the context of offshore employment are relatively unproblematic. We feel that such an argument is overly simplistic. It appears that there are unique pressures created by offshore oil employment which are not perhaps taken seriously enough, especially by men. We would contend that good adaptations to offshore oil employment, particularly on the rigs, cannot be made without fundamental changes within the family itself. In other words it is probably unrealistic to expect the "traditional" Newfoundland family to be capable of automatic adjustments from its existing pool of resources to a pattern of employment which is objectively different from anything previously experienced.

The reactions and adaptations which have been identified in this study are not to be seen exclusively in relation to intermittence, but rather in terms of a new

industry with unfamiliar working environments, management styles and value systems. We believe that improving conditions and practices in the work place and levels of job satisfaction would reduce the conflicts which presently exist between home and work. This would also serve the long term interests of the industry.

In light of the above arguments, a number of specific recommendations are proposed. These are grouped under the general headings:

- (i) Information
- (ii) Counselling
- (iii) Communications
- (iv) Work Practices
- (v) Code of Good Practice
- (vi) Work Culture
- (vii) Research.

### 3.2 Information

#### (i) Information Packages

##### Recommendation:

Production and dissemination of targetted information packages for employees and their families which describe the nature of offshore work and its implications for family life.

##### Rationale:

It is clear that many families entering the industry may have little idea of the impact of offshore work on their lives. Offshore work for both males and females takes a lot of "getting used to." For those affected, information about common areas of difficulty may help speed up the adjustment process. It is particularly important to indicate that most problems are general problems, relevant to many offshore workers and their families and to illustrate that the individual is neither the first nor the only one to experience particular feelings or reactions. Information packages may prevent problems in some cases or mitigate them by indicating the shared nature of many such problems. In addition, such information will help reduce individual, and hence also joint stress, by reducing uncertainty about the detailed requirements and implications of offshore work.

Information is particularly important in helping family members, especially men, understand their partners feelings and reactions. The experiences of the oil

industries for families have been described as being different from those of previous employment. The number of families involved will likely grow in the near future with the development and production of offshore oil and gas resources, and it is therefore important that the development of targetted information packages be initiated now.

#### **Implementation:**

The information required should detail the nature of offshore work and its implications for family life for employees and their families. A variety of media might be used with video material as a primary medium supplemented by written booklets and pamphlets and posters. Specific material is required for workers, their spouses and children of different ages. While individual companies many already provide some material to their employees there is a need to develop and standardize the provision of materials for families. Industry rather than company packages are suggested as a means of providing common information and as a way of minimizing development costs.

Offshore workers and their families should be actively involved in the development of these packages. This can be achieved through consultation, but their experience might also be used directly through video interviews with panels of workers and their spouses which would provide an effective means of communicating areas of difficulty and methods of adaptation.

#### **(ii) Helicopter Arrival and Departure Times**

##### **Recommendation:**

Provision of accurate and timely information about worker arrival and departure times of rig workers.

##### **Rationale:**

While logistically difficult, it is highly desirable that accurate and timely information be provided to families about the times of arrival and departure of the rig worker so as to minimize the stress associated with uncertainty. Times of arrival of the worker at the heliport at the end of the hitch are particularly important for rural families in this regard as many families travel in to meet the workers. It appears that workers scheduled for a particular flight may be "bumped" by other employees having higher priority to go to or return from the rig. From the perspective of the "bumped" worker and his family, it is desirable that this practice be minimized. However, it is



inevitable that some delays will still result from bumping, weather conditions, mechanical difficulties, etc., on occasion. If accurate and timely information is not available, families at the heliport may be left not knowing what has happened or when the worker will arrive. Bumping may also result in workers leaving later than expected for the rig at the start of a hitch. If on their arrival they are required to immediately work a full shift, they may be tired at the outset which may have implications for offshore safety.

**Implementation:**

The industry should investigate ways by which bumping can be minimized and to provide information to families about who is on any given flight. Where last minute changes are made, it is desirable that families be directly notified of this. Recognizing that last minute changes may be too late for families to alter their travel plans, information outlining the problem should be provided to offshore workers and their families at the time of hiring.

**(iii) Rig Visits**

**Recommendation:**

Provide opportunities for families to visit rigs while they are in port.

**Rationale:**

Most, though not all, wives expressed a strong interest in visiting the place of work of their partner. While some would prefer to know as little as possible about the job or the work place, which represents one coping strategy, most wives would like to learn more and have a better understanding of offshore work. This is still a new occupational opportunity in Newfoundland and few people can comprehend the scale and complexity of the working environment without visiting a rig. The opportunity that this offers for husbands and wives to share the experience of the work place, though not the work, should not be underestimated as an aid to the adjustment process.

**Implementation:**

Opportunities for rig visits are already offered by some operators. Insofar as it is possible, this practice should be continued and extended. The best opportunities are while the rigs are in port for repair or because of ice conditions.

### 3.3 Counselling

#### (i) Employee and Family Orientation Programmes

##### **Recommendation:**

Provide orientation programmes for all new offshore workers and their families.

##### **Rationale:**

Such orientation programmes for workers as already exist are very favourably described by respondents to our surveys. We believe from these responses that orientation programmes that describe both the nature of the work and its implications for family life represent and are seen by employees as part of "good industry practice." Such programmes serve not only to provide information but foster good employee morale. Through their information components they may also serve to dispel any myths that may be held about offshore work and thereby better prepare the worker and his or her family for what is to come. Orientation programmes may serve to avoid situations such as those where a worker did not know he had to provide his own work gloves and hard hat, or, as in another case, where the worker neglected to make sure his wife had access to his bank account.

##### **Implementation:**

Such orientation programmes as already exist focus largely or entirely on the work itself; these might be expanded, or the remit might be handed to another organization. For example, all offshore workers must pass through the Marine Emergency Duties Certificate programme. A component dealing with worker/orientation might be added to this. In either case, the orientation might consist of talks, videos and/or the provision of written materials, with some of the last directed towards workers' partners and children.

#### (ii) Management Orientation Programmes

##### **Recommendation:**

Provide orientation programmes for managers and supervisors newly arrived in Newfoundland regarding the local working environment, society and culture.

### **Rationale:**

A specific orientation programme for non-Newfoundland managers and supervisors would serve to introduce them to the local society and culture. While in comparison to the 1981 survey (Scarlett and Storey 1981), the present study found far fewer negative comments about the attitudes of non-Newfoundlanders towards Newfoundlanders, a better understanding of the social and economic context within which offshore work is occurring on the part of management and supervisory staff would lead to further improvement in working relationships.

### **Implementation:**

Video and written material allow information to be provided in a non-interactive way. In Norway, seminars have been used effectively to introduce newcomers to the area and to the social, economic and cultural context within which they will be working. Whichever method or methods are used, a standardized system for the industry as a whole might represent the most cost-effective approach.

### **(iii) Counselling Services**

#### **Recommendation:**

Provision of counselling services to workers and their families.

#### **Rationale:**

This study has identified the needs of workers and families with respect to a number of areas of difficulty, and particularly those difficulties associated with partings and reunions, mood swings, anxiety, and so forth. While most appear to deal with such problems themselves, as a family, or with the aid of friends or relatives, professional help may be appropriate for some, and there may on occasion be a need for crisis intervention.

#### **Implementation:**

Two types of counselling service appear relevant:

(a) Onshore - a referral service to which family members and workers can turn for help if necessary. This service would not provide particular specialized forms of counselling directly but, like the Employee Assistance Programmes that at least one company already offers, would provide referrals. It would be essential that offshore

workers and their families know about such an information/crisis line, and have easy access to it. The last requirement would involve a toll-free number for those living outside St. John's.

Such a service should be provided as an addition to the work of an existing organization such as the counselling unit of the Unified Family Court or the Information Referral Service of the Community Services Council. In any case, there would be a requirement that those working for the service receive a thorough orientation about the nature of, and problems which may arise out of, offshore work. Such an orientation should also be provided to other professionals who often engage in formal or informal counselling, e.g. social workers, clergy, doctors, and public health nurses. Short courses or workshops for counsellors which would include, for example, the findings of this study, would aid those who may have to address the needs of offshore families.

(b) Offshore workers should have the opportunity to discuss non-medical (as well as medical) issues and problems with an offshore medic without such discussions being thought to jeopardize their employment prospects. This requires that offshore medics have the confidence of the other workers, be aware of both potential offshore and onshore problems, that they have some counselling skills and the knowledge to make referrals when appropriate. They should receive some training in counselling, including the identification of psychiatric illness and the appropriate action to be taken, a practice which has been adopted in the Norwegian oil industry.

### **3.4 Telecommunications**

#### **(i) Offshore-Onshore Telecommunications Links**

##### **Recommendation:**

Provision of a satisfactory system for offshore-onshore telecommunications for workers and their families.

##### **Rationale:**

Large numbers of rig workers and their families consider the existing system unsatisfactory in terms of any or all of the issues of physical difficulty, cost, and lack of privacy.

MARISAT links between the rig and home provide the best quality link but some contractors severely restrict

access to it, and when they can use it, the costs to workers and their families are very high. For many families, a brief call during each week of the hitch simply to say that all is well may serve to minimize anxiety and, albeit briefly, re-establish contact. For many, this is clearly a very important element in the adjustment/coping process.

Provision of communication time as a fringe benefit for employees is not an uncommon practice. For example, Newfoundland provincial government employees are allowed a certain amount of free call time to their families if they are away on provincial business beyond a certain time. It should be noted that such a practice is also followed by companies operating production platforms in the Norwegian North Sea Sector.

#### **Implementation:**

High quality links such as MARISAT should be available to all. Companies should investigate the possibility of providing free or subsidized call time for all workers on a weekly basis.

Attention also needs to be given to the privacy of the call. Every attempt should be made to maximize privacy, in some cases this may be effected simply by relocating the telephones on the rig.

### **3.5 Work Practices**

#### **(i) Shift Pattern**

##### **Recommendation:**

Consider the adoption of a standard 14 day offshore hitch for rig workers.

##### **Rationale:**

This study shows that rig workers and their partners would prefer shorter shifts than are presently used. While a 7 day on/off is regarded as being too short, there is evidence that 21 days offshore is considered too long. In particular, workers describe their tiredness during the third week which may influence both productivity and safety. While there appears to have been little research on the long term implications of particular work cycles, common practice in the North Sea is for a two week offshore hitch, especially for production workers.

### **Implementation:**

The implications of a change in the work cycle require further study before implementation. From the point of view of the workers and their families, there may be various benefits, as is reflected in the expressed preferences. However these may, to some degree, be counterbalanced by the increased amounts of time spent in travel, especially in the case of those living far from St. John's. In addition, if the "recovery" time workers need upon return home remains the same, it may transpire that there are higher costs associated with more frequent commuting than is currently perceived.

From an industry point of view, the principal impact will be the cost of the increased number of helicopter flights. There may also be increases in administrative costs, while worker productivity may respond positively or negatively.

An evaluation of these costs and benefits should be undertaken. A case study approach might be appropriate, with one or more rigs operating on a 14 day work cycle for a trial period.

### **(ii) Shift Organization**

#### **Recommendation:**

Adopt systems of shift organization to reflect the physical and psychological needs of the workers.

#### **Rationale:**

Some workers have long journeys from their homes to the heliport in St. John's. In some cases they may not leave as scheduled. The flight to the rig lasts approximately two hours and on arrival workers may be required to work a 12-hour shift. Where workers are tired, the likelihood of accidents will increase. Similarly, it seems that the change of shift at mid-hitch can be very disruptive, and may have physical and psychological impacts on the workers and indirectly their families.<sup>1</sup>

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1. For instance, Thiis-Evensen (1953) and Jamal and Jamal (1982) note the negative effects of rotating shifts on workers' physical and mental health.

### **Implementation:**

Consideration should be given to shift organization to minimize physical and psychological stress. In some cases, for example, workers only work a partial shift on their arrival offshore. Where possible, similar practices should be adopted industry-wide. The feasibility and impact of avoiding the mid-hitch shift change should be reviewed.

### **(iii) Safety**

#### **Recommendation:**

Continuing and improved efforts be made to ensure that offshore safety is maximized and is seen to be a high priority of the industry.

#### **Rationale:**

Offshore safety was a recurring theme of concern in the questionnaires and interviews. While some respondents considered that too much emphasis was placed on safety matters on the rig, the majority felt that safety practices were ignored too frequently thereby placing in danger both individuals directly and indirectly concerned. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this matter are the differences in attitudes toward safety practices between rigs.

#### **Implementation:**

Numerous reports, notably the Commission of Enquiry into the Sinking of the Ocean Ranger, have recommended improvements in offshore safety practices. While specific recommendations in this area are beyond the mandate of this study, it is clear that there are considerable variations in attitudes toward safety practices and that ways need to be determined to establish more uniform standards of good practice.

## **3.6 Industry Practices**

### **(i) Code of Good Industrial Practice**

#### **Recommendation:**

That a code of "good industrial practice" be established with respect to employment practices, including the provision of information, counselling, communications and work practices.

### **Rationale:**

It was clear from interviews with workers and industry representatives that there is wide variation in employment practices between different rigs and contractors. This report has shown that such practices are of critical importance to family life adaptations. (The variations may also cause problems in and of themselves, in that workers and their families are caused distress not only because of the specific work practices on a given rig, but also because they know from the example of other rigs that things can be different). While most of these issues have been addressed by specific recommendations, we believe it important that there be an ongoing dialogue among the different contractors and operators, leading to the establishment, and subsequent periodic review, of an industry-wide code of good practice. For example, while some companies provide work orientation programmes, others do not. Workers interviewed consider these programmes very useful and we recommend that they be adopted on an industry-wide basis as part of the general code of good practice. We recognize that technological and other limitations would prevent an immediate or complete conformance to all items of such a code, but it would provide a consensus on, and target for, employment practices.

### **Implementation:**

The code should be developed, established, and reviewed by a committee, the membership of which should include representatives of all major operators and contractors, and other relevant parties. The development of the code should clearly also involve, directly or otherwise, both offshore workers and their families.

## **3.7 Work Culture**

### **(i) Management Awareness of Work Culture Issues**

#### **Recommendation:**

A higher priority be placed on management awareness of the importance of work culture in determining both worker morale and family adaptations to offshore work.

#### **Rationale:**

There has been an increasing realization that work and home life are not simply or easily separated into distinct elements. Socio-technical relationships, whether they be considered in terms of home and work cultures or the offshore work environment alone, are important considerations



that may have significant implications for worker morale, productivity, and safety.

### **Implementation:**

Changes in the work culture can be effected most simply by improvements in the physical and social environments offshore. For example, with the arrival offshore of more modern exploration rigs in recent years, there have been improvements in worker accommodation and recreation facilities. In 1981, for example, few if any rigs had exercise facilities. Now few do not, even if they are not very elaborate. The rig has been described as a "Steel Island," and workers cannot "go home" and forget the work place or their co-workers at the end of a day's shift. As a result, improvements in accommodations and other on-board facilities which serve to reduce tensions generated by the work and the work place are highly desirable. Likewise, other changes which reduce the contrast between home and work may further contribute to a reduction in tensions. For example, increases in the number of women working offshore will make the working environment more like onshore work and social environments and complementary changes of the type noted earlier, including rotation patterns and communication systems, will help to downplay one element of the "dual frontier." Special attention should be given to these considerations during planning for the introduction of production platforms, which will likely be in operation for ten to twenty years.

Other changes in the work culture are much more complex to implement. Many of the changes are associated with management style. Managers and supervisors must recognize the importance of socio-technical relationships, particularly those between the home and the workplace. There is a need to recognize that there is effectively an "invisible work force" onshore providing essential support for the offshore worker. Education of management and supervisory staff in all of these matters may help to minimize worker feelings that they are simply "treated as a number." Management attitudes towards the work and the workers can have significant influence on worker morale, productivity, and safety.

### **3.8 Research**

#### **(i) Long Term Effects of Offshore Work Patterns**

##### **Recommendation:**

A review of the existing literature on the long term physiological effects of current offshore shift and hitch patterns.

**Rationale:**

Little appears to be known about the long term implications of working 12 hour shifts on a 21 day on/off cycle.

**Implementation:**

This review could be part of the investigation of optimal work cycles.

**(ii) Adaptations by Other Oil Workers****Recommendation:**

That a study of single, separated and divorced worker adaptation to offshore employment be undertaken.

**Rationale:**

This present study addressed only about half of the current offshore work force. Little is known about single workers and such a study would complement the present one. In particular, nothing is known about subsets of this group, notably single workers who are divorced or any single-parent families. It has been shown that about 8% of the work force are divorced, compared with a provincial average of 2% (Government of Newfoundland, 1983, 33), but it is not clear whether this is because the nature of the work leads to divorce, or whether there is a "foreign legion effect" whereby divorced and separated individuals are more likely to choose to work offshore.

When reference was made to "offshore cowboys" either explicitly or implicitly, these were single men apparently with different values and aspirations than the married workers considered here. A supplementary study would investigate these differences and provide further insights into the character, attitudes, and adaptive strategies of the offshore work force.

**Implementation:**

A survey instrument now exists which, with relatively minor modification, could be employed in examining this group.

### (iii) Family Adaptations in Other Industries

#### **Recommendation:**

That a similar study of adaptation in other occupational contexts than offshore employment be undertaken for comparative purposes.

#### **Rationale:**

This study has indicated that the adaptations required of offshore employment on the rigs are significantly different from those associated with other types of work, in that it is not just the matter of spousal intermittence that requires adaptation, but also adaptation to the work and work place itself. This is suggested by the comparison between supply boat workers and rig workers. However, only through a formal comparative study of, for example, the trawler fishery, can these differences be specifically identified.

#### **Implementation:**

The research instrument generated by this study could be modified to address workers and their families in, for example, the trawler fishery with the emphasis of the surveys being to explore the differences indicated by this study.

### (iv) Rig Culture

#### **Recommendation:**

That a study be undertaken of the offshore work environment and rig culture.

#### **Rationale:**

As discussed in Section 3.6, the culture of the work environment is important insofar as it may affect morale, productivity, and safety offshore, and family relationships onshore. Little is, however, known about the complex relationships that exist between the work, the workers, and the family.

#### **Implementation:**

A study of this type was previously suggested in an earlier ESRF report (Cleland Dunsmuir et al. 1985, 46-48). To document the relationships noted above, an ethnographic approach might be far more revealing than a survey. Such an approach has been used elsewhere to good effect, as in the case of the study of the Condeep construction experience in Stavanger and the adjustment to and of newcomers to Shetland.

## APPENDIX A

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for this study as per the Environmental Studies Revolving Funds Update, Vol. II(4), pp. 7-8, December 1984, are as follows:

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- A. provide an annotated bibliography of research literature on the family adaptation to the "intermittent spouse syndrome" experienced in various industries and locations; "industries" should include the fishery, the merchant marine, the armed forces, the oil and gas industry and others; "locations" should include marine and land-based, foreign and the far north.
- B. provide a description of the special adaptations of offshore workers' families to rotational scheduling and other aspects of offshore oil and gas work;
- C. identify successful adaptational responses of family members to the intermittent presence and absence in the household of the spouse who is employed in the offshore;
- D. identify social, family and personal service needs which are specific to such families; and
- E. recommend suitable mechanisms through which the needs (identified in D) of offshore oil workers families are, and can be, met.

The study should include the following:

1. an exhaustive review of historical and contemporary research literature on family adaptation to the "intermittent spouse syndrome" as experienced in various industries; and,
2. a primary research program involving families of offshore petroleum industry workers in Newfoundland of sufficient scale to derive empirically based conclusions and recommendations.

## BACKGROUND

Several studies have suggested that the rotational schedule of work for offshore employees presents special adaptational issues for family life (e.g. Steel Island, ESRF Social Issues East Scoping Study). Issues such as potential conflicts over the variable division of authority in the household, alternative parenting strategies for the intermittent spouse household, problems associated with abrupt changes in hours of rest, and mood swings accompanying the departure to, and arrival from, work are thought to present potential disruptive influences on family life.

The purpose of the study, as defined by the objectives, is to document the actual experiences of families as they define the problems presented by offshore employment and to develop solutions to them. What is required is an empirically validated definition of the problem along with systematically derived recommendations to alleviate undue family disruptions resulting from offshore employment.

It is essential that applicants demonstrate their sensitivity and ability to deal with the complexity of family relationships in a research context.

## STATEMENT OF WORK

- Task 1 - Provide an annotated review of relevant literature.
- Task 2 - Develop and implement a research program (including a statistically sound sampling method) to address the issues identified in the objectives of such a scale as to account for variables such as the presence/absence of extended family, the length of offshore experience by the family, previous "intermittent spouse" experience by the family in other occupations, the presence/absence of children, the family size, the levels of education, the participation of the other spouse in the labour force, and other factors considered important in the research.
- Task 3 - Present a report which adequately describes the research and provides recommendations to alleviate disruptive family life influences and to enhance the capability of families to deal effectively with the special experiences they encounter.

APPENDIX B

# Community Resource Services Ltd.

P.O. Box 5936 • St. John's, Newfoundland • Canada • A1C 5X4

---

Dear

As someone with a partner working in the offshore oil industry, you experience a pattern of family life which may become increasingly common in Newfoundland in the future. Others, like the wives of trawlermen, go through periods when their partners are working away from home. However, the regular cycle of offshore commuting makes your family experiences unique. Your experiences and that of other wives in a similar situation, can provide very valuable assistance to the families of future offshore workers.

Community Resource Services Ltd. and the Ocean Ranger Foundation have been asked by the government and oil industry to study how offshore work affects the families of offshore workers in Newfoundland. Does, for example, the pattern of work help or hinder when it comes to raising children? Does it cause problems, or does it benefit relationships between you and your partner? Are "oil families" really any different from other families? Most importantly, what can be done about any family problems that result from offshore work?

We need your help in answering such questions. Your experiences, ideas and suggestions, together with those of others, will be summarized in a report that will go to government, the oil industry, and, very importantly, to the families of present and future offshore workers. In this way you will be able to share your experiences with others in similar situations.

We would emphasize that any information that you provide will be kept in strict confidence. We do not ask for your name or any information that could be traced to you.

We believe that this is a very worthwhile study, and hope that you will agree. Its success, however, depends on your assistance in completing the attached questions and returning them to us as soon as possible. Simply put the completed form in the enclosed envelope and mail it back to us. No postage is required.

We greatly appreciate your help with this study.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Lewis  
Community Resource Services

Cynthia Parsons  
Ocean Ranger Foundation

Enclosures

P.S.: Of course these issues involve both partners. For this reason we will be sending a different survey to your partner in the near future. However, please do not delay in completing the enclosed questions and returning them to us.

---

**1**

How long has your partner worked in the offshore oil industry?  
(Check one box only).

Less than 1 year  
1 or 2 years  
3-5 years  
More than 5 years

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**2**

What is your partner's current pattern of work offshore? (Check one box only).

2 weeks onshore/2 weeks offshore  
3 weeks onshore/3 weeks offshore  
4 weeks onshore/4 weeks offshore  
Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**3**

What type of community do you live in? (Check one box only).

Outport  
Town  
City

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you changed your community since your partner started working offshore?

Yes  No

If yes, was his offshore work the main reason that you decided to move?

Yes  No

---

4

Thinking about you and your partner, please give your reactions to each of the following. Check YES if the statement applies to you and NO if it does not

"Offshore work prevents us from being together at times when we need to make decisions affecting our lives."

Yes

No

"Offshore work allows us more time for talking with one another and being together as a couple."

Yes

No

"Offshore work creates confusion about who makes the decisions in our family."

Yes

No

"Offshore work means that we share tasks in the home more equally."

Yes

No

"Because my partner works offshore I have developed a greater sense of independence."

Yes

No

---

5

Thinking of those times when your partner is ONSHORE, for each of the following activities, please use a check mark to indicate how often each one applies to you.

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
Church and service club activities	_____	_____	_____
Going to clubs and bars	_____	_____	_____
Bingo, darts, cards	_____	_____	_____
Visiting relatives & friends (with husband)	_____	_____	_____
Visiting relatives & friends (without husband)	_____	_____	_____
Entertaining at home	_____	_____	_____
TV, reading, sewing/knitting	_____	_____	_____
Household work	_____	_____	_____
Sports, driving, skidoing, etc.	_____	_____	_____
Dancing, movies	_____	_____	_____
Oil related clubs/societies	_____	_____	_____
Outings with the children	_____	_____	_____
Going out with the girls	_____	_____	_____
Other, please specify _____	_____	_____	_____



---

**6**

Despite looking forward to your partner's return, do you find that some part of his stay at home is taken up with misunderstandings and niggling arguments?

Yes  No

If YES:

a. Over what kinds of things do these misunderstandings and arguments occur?

---

---

---

b. When are these misunderstandings and arguments most common? (Check one box only).

In the first few days after he is home   
Halfway through his stay   
Towards the end of his stay   
No particular time

---

**7**

Are you happy with the amount of time you spend with your partner when he is onshore, or would you prefer to spend more or less time together?

Time spent together is just about right   
We do not see enough of each other   
At times we tend to get under one another's feet

---

**8**

How often do you think about the dangers of offshore work?

Often  Sometimes  Never

---

**9**

How often do you talk with your partner about the dangers of offshore work?

Often  Sometimes  Never

---

**10**

Thinking of those times when your partner is OFFSHORE, for each of the following activities, please use a check mark to indicate how often each one applies to you.

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
Church and service club activities	_____	_____	_____
Going to clubs and bars	_____	_____	_____
Bingo, darts, cards	_____	_____	_____
Visiting relatives & friends (with husband)	_____	_____	_____
Visiting relatives & friends (without husband)	_____	_____	_____
Entertaining at home	_____	_____	_____
TV, reading, sewing/knitting	_____	_____	_____
Household work	_____	_____	_____
Sports, driving, skidoing, etc.	_____	_____	_____
Dancing, movies	_____	_____	_____
Oil related clubs/societies	_____	_____	_____
Outings with the children	_____	_____	_____
Going out with the girls	_____	_____	_____
Other, please specify _____	_____	_____	_____

---

**11**

How difficult is it for you to talk to your partner while he is offshore?

Very difficult  
Somewhat difficult  
Not at all difficult


---

**12**

During a typical offshore trip, how many times do you:

- a. Write to your partner? \_\_\_\_\_ times  
b. Talk to your partner? \_\_\_\_\_ times

NOW HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS INTENDED ONLY FOR THOSE WITH CHILDREN.  
IF YOU HAVE NO CHILDREN, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 18.

---

**13**

How many children do you have at home and how old are they?

\_\_\_\_\_ boys - ages \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ girls - ages \_\_\_\_\_

---

**14**

Generally speaking, would you say that your children are more difficult to cope with when your partner is at home or when he is away?

- a. More difficult when away
- b. More difficult when at home
- c. No change


If (a) or (b), please describe the kind of difficulties that you have had.

---

---

---

---

**15**

Do you find that your partner's absences creates any advantages for either of you in dealing with the children?

Yes  No

If YES

What are the advantages \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---



---

**19**

Suppose your partner is offered a local onshore job with the same annual pay as offshore and 3 weeks vacation a year. Do you think he should take it?

Yes  No

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**20**

When your partner is working offshore, do you ever stay overnight with family or friends? (Check one box only).

Often   
Occasionally   
Never

---

**21**

When your partner is working offshore, do members of your family or friends ever stay overnight with you? (Check one box only).

Often   
Occasionally   
Never

---

**22**

Thinking about your feelings during those periods when your partner is OFFSHORE, which of the following words best describe how you usually feel? (Check as many words as appropriate).

afraid	_____	nervous	_____	secure	_____
calm	_____	joyful	_____	terrified	_____
desperate	_____	panicky	_____	steady	_____
cheerful	_____	loving	_____	upset	_____
fearful	_____	shaky	_____	peaceful	_____
contented	_____	pleasant	_____	worrying	_____
frightened	_____	tense	_____	relaxed	_____
happy	_____				

# 23

We would now like you to think about 3 imaginary women whose husbands work offshore regularly. Please read each description carefully and then check one of the boxes to indicate how close each one comes to describing you.

ANN can't get used to his pattern of work. She feels life is incomplete when he is away from the family. She occasionally gets lonely and depressed.

Is ANN -

A lot like you  
A bit like you  
Not at all like you


JUDY'S life seems to carry on pretty much the same whether he is at home or away. She has no strong feelings about him being away from the family and his time offshore doesn't produce any great changes in her moods.

Is JUDY -

A lot like you  
A bit like you  
Not at all like you


MARY likes his pattern of work. She enjoys both the time he is away and when he is at home. She can follow her own interests and has more confidence in herself.

Is MARY -

A lot like you  
A bit like you  
Not at all like you


Thinking of all 3 women, which one is most like you? (Check one box only).

ANN  
JUDY  
MARY


---

**24**

We would now like to ask you about two situations which could occur while your partner is away. For each situation we would like to know what you would be most likely to do.

a. Suppose your husband is offshore and you have an illness which means that you are unable to carry out your usual tasks. Who would you be most likely to turn to for help with your tasks?

Relative   
Neighbour or friend   
Other  Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

b. Suppose your husband is offshore; you are feeling anxious or depressed and you would like to talk to someone. Who would you be most likely to turn to?

Relative   
Neighbour or friend   
Clergyman, doctor, or  
other professional   
Other  Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

**25**

How many other offshore workers' wives do you know? (Check one box only).

None  Less than 5  5 or more

If you do know any other offshore workers' wives, how important are they in providing you with practical and emotional support in dealing with offshore work patterns?

Not at all important   
Not very important   
Quite important   
Very important

---

**26**

Thinking about your feelings during those periods when your husband is ONSHORE, which of the following words best describe how you usually feel? (Check as many words as appropriate).

afraid	<input type="checkbox"/>	nervous	<input type="checkbox"/>	secure	<input type="checkbox"/>
calm	<input type="checkbox"/>	joyful	<input type="checkbox"/>	terrified	<input type="checkbox"/>
desperate	<input type="checkbox"/>	panicky	<input type="checkbox"/>	steady	<input type="checkbox"/>
cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/>	loving	<input type="checkbox"/>	upset	<input type="checkbox"/>
fearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	shaky	<input type="checkbox"/>	peaceful	<input type="checkbox"/>
contented	<input type="checkbox"/>	pleasant	<input type="checkbox"/>	worrying	<input type="checkbox"/>
frightened	<input type="checkbox"/>	tense	<input type="checkbox"/>	relaxed	<input type="checkbox"/>
happy	<input type="checkbox"/>				

27

The following views are sometimes expressed about offshore workers and their families. Please indicate how far you agree or disagree with each of these statements.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	Neither agree nor <u>disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>disagree</u>
"When the man is an offshore oil worker, it's the woman who takes over."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Absence makes the heart grow fonder: offshore work improves the sex life."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"The time onshore is a holiday for the man, but just more work for the woman."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"When onshore, offshore workers are more into drink and drugs than other workers."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Since they are at home for long periods, men who work offshore are more likely to help with the housework."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Men who work offshore can be prone to violent outbursts during their time in the home."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



FINALLY, SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF

---

**28** In what year were you born? 19\_\_\_\_.

---

**29** Are you married?  
Yes  No

---

**30** How long have you been living with your partner?  
 years

---

**31** Were you born in Newfoundland?  
Yes  No

---

**32** What is the name of your community? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**33** What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed?

Grade 9 or less	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade 10 or 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade 12 or 13	<input type="checkbox"/>
University Degree or Diploma:	
Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Post Secondary Diploma:	
Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**34** During the past 12 months, how many times did you see or talk to a medical doctor about your health?  
\_\_\_\_\_ times

---

**35**

Do you have a paid job at the moment?

Yes  No

If YES full time   
part time

What is your present job? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**36**

Since you have been living with your partner, has he had any other job.

Yes  No

If YES

Which job(s)?

What was the work cycle?

(a)	_____	(a)	_____
(b)	_____	(b)	_____
(c)	_____	(c)	_____

---

**37**

Some jobs are less disruptive to family life than others. Comparing offshore work to the jobs that you listed above, were they more or less disruptive?

more disruptive      about the same      less disruptive

Job (a)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job (b)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job (c)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**38**

What is your partner's job? (Check one box only)

Bosun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floorman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio Opr.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roughneck	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crane Opr.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roustabout	<input type="checkbox"/>
Derrickman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seaman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steward	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrician	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motorman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watchstander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engineer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oiler	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welder	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

**39**

If you were given a choice, which of the following systems of offshore work would you most prefer for your partner. (Please check one box only).

1 week onshore/1 week offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks onshore/2 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 weeks onshore/3 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 weeks onshore/4 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which system would you least prefer?

1 week onshore/1 week offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks onshore/2 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 weeks onshore/3 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 weeks onshore/4 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**40**

Thinking ahead 3 years, do you hope that your partner will still be working offshore?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depends	<input type="checkbox"/>

On what does it depend? \_\_\_\_\_

---



APPENDIX C

# Community Resource Services Ltd.

P.O. Box 5936 • St. John's, Newfoundland • Canada • A1C 5X4

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Dear Sir:

As someone working in the offshore oil industry, you experience a work pattern which may become increasingly common in Newfoundland in the future. Others, like trawlermen, go through periods when they are working away from home, however, the regular cycle of offshore commuting makes your working and family experiences unique. Your experiences and those of others in a similar situation, can provide very valuable assistance to future offshore workers and their families.

Community Resource Services Ltd. and the Ocean Ranger Foundation have been asked by the government and oil industry to study how offshore work affects offshore workers and their families in Newfoundland. Does, for example, the pattern of work help or hinder when it comes to raising children? Does it cause problems, or does it benefit relationships between you and your partner? Are "oil families" really any different from other families? Most importantly, what can be done about any family problems that result from offshore work?

We need your help in answering such questions. Your experiences, ideas and suggestions, together with those of others, will be summarized in a report that will go to government, the oil industry, and, very importantly, to present and future offshore workers and their families. In this way you will be able to share your experiences with others in similar situations.

We would emphasize that any information that you provide will be kept in strict confidence. We do not ask for your name or any information that could be traced to you.

We believe that this is a very worthwhile study, and hope that you will agree. Its success, however, depends on your assistance in completing the attached questions and returning them to us as soon as possible. Simply put the completed form in the enclosed envelope and mail it back to us. No postage is required.

We greatly appreciate your help with this study.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Shrimpton  
Community Resource Services

Cynthia Parsons  
Ocean Ranger Foundation

Enclosures

P.S.: Of course these issues involve both partners. For this reason we have already sent a different survey to your partner. We need responses from both male and female partners so please do not delay in completing the enclosed questions and returning them to us.

---

**1** How long have you worked in the offshore oil industry? (Check one box only).

Less than 1 year   
1 or 2 years   
3-5 years   
More than 5 years

---

**2** What is your current pattern of work offshore? (Check one box only).

2 weeks onshore/2 weeks offshore   
3 weeks onshore/3 weeks offshore   
4 weeks onshore/4 weeks offshore   
Other, please specify  \_\_\_\_\_

---

**3** What type of community do you live in? (Check one box only).

Outport   
Town   
City

Have you and your partner changed your community since you started working offshore?

Yes  No

If yes, was your offshore work the main reason that you decided to move?

Yes  No

4

Thinking about you and your partner, please give your reactions to each of the following. Check YES if the statement applies to you and NO if it does not

"Offshore work prevents us from being together at times when we need to make decisions affecting our lives."

Yes

No

"Offshore work allows us more time for talking with one another and being together as a couple."

Yes

No

"Offshore work creates confusion about who makes the decisions in our family."

Yes

No

"Offshore work means that we share tasks in the home more equally."

Yes

No

"Because I work offshore my partner has developed a greater sense of independence."

Yes

No

5

Thinking of those times when you are ONSHORE, for each of the following activities, please use a check mark to indicate how often each one applies to you.

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
Church and service club activities	_____	_____	_____
Going to clubs and bars	_____	_____	_____
Bingo, darts, cards	_____	_____	_____
Visiting relatives & friends (with wife)	_____	_____	_____
Visiting relatives & friends (without wife)	_____	_____	_____
Entertaining at home	_____	_____	_____
TV, reading	_____	_____	_____
Household work	_____	_____	_____
Sports, driving, skidoing, etc.	_____	_____	_____
Dancing, movies	_____	_____	_____
Oil related clubs/societies	_____	_____	_____
Outings with the family	_____	_____	_____
Going out with the boys	_____	_____	_____
Other, please specify _____	_____	_____	_____

---

**6**

Despite looking forward to getting home, do you find that some part of your stay at home is taken up with misunderstandings and niggling arguments?

Yes  No

If YES:

a. Over what kinds of things do these misunderstandings and arguments occur?

---

---

---

b. When are these misunderstandings and arguments most common? (Check one box only).

In the first few days after you get home   
Halfway through your stay   
Towards the end of your stay   
No particular time

---

**7**

Are you happy with the amount of time you spend with your partner when you are onshore, or would you prefer to spend more or less time together?

Time spent together is just about right   
We do not see enough of each other   
At times we tend to get under one another's feet

---

**8**

How often do you think about the dangers of offshore work?

Often  Sometimes  Never

---

**9**

How often do you talk with your partner about the dangers of offshore work?

Often  Sometimes  Never



---

**10**

How difficult is it for you to talk to your partner while you are offshore?

Very difficult  
Somewhat difficult  
Not at all difficult


---

**11**

During a typical offshore trip, how many times do you:

- a. Write to your partner? \_\_\_\_\_ times  
b. Talk to your partner? \_\_\_\_\_ times

---

NOW HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS INTENDED ONLY FOR THOSE WITH CHILDREN.  
IF YOU HAVE NO CHILDREN, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 16.

---

**12**

How many children do you have at home and how old are they?

\_\_\_\_\_ boys - ages \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ girls - ages \_\_\_\_\_

---

**13**

Do you find that your absences create any disadvantages for either of you in dealing with the children?

Yes  No

If YES

What are the disadvantages \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**14**

Do you find that your absences create any advantages for either of you in dealing with the children?

Yes  No

If YES

What are the advantages \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

**15**

Would you say that your work offshore prevents your involvement in important events in the children's lives - such as birthdays, sports events, holidays?

Often  
Sometimes  
Almost never


---

**16**

Suppose you are offered a local onshore job with the same annual pay as offshore and 3 weeks vacation a year. Would you take it?

Yes  No

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# 19

We would now like you to think about 3 imaginary men who work offshore regularly. Please read each description carefully and then check one of the boxes to indicate how close each one comes to describing you.

JIM can't get used to the work pattern. He dislikes being away from his family. He occasionally gets lonely and depressed.

Is JIM -

A lot like you	<input type="checkbox"/>
A bit like you	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all like you	<input type="checkbox"/>

MIKE'S life seems to carry on pretty much the same whether he is at home or away. He has no strong feelings about being away from his family and his time offshore doesn't cause any great changes in his moods.

Is MIKE -

A lot like you	<input type="checkbox"/>
A bit like you	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all like you	<input type="checkbox"/>

FRED likes his pattern of work. He accepts being away from his family but recognizes the benefits of the time he can spend at home.

Is FRED -

A lot like you	<input type="checkbox"/>
A bit like you	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all like you	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thinking of all 3 men, which one is most like you? (Check one box only).

JIM	<input type="checkbox"/>
MIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRED	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 20

Thinking about your feelings during those periods when you are ONSHORE, which of the following words best describe how you usually feel? (Check as many words as appropriate).

afraid	_____	nervous	_____	secure	_____
calm	_____	joyful	_____	terrified	_____
desperate	_____	panicky	_____	steady	_____
cheerful	_____	loving	_____	upset	_____
fearful	_____	shaky	_____	peaceful	_____
contented	_____	pleasant	_____	worrying	_____
frightened	_____	tense	_____	relaxed	_____
happy	_____				

## 21

The following views are sometimes expressed about offshore workers and their families. Please indicate how far you agree or disagree with each of these statements.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	Neither agree nor <u>disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>disagree</u>
"When the man is an off-shore oil worker, it's the woman who takes over."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Absence makes the heart grow fonder: offshore work improves the sex life."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"The time onshore is a holiday for the man, but just more work for the woman."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"When onshore, offshore workers are more into drink and drugs than other workers."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Since they are at home for long periods, men who work offshore are more likely to help with the housework."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Men who work offshore can be prone to violent outbursts during their time in the home."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FINALLY, SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF

---

**22** In what year were you born? 19\_\_\_\_.

---

Are you married?

Yes  No

---

**23** How long have you been living with your partner?

years

---

**24** Were you born in Newfoundland?

Yes  No

---

**25** What is the name of your community? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**26** What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed?

Grade 9 or less	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade 10 or 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade 12 or 13	<input type="checkbox"/>
University Degree or Diploma:	
Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Post Secondary Diploma:	
Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**27** During the past 12 months, how many times did you see or talk to a medical doctor about your health?

\_\_\_\_\_ times

---

**28**

When onshore, do you have another paid job?

Regularly  
Sometimes  
Never


If you do, what type of job(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**29**

When onshore, are you involved in any activities which take you out of your home on a regular basis, for example, fishing, wood-cutting, etc.?

Yes  No

If yes, what type(s) of activity? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**30**

Since you have been living with your partner, have you had any other job which involved regular work away from home. i.e. where you had to stay overnight?

Yes  No

If YES

<u>Which job(s)?</u>	<u>What was the work cycle?</u>
(a) _____	(a) _____
(b) _____	(b) _____
(c) _____	(c) _____

---

**31**

Some jobs are less disruptive to family life than others. Comparing offshore work to the jobs that you listed above, were they more or less disruptive?

more disruptive                      about the same                      less disruptive

Job (a)	<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>			
Job (b)	<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>			
Job (c)	<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				<table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>			

**32**

What is your job? (Please check one box only).

Bosun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floorman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio Opr.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roughneck	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crane Opr.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roustabout	<input type="checkbox"/>
Derrickman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seaman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steward	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrician	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motorman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watchstander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engineer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oiler	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welder	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**33**

If you were given a choice, which of the following systems of offshore work would you most prefer. (Please check one box only).

1 week onshore/1 week offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks onshore/2 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 weeks onshore/3 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 weeks onshore/4 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which system would you least prefer?

1 week onshore/1 week offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks onshore/2 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 weeks onshore/3 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 weeks onshore/4 weeks offshore	<input type="checkbox"/>

**34**

Thinking ahead 3 years, do you hope that you will still be working offshore?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depends	<input type="checkbox"/>

On what does it depend? \_\_\_\_\_





## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Structured informal interviews were held with a sample of families or family members. The following topics were covered in the interviews.

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHECK LIST

1. Name:
2. Community:
3. Phone No.:
4. Age: Male:  
Female:  
Boys:  
Girls:
5. Is there anybody else in the household?
6. Years with partner:
7. Born in Newfoundland: Male (Yes, No)  
Female (Yes, No)
8. Is this the "home" community? Male (Yes, No)  
Female (Yes, No)
9. How long have you lived here? Years:  
If < 5 years, previous community?
10. Did offshore work influence decision to move? (Yes, No)  
If yes, why?

### WORK CHARACTERISTICS

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

1. Male job:
2. Years in offshore industry:
3. Previous experience with "away from home" work. (Job, Work Cycle, More/Less Disruptive)
4. Ask other partner whether they agree about more/less disruptive.
5. What makes some jobs/a particular job more/less disruptive for family life?
6. Experience in family with "absent worker." Male;  
Female

7. Does female have paid employment? (Yes, No)  
If yes, (Full, Part)  
Job:
8. Does offshore work influence whether wife has job or job type?
9. Does having job pose any difficulties while he is home?

#### WORK PREFERENCES

10. Is this job: the only one available  
the best available  
the means to some other end  
what he really wants to do
11. Would he prefer to work onshore for the same money?  
Why/why not?
12. Is he actively looking for onshore work? (Yes, No)
13. Current shift pattern? (2/2, 3/3, 4/4, Other)
14. Preferred shift pattern (including 2/3, 3/4, or others)?  
(Male, female)  
Why?

#### WORK ATTITUDES

15. What do you like best about offshore work?  
(male, female)  
What do you like least?  
(Male, female)
16. What do your friends/relatives think about him working offshore?
17. Do you think offshore work is more dangerous than other jobs you have done? (Yes, No)  
Why/why not?
18. How did you find out about the job?
19. Did the company tell you anything about what to expect if this was your first time offshore?
20. In what ways is work on a supply boat different from that on a rig?
21. Does it have any differences as far as the families are concerned?
22. How permanent do you consider your job to be?
23. Do you have any plans if you are laid off?
24. Do you or your wife worry about this prospect?
25. How would you describe your work? (Interesting, hard, dangerous, boring, easy, safe, other)
26. Do you work with any women offshore? (Yes, No)
27. Does this have any benefits/disadvantages c.f. an all male workplace?
28. Do the men tend to talk to the women about home life, problems, etc.?

29. Has your attitude towards offshore work changed over time? How?
30. Has the wife ever been on a rig? (Yes, No)
31. Would she like to go? (Yes, No)
32. Why/why not?

## COMMUNICATIONS

### ONSHORE/OFFSHORE

1. What kind of communications system is there on your rig/vessel for contacting home?
2. When he is offshore, how often do you talk to each other on the phone?
3. About how long do you normally talk for?
4. Who normally calls whom?
5. Is it difficult to hear each other?
6. How private is your conversation?
7. How easy is it for her to reach him?
8. Is there any company policy/restrictions on calling?
9. Do you find it difficult to discuss family matters over the phone/radio?
10. What circumstances would cause the "normal" pattern of calling to alter?
11. Is the phone the best way to keep in touch while he is offshore?
12. How do you get a letter offshore/onshore?
13. If you want information about anything that is happening offshore, for example when the weather is bad, who would you contact?
14. Are the companies helpful about providing information? Are there things that you think they could do?
15. Are there any ways that onshore/offshore communications could be improved?

### ONSHORE

16. Do you talk about his work very much?
17. What sorts of things do you talk about?
18. Do you talk about his work with anyone else?
19. How many other offshore families do you know?
20. Do you find these families more helpful if you need to discuss things about the work?
21. If you work on a supply boat, how often do you see your family in the course of a work period?
22. How do you arrange to see them?

## OFFSHORE

23. Are there particular social networks on the rig/supply boats? Describe them.
24. Do they help in dealing with family matters in any ways? How?
25. Do these networks continue onshore?
26. Are there any ways in which onshore communications could be improved, e.g. networks of wives?

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

### FEMALE

1. Was he working offshore or in a similar job that took him away from home when you first got married? (Yes, No)  
If no, how did you manage when he first started working offshore, what were the things you found most difficult to deal with?
2. How do you feel now about him being away? Do you feel that you have adjusted? Can you deal with those original difficulties? How?
3. Have you found that new problems or concerns have arisen since he first started working offshore? What are they and how do you deal with them?
4. Do you think that your life has changed in any significant ways because he works offshore? (Money, husband/wife relations, friends).
5. Do you see the same people when he is away as when he is home?
6. Do people treat you any differently when he is away compared with when he is home? How?
7. Do you find it difficult to adjust to him coming back? What sorts of things are difficult?
8. How do you try to help that adjustment process?
9. Do you do any special things to prepare for him coming home, or when he gets home?
10. Can you describe how you feel just before he gets home, what typically happens when he arrives?
11. Can you describe what typically happens in the first couple of days after he gets back?
12. How do you get along in these first few days?
13. How do the children react?
14. While he is home, are there certain things you try to do together/alone? Are there certain things that you always make sure get done while he is home?

## MALE

15. When you leave the rig, have you just finished a shift or a rest period? Is this always the same? If not, does it make any difference to how you feel or what you do when you first get home?
16. Can you describe how you feel just before you get home, what typically happens when you arrive?
17. Can you describe what typically happens in the first couple of days after you get back?
18. How do you get along in these first few days?
19. How do the children react?
20. While you are home, are there certain things you try to do together/alone? Are there certain things that you always make sure get done while you are home?
21. Ask what he first does on getting home? (Eat, sleep, drink, talk).

## MALE AND FEMALE

22. Is there any difference between what you expect/would like to happen on coming home, and what actually does happen? Can you each describe your feelings and the things you do a couple of days before he leaves? Are there special things you do, do you argue, feel tense, etc.?
23. Do you recognize the same feelings or events occurring each time and do you try to do anything about them?
24. What about the children?
25. Describe your feelings and actions a couple of days before he leaves.

## FEMALE

26. How do you feel just after he has gone? What are the first things you do? How do you make the adjustment?

## MALE

27. What are the first things you do when you leave for the rig/vessel? Do you try to put family matters aside and just concentrate on the job or what?

## MALE AND FEMALE

28. Do you discuss the matter of adjusting to coming and going?
29. In Norway many offshore workers seem to think that working offshore is likely to lead to divorce. Do you think there is anything about the work pattern that would lead to this?

## ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### MALE AND FEMALE

1. There are certain things that have to be done to make sure the household runs properly, e.g. cooking, household maintenance, child raising, bill paying. Do the responsibilities for these things change in any way when he gets home?
2. Does the change in responsibility cause any difficulties?
3. Do you feel that you are financially better off because you/he works offshore than before? (Yes, No)
4. What sorts of things have you been able to use that extra money for? (House, car, vacations, savings, pay debts, other)

### MALE

5. Do you find it difficult to change from a very structured work cycle to an unstructured time at home? (Yes, No)
6. Do you find that your time at home seems to "drag" or that you feel you "waste your time" while at home? (Yes, No)
7. Do you have special projects for the time you are at home? If so, what?
8. Are there things you would like to be able to do while at home but for some reason can't? What?
9. Are there things that your wife wants you to do that you don't? Is the way you spend your time a source of arguments?
10. Can you describe a typical day of activities while you are at home?

### FEMALE

11. Do your activities change while he is at home? Are there some things you leave until he has gone back, are there some things that you try to make sure get done while he is there?
12. Can you describe a typical day of activities while he is home?
13. How does this change when he is away?
14. Do you feel that how the time at home is spent is a source of arguments? Over what?

15. Does being away for a length of time make any difference to the social activities that you would normally enjoy either alone or together?
16. Are there some things that you would like to be able to do but which the work pattern prevents? Are there things that it allows?
17. Have there been changes in your social life because of the shift pattern, i.e. in terms of who you see, how often, when, where you go, etc.?
18. Have you made new friends because of offshore work?

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Is there a need to try to do anything to help families who have somebody working offshore? (Yes, No)
2. What are the most important things that need to be looked at?
3. What could be done to address the problems you have identified?

### HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND TO SOME OF THESE IDEAS:

1. Reduced telephone costs.
2. A number that you could call to get up to date offshore weather condition information, crew change information, etc.
3. Information booklet for new entrants to the industry to tell them something about what to expect.
4. A video of families talking about their experiences/feelings about the work/life.
5. Contact groups for wives and families of offshore workers living in particular areas.
6. Changes in work schedules to allow at least every other Christmas at home.



## APPENDIX E

### THE "INTERMITTENT SPOUSE": AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography has been compiled as part of the "Family Life Adaptations to Offshore Oil and Gas Employment project. The purpose in compiling this bibliography was, first, to examine the literature on family adaptation on the offshore oil industry and second, to examine similar issues in other industries, in order to enable inter-industry comparisons to be drawn. It was anticipated that these comparisons would permit the generation of additional hypotheses, relevant to the offshore oil industry, with respect to issues, adaptations, family and personal needs, and mechanisms for meeting those needs.

Standard procedures for compiling the list of references were used. In addition to the review of "known" literature, library research of published books, journals, etc. provided a wider range of material, and, from a review of key words, a computer search of eight social science data bases was undertaken. These included the Social Sciences Citation Index, Sociological Abstracts, the National Council on Family Relations data base, and Psychological Abstracts. Literature generated by each of these searches was examined for additional references in an iterative "snowball" fashion until no further material was generated.

Information included in the annotation for each reference, where available or relevant, is as follows: industry context; location; time period; purpose of study; rotational work pattern; general study methodology; principal research findings; adaptations to work patterns; family needs; and need-meeting mechanisms. Rarely were all, or even most, of these pieces of information available.

References which are not annotated were not available at the time the bibliography was compiled. These references, for the most part cited by other authors, appear to be relevant to the subject but only a review of them can finally determine this.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, M. (1972). "Schilling Manor: A Survey of a Military Community of Father Absent Families." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America.

Bach, George A. (1946). "Father-Fantasies and Father-Typing in Father-Separated Children," Child Development, Vol. 17-18, No. 1-2, pp. 63-80.

Examines fathers' roles and children's perceptions of their fathers through the fantasies of father-absent children.

The sample consisted of 20 children whose fathers were away on military service and a further control group of 20. Data were collected through interviews with mothers and teachers, and from observations of controlled doll-play situations.

The study concludes that father-absent children had an idealistic image of their fathers. Father-present children were more realistic and paid much more attention to the fathers' aggressive tendencies.

Baird, Irene et al. (1985). "Women in the Offshore in Newfoundland." Paper presented to the International Conference on Women and Offshore Oil, St. John's, Newfoundland, 5-7 September 1985.

A statistical portrait of women working offshore or registered for offshore employment; examines hiring practices; looks at working conditions and relationships on rigs. Based on semi-structured telephone survey of female registrants (19 surveyed = 21% of total), interviews with female employees (17 = 46%), and personnel officers (20 = 35%) conducted January-March 1985. Supplemented by earlier government and development association surveys, and data from Norway.

Refers only incidentally to questions of family life (e.g. marital status). Most women had "successfully reconciled their work and their personal lives," but acknowledged unspecified "inherent difficulties." The authors "suspect" greater family conflicts for women than for men, because of traditional expectations of women. Married women workers with partners in the oil

industry or comparable occupations have a greater career commitment. Women working on a rig refer to all their co-workers as "family," and because of their small numbers, feel some pressure to act as confidants.

Baker, Stewart L. (1967). "Impact of Father Absence on Personality Factors of Children," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 269.

Concludes that the effects of father absence in American military families are not yet known and that more work is needed to research the effects of fathers' absence on the role of the mother and on children's mental well-being.

Baker, Stewart L. et al. (1967). "Impact of Father's Absence on Personality Factors of Boys: 1. An Evaluation of the Military Family's Adjustment." Paper presented at the 44th Annual Meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, Washington, D.C.

Based on a group of Washington, D.C. army families of which the father was to be away for a year. These questionnaires and interviews were administered, before departure, three quarters of the way through the separation, and nine-twelve months after the father's return. Significant differences from civilian family behaviour was found. For example, mothers tended to be more reliant on independent social interactions and male children showed less trouble in interacting with their peers. However, stresses between family members were increased.

Baker, Stewart L. et al. (1968). "Impact of Father Absence: III Problems of Family Reintegration Following Prolonged Father Absence." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 38, pp. 347-350.

Based on a study of 40 army families in the Washington, D.C. area to study family characteristics and experiences during separation. Questionnaires and interviews were administered before, three quarters of the way through the separation, and nine-twelve months after the father's return.

Families showed great fears about possible effects of separation. Support of relatives was found to be an important buffer. Children tended to react

to separation by becoming more hostile and socially introverted. The father's return was a trying period of role adjustment in the household.

Beckman, K. (1976). "Reaction to Separation Among Women Married to Navy Submariners." In: R. Finney C. Meredith, eds. Selected Human Development Undergraduate Research Papers, Vol. II: Self-Concept: Identity and Roles. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Department of Human Development.

Bermudes, R. W. (1973). "A Ministry to the Repeatedly Grief-Stricken." Journal of Pastoral Care, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 218-228.

Investigates the effects of husband-absence on wives. The author hypothesized that wives would experience a state of grief not unlike that following bereavement.

The sample consisted of 101 of U.S. submarine personnel who were regular church-goers. Together with 57 non-churchgoers, also from the naval base, they responded to a questionnaire.

The results supported the "bereavement" hypothesis. The wives experienced depression, insomnia, short temper and a sense of isolation. Relief of these symptoms was obtained chiefly through support groups; the churchgoers attended church more frequently.

Bey, D. R. and J. Lange (1974). "Waiting Wives: Women Under Stress," American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 131, No. 3, pp. 283-6.

This is a nonquantitative study of the stress experienced by 40 wives of noncareer army men whose husbands were stationed in Vietnam. None of these women were psychiatric patients but all experienced patterns of anxiety due to their husbands' absence.

The various major periods of stress during a husband's tour of duty are identified as: receiving the orders and preparing for departure, stress during separation, and the return. Anxieties specific to each period are described.

The study suggests that professional leadership from the military may help these women to adjust better to their husbands' absence.

Bohen, H. and A. Viveros (1981). Balancing Jobs and Family Life. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Bonovich, Robert C. (1967). "The Family Crisis of Enforced Separation." Proceedings of the 14th Annual Conference of Air Force Behavioral Scientists, Texas, pp. 186-197.

Examines the role of Air Force psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers in addressing how periods of enforced separation may produce crises in the families of military personnel.

The study states that "the principal characteristics of the family are its differentiation (role and status), organization, boundary maintenance, and equilibrium-tendency." Families function to produce a level of equilibrium, or "steady state." Crises test this equilibrium, and enforced separation of a spouse creates a crisis situation where the "amputated" spouse's roles must be reallocated, and the organization and boundaries reassessed and defined.

It concludes that a better knowledge of the military family is needed: to understand those families that are able to adjust to enforced separation and to be able to use their successes in preventative techniques for other families; and to come up with new methods to aid other families that are in a "pathogenic family crisis state."

Border, William (1980). "Away-On-Work Husbands and Marital Strains," New York Times, November 11-20, 1980.

Boss, Pauline G. (1975). Psychological Father Absence and Presence: A Theoretical Formulation for an Investigation into Family Systems Pathology. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Based on in-depth in-home structured interviews with 47 families of servicemen missing-in-action, including use of family interaction tasks, interviewer assessment and self report. Investigated relationship between degree of psychological father presence and realistic expectations of return of the father. Relates this to family systems pathology.

Boss, Pauline G. (1980). "The Relationship of Psychological Father Presence, Wife's Personal Qualities and Wife/Family Dysfunction in Families of Missing Fathers," Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 541-549.

Examines role of wife in whether or not families of men missing-in-action (MIA) reorganize to close out the father role. This is part of a larger longitudinal study by Plag (1974), Boss (1975) and the Center for Prisoners of War Studies (1972). Thirty-seven MIA wives were used for this study which employed semi-structured personal interviews and a series of questionnaires. Results showed a high degree of "Psychological Father Presence" which was correlated with wife and family dysfunction. Instrumental personal qualities of the wife may be more important than androgynous qualities.

Boss, Pauline, Hamilton I. McCubbin, and Gary Lester (1979). "The Corporate Executive Wife's Coping Patterns in Response to Routine Husband-Father Absence," Family Process, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 79-86.

This study surveys coping mechanisms of 66 corporate U.S. wives by questionnaire (the authors note that wives who were not coping were more likely not to complete the questionnaire). A number of frequently used coping behaviours were identified, e.g. establishing a routine that is not dependent on the husband. The respondents found that they put greatest effort into developing interpersonal relationships, independence, and into fitting into the corporate scene.

Boynton, Kathleen Reardon and W. Barnett Pearce (1978). "Personal Transitions and Interpersonal Communication among Submariners' Wives." In: E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice, eds. Military Families: Adaptation to Change. New York: Praeger, pp. 130-141.

Examines coping mechanisms of submariners' wives re three stressful conditions of periodic husband absence: instability, aloneness, and role ambiguity.

The sample consisted of 30 wives of naval officers at New London Naval Base, Groton, Connecticut, with 3 1/2 month absences.

Methods used were questionnaires and card sorts, the cards containing episodes and coping mechanisms which allowed ranking on a scale of marital happiness and descriptions of transitions between states. The study found that coping mechanisms were divided into: (i) Internalization (the wife accepts disruption, using interpersonal coping strategies; life "on-hold" while husband is away); (ii) Substitution (same activities when husband is away, but using different people); (iii) Replacement (change activities when husband is gone). Of 116 instances of coping, 86 were substitution, 20 internalization, and 10 replacement. Conclusions reached were that until the military provides programs which inform rather than distract attention from the stresses of being alone, the problems will continue to exist.

Burton, R. V. and J. Whiting (1965). "The Absent Fathers and Cross-Sex Identity." In: R. E. Grinder, ed. Studies in Adolescence, New York: The MacMillan Company.

Carlson, Elwood and Ruth Carlson (1984). Navy Marriages and Deployment. New York: University Press of America.

Based on a sample of 42 families of a naval aviation squadron. Two interview sessions were held, one before and one during the husbands' six-month deployment to Spain and the Azores. Addresses a variety of separation issues including: "the departure" which treats separation as a social process and examines the appropriateness of the concept of "separation trauma"; social bonds during deployment including the role of wives' clubs, community and social institutions, friends, neighbours, and relatives; individual coping strategies such as modified activity patterns, disengagement, and changing attitudes; homecomings, reunions and family adjustments.

Clark, D., K. McCann, K. Morrice, and R. Taylor (1985a). "Oil Wives and Intermittent Husbands." British Journal of Psychiatry, 147, pp. 479-483.

The study used a postal questionnaire (200 respondents) to look at the ways wives adapted to their husbands' absence in the Scottish North Sea offshore oil industry. A control group of 103 onshore wives responded to a similar questionnaire which investigated a variety of mechanisms used to cope with husband work schedules.

The study found no significant differences in health status between wives of off and onshore workers. A greater fluctuation in anxiety levels was found among wives of offshore workers with 10% suffering from a "caseness" termed the "Intermittent Husband Syndrome." Factors which increased the likelihood of this syndrome were lack of a community support system, children combined with full time employment for the wife, recent marriage and an irregular pattern of husband absence.

Clark, D., K. McCann, K. Morrice, and R. Taylor (1985b). "The Psycho-Social Consequences of Intermittent Husband Absence: An Epidemiological Study." Social Science and Medicine.

Examines the psycho-social effects of husbands' absence. (Sample and methodology same as for Clark [1985a]).

Few differences were found between the wives of onshore and offshore workers with respect to lifestyle and history, with the exception that wives of offshore workers were less likely to have paid employment outside the home.

Greater fluctuations in anxiety were found among the wives of offshore workers with a majority suffering disturbances in eating and sleeping patterns. A variety of factors were found to affect stress levels. These included, previous experience of husband absence, number of pre-school children, husbands' rotational work pattern and the duration of husbands' absence. Those with no previous experience of husband absence were found to suffer most anxiety. About 10% of the women suffered from significant psycho-social problems attributed to their husband's offshore work.

Clark, D., K. McCann, K. Morrice, and R. Taylor (1985c). "Work and Marriage in the Offshore Oil Industry." International Journal of Social Economics, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 36-47.

An effort is made to identify the cost/benefit aspects of a marriage in which the husband is employed in the oil industry with a regular pattern of intermittent absence.



Uses the responses of 200 Aberdeen women whose husbands work offshore (see Clark, 1984, a, b). A subset of these was interviewed personally.

The chief attraction of the job to men was identified as the combination of financial advantage and greater leisure time. Both spouses reported loneliness. Wives reported anxiety concerning the danger of their husbands' work. Husbands' behaviour onshore reflects the tensions they experience as a result of rotational work schedules.

Four patterns of housework division are identified, which included varying degrees of participation by the husband. A discussion of parenting problems associated with rotational work patterns revealed a general willingness for the men to assist and to try and maintain a sense of family unity.

A majority of women felt that emotional tension was triggered by the husbands' absence. Most also reported experiencing greater independence and personal freedom.

Cohen, C. (1977). "Absentee Husbands in Spiralist Families." Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 595-604.

Analyzes the experiences of 42 families living on a middle-class housing estate in southwest London (England), all of whom have husbands in managerial or professional jobs requiring prolonged absences from home. Data derived from observation of the participants, and quantitative evidence on 552 households on the estate, were also obtained. Most wives felt that their husband's career pressures were a necessary evil, and had developed a support network among similar wives. At the same time, husbands were encouraged to take an active role in child rearing when they were home, particularly with their sons, and in some cases a neighbour's husband would stand in for an absent father at birthday parties. Most decisions relating to children were made by the mother.

Cretekos, C. J. G. (1971). "Common Psychological Syndromes of the Army Wife." Paper read at 124th Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, Washington, D.C., May 3-7, 1971.

Croake, J. W. and R. S. Lyon (1979). "Factors Related to Tours of Duty and Marital Adjustment (Research Notes)," International Journal of Sociology of the Family, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 259-261.

The study was designed to determine if warrant officers, stationed overseas, experienced more marital problems if they were unaccompanied by their wives. A sample of 133 warrant officers was used, all were at least 30 years old and had been married to the same woman and been in the army for the past 10 years.

The study found that the marital adjustment rates were no different for warrant officers who had taken many unaccompanied tours than for those who had.

Dahl, B., H. I. McCubbin, and G. Lester (1976). "War-Induced Father Absence: Comparing the Adjustment in Children in Reunited, Non-Reunited and Reconstituted Families." International Journal of Sociology of the Family, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 99-108.

Three types of families whose fathers had served in Vietnam are compared, using 14 matched children from each type of family. The three types were those who were reunited with the father, those who had lost their father and those who had lost their father but whose mother had remarried.

The findings indicate that the children of reunited parents scored highest in areas such as social adjustment, freedom from nervous symptoms, lack of anti-social behaviour and good school and social relations. Lower scores were found among children of father who had died, whether or not the mother had remarried. The stress of a new father was found to introduce a pattern of sustained symptoms of loss, accompanied by the feeling that another adult has usurped the father's role.

Dahl, B., G. R. Lester, D. Benson, and M. L. Robertson (1976). "Coping Repertoires of Families Adapting to Prolonged War-Induced Separations." Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 461-471.

The adjustment of 47 families of missing-in-action American servicemen was investigated, revealing six coping behaviour patterns, such as establishing independence through self-development. Predictors

of coping patterns are described, e.g. less-educated wives were more likely to emphasize maintaining family integrity. The spouses' backgrounds and the history of the marriage are thought to be crucial to the family's response to separation; for instance, wives who grew up in military families may manage better.

Danowski, Fran (1980). Fishermen's Wives: Coping with an Extraordinary Occupation. University of Rhode Island Marine Bulletin 37, Naragansett, R.I.

Results of a 1978 study of 50 women married to men fishing out of Galilee, Rhode Island. The purpose was an ethnography of the group, examination of the relationships between fishing and the lives of the women.

Fishing activities exhibit little regularity or predictability, whatever routine does exist is seen as responsible for holding together the household and providing continuity and stability. The fisherman's success appears to be strongly related to his wife's understanding and adjustment to the work. The women's contentment with the situation appears related to her husband's job satisfaction, the financial reward and the opportunity to enjoy regular time for personal pursuits.

The most difficult times for wives appears to be at both ends of their marriage span; coping with a young family and later the ambivalence of retirement. In the context of a changing fishing industry, the author argues that the independence forced on fishermen's wives may allow them to adjust to change better than most. In spite of the drawbacks, many of the respondents remain enthusiastic and satisfied with their way of life.

Decker, K. (1976). Coping with Sea Duty: A Study of the Problems Encountered and Resources Utilized by Navy Wives During Periods of Family Separation. Unpublished MSW thesis, Norfolk State College, Norfolk, VA.

Decker, Kathryn Brown (1978). "Coping with Sea Duty: Problems Encountered and Resources Utilized During Periods of Family Separation." In: E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice, eds. Military Families: Adaptation to Change. New York: Praeger, pp. 113-129.

Study of the impact of career navy men's separation from the family, the coping mechanisms used, the problems faced and the resources utilized.

Based on 108 navy wives in the Tidewater Virginia area whose husbands were deployed during the spring of 1976, and who were members of wives' clubs. Questionnaires were administered that addressed child-care problems and concerns, problems of home management, and problems of personal-need satisfaction.

The most frequently reported problems were loneliness and loss of companionship and the children's behavioural reactions to father's loss and to interactions with the mother. The perceived severity of problems was directly related to the period of the male's absence. The typical pattern of problem solving is that families first try to cope alone, or assisted by friend or relative, then turn to formal resources in the military system (chaplain, ombudsman, etc.). Resources in the civilian community were rarely used. The study recommends that more resources should be made readily available to the families and that more studies should be done to identify successful coping mechanisms.

Dixon, R. D., R. C. Lowery, and J. C. Sabella (1984). "Fishermen's Wives: A Case Study of a Middle Atlantic Coastal Fishing Community." Sex Roles, Vol. 10, Nos. 1-2, pp. 33-52.

This study was designed to determine the differences in attitude toward the work done by the fishermen on Hawker's Island, N.C. that exist between wives of fishermen, wives of non-fishermen and fishermen themselves. The study group was comprised of 67 fishermen's wives, 167 non-fishermen's wives and 37 married fishermen.

It was found that a majority of the wives of fishermen opposed both their sons' becoming fishermen and their daughters' marrying fishermen. There was also a significant number of fishermen's wives who worry considerably about safety and who wanted their husbands to restrict their fishing trips to day trips near the coast.

Significant differences were found between fishermen's wives and non-fishermen's wives. Fishermen's

wives were not as well-educated as wives of non-fishermen, they had children earlier and expressed less optimism about the future than their counterparts.

Dolzonek, Cynthia M. (1983). Father Absence and Its Impact on Male Adolescents of Military Family. Ph.D. Diss. Abstracts; Dissert. San Diego: California School of Professional Psychology.

Investigates the effect of father absence on adolescents. The sample consisted of 15 adolescents with fathers absent in the American military and 15 whose fathers were present at home.

Father-absent children showed more deviant behaviour than father-present children and it was found that the age of the child at the time of the father's absence was a crucial determinant of behaviour. The study recommends that the military try and eliminate father-absence at crucial times in children's development.

Duvall, E. M. (1945). "Loneliness and the Serviceman's Wife." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 7, No. 1, pp. 77-81.

Ellis, Carolyn (1984). "Community Organization and Family Structure in Two Fishing Communities." Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 515-26.

The reciprocal relation of community organization and family patterns is examined by participant observation techniques in two isolated fishing communities, similar in ecology and cultural background. Even though work organization in both is small scale, with similar seafood harvested in the same waters, substantial differences in patterns of family life are found. One community exhibits patterns of family life like isolated Appalachian peasant communities; the other resembles family adaptations in small-town rural America. These differences are attributed to variations in interface with the larger society. The first community, organized around kindreds, has broker-mediated links; the second, with independent conjugal units, has direct ties to the center.

The two communities do not support the concept of a typical fishing family or community, but rather, two examples of the range of possible types.

Fagan, Stanley A. et al. (1967). "Factors Relating to Success of Coping with Crisis. Impact of Father Absence in Military Families." Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, Washington, D.C.

Fagan, Stanley A., E. Janda, S. Baker, E. Fischer, and L. Cove (1968). "Impact of Father Absence in Military Families: II. Factors Relating to Success of Coping with Crisis." Technical Report, Washington, D.C.: Walter Reed Medical Center.

Finch, Janet (1983). Married to the Job: Wives' Incorporation into Men's Work. London: Allen and Unwin.

This book deals with the entire spectrum of effects of husbands' jobs on their wives. Rotational work patterns, which take the husband away for periods, are discussed within this broader context.

The study concludes that women with intermittently absent husbands are less likely to have careers of their own and to be able to pursue their own activities. However, coping with husbands' absence results in greater self-sufficiency.

A study of wives of lorry drivers in Britain found that men tried to over-compensate for their absence from the household by participating in all domestic activities upon their return. Finch suggests that many of the adjustment problems linked to husband absence are related to society's view of such an arrangement being "abnormal."

Fuchs, R. (1982). "The Adaptation of Rural Residents to the Offshore Oil and Gas (Exploration Phase) Labour Force; Newfoundland and Labrador, 1981." Paper presented at Symposium on Psycho-Social Impacts of Resource Development in Canada: Research Strategies and Applications, Toronto, 1982.

This paper describes the composition of the Newfoundland offshore labour force, noting, for instance, that a higher percentage of Newfoundland offshore workers are younger and unmarried than their non-resident counterparts. The rig and home environments are contrasted, and adjustment problems to home life are discussed. Most respondents

say that their relationships with friends and family have not been significantly affected by their work. Wives, although not directly included in the study, are often described as preferring the three or four week rotational pattern in the off-shore oil industry to longer absences in the fishing or construction industry.

Forsyth, Craig and W. B. Bankston (1983). "The Merchant Seaman as a Social Type: A Marginal Life-Style." Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology, Vol. 11, pp. 8-12.

Forsyth, Craig J. and William B. Bankston (1984). "The Social Psychological Consequence of Life at Sea: A Causal Model." Maritime Policy and Management, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 123-134.

This paper explores the influence of the occupation of merchant seamen on alienation and social integration of its members. Data were collected from a sample of 293 seamen, both officers and crew. Factors determining variance in levels of alienation are examined using multiple regression techniques. Results indicate that variance in several occupational features of life at sea affect the degree of alienation experienced by seamen, and a number of social characteristics were found to mitigate these influences. Supplementary qualitative data are also used.

Months at sea is the strongest predictor of marginality. Other variables include length of trips, years a seaman, shipboard status, sailing on a single ship, education, marital status, having children, race, community size, same community as the one in which he was raised, organizational membership, religious participation.

Parallels are drawn with the offshore rig worker. The rig work cycle (equal time on and off work) is seen as less alienating.

Gerstel, Naomi and H. I. Gross (1982). "Commuter Marriage: A Review." Marriage and Family Review, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 71-93.

This article deals with the problems intrinsic to commuter marriages in North America. The section, "Consequences for the Couple's Relationship" describes adaptation mechanisms of the couples. Marriages in the study were mostly dual-career

professional relationships. Telephone calls were identified as the major form of communication while separated. Couples appreciated that these calls allow them to maintain an idea of the other's activities, but missed the intimacy and visual cues of normal conversation. The most missed aspects of married life included, dinners together, spontaneous walks and someone to talk to.

Glisson, Charles A., Sherry C. Melton, and Linda Roggow (1980). "The Effect of Separation on Marital Satisfaction, Depression, and Self-Esteem." Journal of Social Service Research, Vol. 4(1), Fall 1980, pp. 61-76.

The marital dissatisfaction, depression, and self-esteem problems of 37 wives of naval personnel assigned to 4 submarines, who were each separated from their spouses for 14 weeks, were monitored biweekly beginning 5 weeks before separation until 5 weeks following reunion. Unlike other military separations, this study group is characterized by regular cycles of approximately 3 months home and 3 months gone. The subjects were based in Hawaii.

Some problems associated with separation are: interrupted communication, role conflicts, disconnected relationships, and separation anxiety. It was hypothesized that marital dissatisfaction would begin to increase before the separation, and would decrease midway through the separation. However, the findings indicate that while the husband was depressed before departure, the wife postponed their grieving by filling the last days with activity. After departure, the wives' levels of depression rose until the mid-way point in their husbands' time away, when the submarines submerged and all communication was cut off. Depression increased again just before reunion.

Gonzalez, V. R. (1970). Psychiatry and the Army Brat. Springfield, Il.: Charles C. Thomas.

Examines the impacts of military life and family separation on children. Interviews with families and analysis of games and drawings of children provided the data. Traits evident in father absent children included: feelings of greater responsibility within the household; insecurity; delinquent behaviour. Reunions frequently created tensions, in some cases provoking greater crises than separation.



Gramling, Robert and Craig Forsyth (n.d.) "Work Scheduling and Family Interaction: A Theoretical Perspective." Unpublished paper, Department of Sociology, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana.

Green, Maureen (1976). Goodbye Father. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Gronseth, Erik (1957). "The Impact of Father Absence in Sailor Families upon the Personality Structure and Social Adjustment of Adult Sailor Sons." In: Nels Andersen, ed. Studies on the Family 2. Gottingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht.

Gronseth, Erik (1960). "Reactions of Seaman's Wives to Frustrations Resulting from the Absence of their Husbands." Nordisk Psykologic, Vol. 1-2.

Gronseth, Erik (1964). "Research on Socialization in Norway." Family Process, Vol. 3, No. 1, (Sept. 1964), pp. 302-322.

Although addressing a broad topic, this paper is based on Gronseth's research on sailor families in Norway. Characteristics of socialization peculiar to sailors' children are identified and explained.

Norwegian sailors' wives are generally characterized as ideal housewives, but it is pointed out that they are seen as a "potential threat to sexual morality" and that their behaviour is closely watched. In comparison with wives of nonsailors, significantly more sailors' wives thought that they bore too much responsibility for the children, that child rearing in general was difficult, that husbands should be more authoritarian and spend more time with the children and that the children missed fathers a lot. However, wives of the seamen also tended to hold onto an idealized image of their husbands as fathers.

Gronseth found that the returning father is treated as a "dear guest" and behaves like a "kind uncle." Children of seamen were found to think more highly of their fathers than children of land-based fathers. Boys were found to have more female identification than controls, and reacted to this with "compensatory masculinity."

Comparison of sailor and whaler families showed that rotational work patterns involving prolonged

father absences with little shore time leads to deep personality conflicts within offspring, whereas more frequent time with the father results in a better adjustment.

Gronseth, Erik and Per Olav Tillfr (n.d.). "Father Absence in Sailor Families: And its Impact Upon the Personality Development and Later Social Adjustment of the Children." In: Recherches Sur La Famille, Vol. 2, Institute for Social Research, Oslo, pp. 95-137.

Documents the effects of father absence on children of sailor's families. The focus is on personality development and how the children adjust during the period of absence.

The study group consisted of 40 Norwegian children whose fathers are sailors or whalers and periodically absent. The control group for comparison consisted of 40 similar children whose fathers are not absent. Data were generated from interviews with the mothers, and doll play tests with the children.

It was found that father absent children had over-protective mothers, the children were more dependent on their parents, more immature and identified more with their fathers than control children.

Father absent boys showed more femininity and strived more to act masculine. Father absent girls showed less masculinity than control girls.

Hall, R.C.W. and W. C. Simmons (1973). "The POW Wife: A Psychiatric Appraisal." Archives of General Psychiatry, 29(Nov.): pp. 690-694.

Hamilton, Marshall L. (1977). Father's Influence on Children. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Inc., Publishers, Chapter 2 "Father-Absence Effects," pp. 19-51.

A survey of a number of studies of the effects of father absence, comparing children without fathers to those with fathers.

Studies of father absence report detrimental effects on children's aggression, dependency, degree of adjustment or "psychopathology," delinquency rates, moral behaviour, success in the peace corps or military, premarital pregnancy rates,

masculinity in males, and intellectual performance.

The effects vary, depending on the kind of relationship the father had with the children and the mother before his absence began, the cause and duration of his absence, and the availability of other adult males to the children. Father-absence effects vary also with the age of the child when the absence began, presence of other developmental problems, sex and ordinal position of any siblings, behaviour of the mother during the absence, and the socio-economic status of the family, as well as other factors.

Hedges, J. and E. Sekscenski (1979). "Workers on Late Shifts in a Changing Economy." Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 102, pp. 14-22.

Heen, Hanne (1985). "Offshore Women." Paper presented at the Conference, "Women and Offshore Oil," St. John's, Newfoundland, September 5-7.

Examines the implications of women working offshore Norway, where they are 4-5% of the labour force. Major occupations are: catering, nurses, secretaries, plus some traditionally "male" occupations.

The study was carried out at Statfjord in 1980, of 75 women working there, only 32% had children. But these women had worked out offshore work and family life. Ratio of time offshore to time (weeks) home is 2:3. Three case studies of women (with children) working offshore are examined.

Having women offshore creates a more "natural" environment, and as women are chiefly in "traditional" roles (caretaking), it becomes more like home. Transitions are made easier. Women are generally in subordinate positions with few advancement opportunities. Women are in service/maintenance roles, not production. Social control of male-female relations is strict, and is reflected in "joking relationships" and emotional reserve. Having more women offshore (particularly in traditionally "male" occupations) will hopefully equalize the work environment and provide more opportunities for advancement for women.

Heen, Hanne and Jorun Solheim (1982). Oljearbeid og Familie-organisation. Oslo: Arbeidsforskningsinstituttene.

Heen, Hanne, Oystein Holler, and Jorun Solheim (1984). Nordsjøpendling, familie og lokalsamfunn. Oslo: Arbeidsforskningsinstituttene.

Hill, Reuben (1949). Families Under Stress: Adjustment to the Crises of War Separation and Reunion. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers.

A study of World War II crises of separation and reunion on 135 Iowa families, based on statistics and case studies.

Whether or not a crisis is created by father-absence depends upon: (1) the hardships of the event, (2) the resources of the family to meet the event, (3) the family's definition of the event.

Sixty-five factors were studied by statistical methods and about forty by case study. On the basis of the analysis it can be predicted which types of families will best adjust to crises of separation and reunion.

The study found that there are many different family types successful in coping with crises of separation and reunion. Crises varied in number and severity for each family. Adjustment usually followed pattern of disorganization - recovery - readjustment. Social time, not chronological time, determines the importance of events on family adjustment. Previous experience with crises aids adjustment. Families with a democratic-consultative power structure were found to be the most successful.

Hillenbrand, Elizabeth D. (1976). "Father Absence in Military Families." Family Coordinator, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 451-458.

A sample of 73 boys and 53 girls in the sixth grade of a school for military dependents were assessed on intelligence, classroom behaviour, parental dominance, parental identification and family constellation. In first born boys, cumulative father absence related significantly to enhanced quantitative ability and perception of the mother as the dominant parent. For boys with older siblings, early beginning absence related to

increased aggression and dependency, but absence did not relate to quantitative ability or maternal dominance. In girls, earlier beginning absence was related to decreased quantitative ability. Differences in how children cope with stress are discussed.

Holter, Oystein G. (1984). Catering for the Oil: Catering and the Reproduction of North Sea Communities. Oslo, Norway: Work Research Institutes.

This study investigates the role of support staff (catering and maintenance workers) on offshore drill rigs, and develop comparisons with other rig workers in Norway. The rotational pattern was usually two weeks on/off.

The study discusses work environment, job security, tasks, health, safety, and social environment on the rigs. One section discusses connections between work and home problems: e.g. deterioration in family communication because of absence. Out of 50 families interviewed, one third of husbands and two thirds of wives said they would prefer it if the husbands worked onshore.

Hunter, Edna J. (1978). "Family Role Structure and Family Adjustment Following Prolonged Separation." In: E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice, eds. Military Families: Adaptation to Change. New York: Praeger, pp. 185-193.

Study of adjustment of former prisoners-of-war and problems of separation and reunion. Also, compares resistance stance of the POW during captivity and harsh treatment received, to the success of a renewed relationship with family.

Fifty-two married former navy and marine corps POWs completed self-report inventories ("Family Development Check List") in 1974, one year after return. Men were POWs 61.7 months, average; mean age, 34.4 years. These questionnaires tested the husbands' perceptions of their personal/emotional adjustment, marital adjustment, father-child relationships, career adjustment. Other factors: family communication, self-esteem, harsh treatment (by captor).

The findings show that between-spouse agreement on factors (listed above) reflect the degree of harsh treatment and the resistance stance of the husband

during captivity. Higher levels of agreement indicates perceived better adjustment. Openness of family communication, high self-esteem (for husband and wife), between-spouse agreement on future career plans, various family tasks, roles, or philosophies determine the level of perceived marital happiness.

Isay, R. A. (1968). "The Submariner's Wives Syndrome." Psychiatric Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 647-652.

This paper, written by a staff psychiatrist at a Connecticut naval base using his own case studies, suggests that the choice of a frequently absent husband may in part be determined by the desire for extensive separations. Nevertheless, it also suggests that submariner's wives suffer from depression during their husbands' absence due in large part to their anger at being left. Therapy for these women consisted of helping them to verbalize their anger.

Jones, A. P. and M. C. Butler (1980). "A Role Transition Approach to the Stresses of Organizationally Induced Family Role Disruption." Journal of Marriage and Family, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 367-376.

This quantitative study considered 181 married U.S. Navy sailors, who responded to questionnaires about different aspects of family/work incompatibility. The results suggest that incompatibility between the demands of jobs and family is significantly related to problems of role transition consequent upon spousal absence.

Keller, Rodney C. (1973). "Issues in the Residential Treatment of Children of Military Personnel." Child Welfare, Vol. 52, No. 1, pp. 26-32.

With the enactment of the Military Medical Benefits Amendments Law of 1966, a greater range of mental health facilities were made accessible to children of military men. This study draws conclusions based on the observation of about 200 children over 5 years who were being treated at a residential treatment center for disturbed children of military personnel.

It was found that father absence resulted in an overly close relationship between mother and son. When a child's behavioural problem became

intolerable for the mother, the father would often reject outside help for fear of this becoming both a negative reflection on his job performance and an impediment to his security clearance.

Kenny, J. A. (1967). "The Child in the Military Community." Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, Vol. 6, No. 1.

LaGrone, D. M. (1978). "The Military Family Syndrome." American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 135, No. 9, pp. 1040-1043.

Through a short literature review and a case review of about 800 patients, this study examines factors in the military family syndrome: father absence, transiency, the husband-wife relationship, etc. Of the total cases, 12% had sought help during the father's absence; it is suggested that this is because the support that he has provided is gone or reduced. Military wives are found to become more independent during a husband's absence, deriving little support from friends and relatives and none from the military. Mothers fall into the role of go-betweens for fathers and children when fathers are away, and fathers often end up feeling rejected if their reintegration is difficult. The author recommends (i) that families be educated as to what to expect from the military, (ii) stabilized tours of duty and (iii) family reintegration sessions.

Lapsley, H. (1981). "The Community Impact of North Sea Oil." In: W. Cairns and P. Roger, eds. Onshore Impacts of Offshore Oil. London: Applied Science Publishers, pp. 173-184.

Larson, Lyle E. (1977). "The Impact of Resource Development on Individual and Family Well-Being." Prepared for Human Environment Committee, Alberta Oil Sand Environmental Research Program, Edmonton, February 15, 1977.

This study sought to establish what is known about development and social impact in Fort McMurray, Alberta. It reviews existing demographic and statistical materials relating to process and change, and includes discussion of problems such as alcohol abuse, and housing shortages. It suggests that extended work periods and household absence of men are possible causes of social and personal problems.

Lein, L, M. Durham, M. Pratt, M. Schudson, R. Thomas, and M. Weiss (n.d.). Final Report: Work and Family Life. Centre for the Study of Public Policy, Cambridge, Mass.

Lynn, David B., William L. Sawrey (1959). "The Effects of Father-Absence on Norwegian Boys and Girls," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 59, pp. 258-262.

A study of 80 Norwegian families, 40 of whom had fathers absent in the Navy. Data were collected from interviews with the mothers and children and observations of doll-play exercises.

The main findings were that father-absent boys showed more immaturity than father-present boys; father-absent boys tried to identify with their fathers more; father-absent boys made a more conscious effort to be masculine; father-absent boys experienced more difficulty in relating to their peers and siblings; and father-absent girls were more dependent on their mothers.

Lyon, Waldo and Lawrence L. Oldaker (1967). "The Child, the School, and the Military Family." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 269-270.

Concludes that adaptation is facilitated by the fact that many children of military families live in communities where their situation is the norm. Military fathers tend to be authoritarian and may demand too much of their children when home. A close, stable family and a homogeneous military community helps to compensate for lack of father attention.

McCubbin, H. I. (n.d.). "Family Separation and Reunion: Families of Prisoners of War and Servicemen Missing in Action." Naval Health Research Centre, San Diego, California.

A study of the effects on the family of fathers listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia. Centres around the time period when prisoners of war were being returned to the United States. A major question is what impact did this have on M.I.A. families since this lessened the hope that these fathers would come home.

The sample was collected from 160 M.I.A. wives who went to one of five week long religious retreats to discuss this situation. Data were collected from



seminars and discussion groups that the women were involved in.

Feelings about the situation produced three distinct groups. Women whose husbands had been absent for a long time (3 years plus) were more independent and trying to start a new life. Women whose husbands had been absent for about 2 years were developing this independence but felt guilty, torn between starting an independent new family life and hanging on to remnants of the old one. Those with the husband being M.I.A. recently were very insecure and unwilling to think about starting a new life. All were concerned about the lack of a male role model in the family and the impacts that this might have on their children.

McCubbin, H. I., P. G. Boss, L. F. Wilson, and G. R. Lester (1978). "Developing Family Invulnerability to Stress: Coping Patterns and Strategies Wives Employ in Managing Family Separations." Paper presented at the 9th World Congress of the International Sociological Association, Uppsala, Sweden.

McCubbin, H. I. and B. Dahl (1974). "Social and Mental Health Services to Families of Servicemen Missing in Action or Returned Prisoners of War." In: H. I. McCubbin et al., eds. Family Separation and Reunion, pp. 191-97. San Diego: Naval Health Research Centre.

McCubbin, H. I., B. Dahl, and E. J. Hunter (n.d.). "Research on the Military Family: An Assessment." In: N. Goldman and D. Segal, eds. Proceedings: Research Conference on the Social Psychology of Military Service. Chicago: Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society.

McCubbin, H. I., B. Dahl, and E. J. Hunter (1976). Families in the Military System. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

McCubbin, H. I., B. Dahl, G. R. Lester, D. Benson, and M. L. Robertson (1976). "Coping Repertoires of Families Adapting to Prolonged War-Induced Separations." Journal of Marriage and the Family, (August), pp. 461-471.

The adjustment of 47 families of servicemen missing in action in Vietnam was studied. A Q-sort inventory was developed and administered to obtain wives' perceptions of the coping behaviours they may have found valuable in adjusting to separation.

A factor analysis of the 46-item inventory revealed six coping behaviour patterns: (1) seeking resolution and expressing feelings; (2) maintaining family integrity; (3) establishing autonomy and maintaining family ties; (4) reducing anxiety; (5) establishing independence through self-development; and (6) maintaining the past and dependence on religion.

Independent predictors, background, attitudinal and situation variables obtained in 1972 and 1975 were analyzed in relation to each of the coping patterns. Multiple regression analyses revealed unique predictors and corroborated Reuben Hill's thesis of the critical value of the husband's and wife's background, the history of the marriage, the development of the family, and the stresses of separation in determining the family's response to separation. Findings are explained in terms of both psychological and sociological theories of coping.

McCubbin, H. I., B. Dahl, G. R. Lester, and B. A. Ross (1975). "The Returned Prisoner of War: Factors in Family Reintegration," Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 37, (August), pp. 471-478.

Data were collected longitudinally on 48 families of returned prisoners of war from Southeast Asia to identify the best combination of factors to be used to explain the degree of reintegration of the returnee into his family system. The first year of follow-up data is reported (1973) and four sets of data are considered: (1) background characteristics of husband and wife; (2) indices of family preparedness for separation and reunion; (3) reports of returnees' prison experiences and their psychiatric status at repatriation; (4) measures of family adjustment during separation. Linear multiple regression procedures were utilized to analyze the contribution of each predictor variable in accounting for the variance in the criteria and for deriving an equation where variables could be optimally weighted.

McCubbin, H. I., B. Dahl, G. R. Lester, and B. A. Ross (1977). "The Prisoner of War and His Children: Evidence for the Origin of Second Generational Effects of Captivity." International Journal of Sociology of the Family, Vol. 7 (January-June), pp. 25-36.

Examines the relationship between the stresses of captivity as POW and subsequent father-child relationships based on data from 42 navy families of returned American prisoners of the Vietnam war. Assessments were made immediately after the POW's return, and one year later.

Of 41 demographic, captivity and separation variables tested, 36 were not significant. The remaining five variables: severity of POW's experiences in captivity (especially captor's threats and promises) and physical abuse were negatively related to father-child reintegration criterion. The wife's relationship with her parents and her involvement with POW/MIA activities were also negatively related. Father's preparation of his family for war-induced separation was positively related to satisfaction in the post-separation father-child relationship.

McCubbin, H. I., E. J. Hunter, and P. J. Metres, Jr. (1974). "Children in Limbo." In: H. I. McCubbin, B. Dahl, P. J. Metres, Jr., E. J. Hunter, and J. A. Plag, eds. Family Separation and Reunion: Families of Prisoners of War and Servicemen Missing in Action, Report No. 74-24, pp. 65-76. San Diego: Naval Health Research Center.

Studies the reaction of children to the prolonged absence of a father missing in action or a prisoner of war.

Based on 1-3 hour group discussions with 124 children age 3-21+ (divided into three age groups) at religious retreats. Of the group, the fathers of 8 children had returned.

Children of returned prisoners of war expressed guilt over having had their fathers return while the others were still waiting. The children whose fathers had not returned indicated several difficult areas of adjustment due to social as well as family responsibilities, conflicts with school mates, frustrations over coping with prolonged absence, needing to support and protect their mothers, facing prospects of starting a new life without father, the probability of mother dating, lessening of hope for father's return.

Advanced maturity and greater sensitivity to other people were perceived by all the children as benefits of their situation.

McCubbin, H. I., E. J. Hunter, and P. J. Metres, Jr. (1974). "Adaptation of the Family to the PW/MIA Experience: An Overview." In: H. I. McCubbin, B. Dahl, P. J. Metres, E. J. Hunter, and J. A. Plag, eds. Family Separation and Reunion: Families of Prisoners and Servicemen Missing in Action, pp. 21-47. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

MacIntosh, H. (1968). "Separation Problems in Military Wives." American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 125, No. 2, pp. 260-265.

In this study of neuroses suffered by military wives who are separated from their husbands, 63 military wives are compared to 113 nonmilitary wives. All the women had sought psychiatric help and were being treated.

A cross-section of the study population revealed a number of differences such as the fact that army wives are younger and are more poorly educated than nonmilitary wives. These factors are correlated with poorer ego development, a lower intellectual capacity and lower frustration levels diagnosed in the military wives. Fewer wives of officers experienced psychiatric difficulties than wives of enlisted men. Wives of air force personnel were less likely to suffer problems than those of army men. These observations are explained by the fact that air force men and officers being non-enlisted.

The author concludes that servicemen should not be requested to return home because of their wives' psychiatric disorders as this would give the wife an opportunity for character regression. Women who cannot tolerate separation are said to suffer from "severe character pathology."

Melhuus, Marcit and Tordis Borchgrevink (1984). Sjofolk, familie og sarnfunn. Oslo: Arbeidsforskningsinstituttene.

Metres, P. J., H. I. McCubbin, and E. Hunter (1974). "Families of Returned Prisoners of War: Some Impressions on their Initial Reintegration." In: H. I. McCubbin, B. Dahl, P. J. Metres, E. J. Hunter, and J. A. Plag, eds. Family Separation and Reunion: Families of Prisoners and Servicemen Missing in Action, pp. 147-155. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office.

Moen, Elizabeth, Elsie Boulding, Jane Lillydahl, and Risa Palm (1981). Women and the Social Costs of Economic Development: Two Colorado Case Studies. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

This book examines a wide variety of effects of boomtowns on the existing social environment.

Rotational patterns for the construction workers vary from returning home every weekend for 3 days, to returning home for four months of the year and working away from home for the other 8 months. The married men, separated from their families are described as "frequently bored, lonesome and frustrated." Some of the families join their fathers in their camper-trailers for the summer holidays.

Some wives of migrant workers were interviewed. Very few were found to be willing to migrate with the husbands. Many had attempted to do so but found trailer living and frequent moves too difficult.

Morrice, J. K. W. (1978). "Psychosocial Problems in the Oil Industry." Update, Vol. 22, pp. 27-34.

Morrice, J. K. W. and R. C. Taylor (1978). "The Intermittent Husband Syndrome." New Society, Vol. 43, No. 796, pp. 12-13.

This paper focuses on the stress induced by the separation-reunion sequence experienced by the wives of offshore oil workers and fishermen using case histories as illustrations.

Fishermens' wives are identified as belonging to communities which are culturally accustomed to giving support to the wives of husbands working offshore. Although this provides fishermens' wives with some advantage over oil workers' wives, it is suggested that it also perpetuates immature dependency.

The "Intermittent Husband Syndrome" is found to be more common among oil workers' wives than fishermens' wives because oil workers and their wives are more likely to be products of a culture where husband and wife depend primarily on each other for emotional support.

Morrison, J. (1981). "Rethinking the Military Family Syndrome." American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 138, No. 3, pp. 354-57.

This study seeks to re-evaluate previous assertions that children of servicemen have more emotional and psychiatric disorders than children from the general population.

A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 140 military and 234 non-military children. All children were patients of the author over a six-year period. It was found that, of psychiatric disorders suffered by both groups of children, the only one more common among military children was schizophrenia. On this basis, the author concludes that the military family syndrome is not a reality.

Nice, D. Stephan (1978). "The Androgynous Wife and the Military Child." U. S. Naval Health Research Center, Report No. 78-14. Reprinted from E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice, eds. Children of Military Families: A Part and Yet Apart. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, pp. 25-37; References, pp. 172-177.

Routine naval deployments, and the resultant periods of family separation, are a prevalent social condition in the lives of naval personnel and their dependents. In order to examine the effects of temporary father absence on child adjustment, pre- and post-deployment measures were collected for 53 children of 36 families of navy aviator and support personnel scheduled for an eight-month deployment into the Western Pacific aboard a navy aircraft carrier. The average family had two children with a mean age of 9 (range 5 to 16).

The study hypothesizes that androgynous women (those who must take on both "masculine" and "feminine" roles while their husbands were gone) and their children, would better adjust to father absence than their non-androgynous counterparts. The Personal Attributes Questionnaire and the California Test of Personality were used to measure personality adjustment.

However, the hypothesis was not supported by the data. In general, all children improved in

personal and social adjustment during the deployment.

Nicholson, P. J. and P. J. Robinson (1980). Goodbye Sailor: The Importance of Friendship in Family Mobility and Separation. Inverness: Northpress (Inverness) Ltd.

Research carried out in a naval married quarters estate in southern England to examine the process by which women make and sustain friendships in a situation of separation, isolation and geographical mobility.

The way of life of naval wives produces a need for emotional support, acceptance and someone in whom to confide. Friendship patterns were aimed at overcoming the discontinuity of emotional relationships created by the mobility of service life. There was far more friendship activity on the estate than is general in a working class group. Wives without local kin, with young families and with absent husbands had more time and a greater need for social contact than their civilian counterparts.

Practical suggestions offered include provisions to make it easier for wives and children to get away from the estate and participate in larger social gatherings. High mobility rates and lack of residential stability inhibits the emergence of local leaders to disseminate information or organize activities, community meeting facilities and a civilian community animateur are suggested as the basis for establishing communications within the estate.

Northern Oil and Gas Action Program (NOGAP) (1985). "Rotation Study - Progress Report." Yellowknife: Department of Social Services, Government of Northwest Territories.

Objectives of the Rotation Study were: (i) to determine the effects of rotation on families and workers in the Beaufort Region; (ii) to assess the effects and to devise appropriate solutions. Methods used were: (i) literature review relating to the topic of rotation, commuting, and shift work; (ii) contact with key researchers on rotation impacts.

Most native peoples are, or were, "cultural commuters" (hunting, trapping), used to periodic separations from family and their community, the motivation for commuting for oil and gas employment is income support.

The negative effects are seen to be: increased child neglect, wife abuse, violence, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, gambling; the young moving away from traditional lifestyles, increases in school drop-outs.

The positive effects are: increased income - better hunting equipment, clothing, housing, and food. Improved recreational facilities; increased training opportunities for young people.

Conclusions drawn indicate that there have been very few comprehensive studies on rotation employment in the Beaufort Region, especially on the long-term effects and that more studies are needed.

O'Bierne, Kathleen P. (1976). "Waiting Wives." U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 102, September 1976, pp. 28-32.

Explores the difficulties many navy wives have because of their husbands' absences, including: lack of acceptance in the community, lack of knowledge about services available to them, shortage of support services (religious, medical, legal, counselling), irregular mail service, lack of communication with other navy wives, psychological adjustment to husband's periodic absences.

The paper focusses on submarine families at the U. S. Naval Submarine Base at New London, Connecticut, but is applicable to most situations where the husband is periodically absent. The average submariner's wife is between 21 - 25 years old, has probably moved geographically within the last two years, is probably distant from her family and from the families of other men on her husband's ship.

The author speaks from experience as a navy commander's wife and suggestions for improving the current situation include: phone-trees and social meetings of wives/families of men on the same boat (wardroom) or geographic area of residence, to



share support, companionship; expansion of Navy Relief facilities.

Orbach, M. K. (1975). The Cultural Systems of the Tuna Seinermen of San Diego, California. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International.

This study deals with the ways in which tuna fishermen on the California Coast cope with the demands of their lifestyle. Chapter 12 deals specifically in the fishermen's community integration. The feelings of frustration felt by the men at their inability to participate in their home life lead to closer relationships with crew members. This, in turn, makes integration to family life more difficult during shore leave.

When the husbands return to land, their presence is often felt to disturb the smooth-running of the household, by both the husband and the wife. Portuguese and Italian families are found to adjust more easily to father absence because of strong community ties.

Since the men are away for long periods, they return to a society in which fashions and news have changed rapidly. As a result, they often feel isolated and may try to integrate by indulging in conspicuous consumption.

Patterson, J. M. and H. I. McCubbin (1984). "Gender Roles and Coping." Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 46, pp. 95-104.

Investigates how the roles of family members, especially wives, change in order to cope with father-absence.

The sample consisted of 82 wives of U.S. navy aviators absent on an eight month tour of duty. A structured questionnaire was administered to the husband and wife before and during the period of absence.

It was found that wives who were able to take over the male gender role were more able to cope emotionally and practically.

Pearlman, C. A. Jr. (1970). "Separation Reactions of Married Women." American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 126, No. 7, pp. 946-950.

This study focuses on Navy wives. Two case histories are described. A pattern of coping with husband absence was identified as: initially feeling that 'I'll never live through 3 months without him,' tears and feelings of despair on his departure, then a gradual acquisition of a 'I don't care if he ever comes back attitude,' and finally a desire to punish him upon his return.

The capacity to be alone was identified as a major coping factor. This is related to the ego development of the woman in childhood. Some women identified as suffering from underdeveloped egos were able to tolerate their husbands after a period of weekly psychotherapy with the husband present.

Peck, Bruce B. and Dianne Schroeder (1976). "Psychotherapy with the Father Absent Military Family." Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling, Vol. 2, pp. 23-30.

Discusses the typical problems of military families (with father absent) which seek psychotherapy. Notes that the lack of mental health facilities (and the stigma associated with using such facilities) on bases have caused military families to seek civilian services. Discusses problems of divorce, infidelity, psychosomatic complaints, drug and alcohol abuse. States that when fathers are absent, mothers "give up on children," then blame delinquent behaviour on fathers' absence.

Suggested treatment is psychotherapy sessions with mother and children together, conducted by a "co-therapy team" comprising 2 therapists, one male and one female.

Pueschel, Janet and Ronald Moglia (1977). "The Effects of the Penal Environment on Familial Relationships." The Family Coordinator, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 373-375.

Reviews the literature on the effects of imprisonment on the family, the prisoner, and society. A major concern of many prisoners is the enforced separation from the family. Imprisonment is demoralizing, and prisoners and their families are stigmatized. Imprisonment may produce monetary hardships for the family and juvenile delinquency and school drop-outs are common among prisoner's children.

The report suggests the liberalization of visiting rules as there is a strong relationship between parole success and the prisoner's ability to maintain strong family ties while in prison. After release, family ties continue to be useful resources for the ex-offender's adjustment to a free society.

Rembowski, Jozef (1978). "The Effect of Father Absence on Children of Merchant Seamen." Polish Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 37-45.

The research for this study was done in Poland with members of fishermen's families from Gdansk.

A review of previous studies of the effects of father absence on the children of seamen is undertaken. These studies indicated that the father is seen as a kinder, more generous figure in seamen's families than among the control families. Boys are identified as suffering more than girls.

A further study using 80 child subjects and 80 children as a control group indicated that the mother is the most loved parent in both groups, but fathers are idealized to a greater extent by the children of seamen.

Reiss, David and Mary Ellen Oliveri (1980). "Family Paradigm and Family Coping: A Proposal for Linking the Family's Intrinsic Adaptive Capacities to its Responses to Stress." Family Relations, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 431-444.

Examines the hypothesis that the family's adaptive capacities are shaped by its abiding conception of the social world in which it lives. This paradigm serves as a basis for orientation in times of crisis.

The dimensions of the paradigm are: (1) configuration - conclusions based on testing of over 400 families. The family's perceived ability to master a situation; (2) co-ordination - solidarity in the family organization; (3) closure - high closure represented by an emphasis on the here-and-now, final decisions delayed until the maximum amount of information is gathered; low closure, an emphasis on tradition, the past, stability, decisions tended to be reached quickly.

Three phases of family coping are evident: (1) definition of the event and search for additional information; (2) initial responses and trial solutions; (3) final decision or closing position and the family's commitment to this.

Rienerth, Janice G. (1977). The Impact of Male Absenteeism on the Structure and Organization of the Military Family. Dissertation Abstract International, 38(5-A), November 1977, pp. 3286-3287.

An examination of the effect of husband-father absence on the structure and organization of the military family based on results of questionnaire surveys of a sample of wives on two U. S. air force bases. The hypothesis tested was that separation of the husband-father would be directly related to increased female-centeredness in the family. The findings support the hypothesis with first separations having the greatest effect and subsequent separations a diminishing effect.

Rienerth, Janice G. (1978). "Separation and Female Centeredness in the Military Family." In: E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice, eds. Military Families: Adaptation to Change. New York: Praeger, pp. 169-184.

Examines how father absence leads to female-centeredness as an adaptation.

Examines the two-person single career family phenomenon, and notes that the greatest pressures on a wife to accept this pattern occur in situations where the employing institution operates within a social enclave as on an army post. Here the wife's personal ambitions and identity tend to be submerged in her husband's. Geographic mobility is often necessary and the wife must bear the greater burden of this stress.

Questionnaires were administered to 156 wives of U. S. air force officer personnel at two midwestern U. S. bases. The results show that female centeredness was found to be significantly related to number and length of separations; the first separation had greatest effect on structure of military family. Other factors examined were: presence of children (not significant); number of children (not significant); sex of oldest child (greater effect if male child); married service time (greater effect if over 12 years); rank of husband (greater

effect if of medium rank, e.g. captain or major); status (i.e. regular or reserve officers [not significant]); career intent (significant if husband planned military career).

Rosenfeld, J., E. Rosenstein, and M. Raab (1973). "Sailor Families: The Nature and Effects of One Kind of Father Absence." Child Welfare, Vol. 52, No. 1, pp. 33-43.

A study with a mandate to identify present and potential needs of Israeli merchant seamen. Nine groups of 80 Israeli sailors were interviewed with and without their wives. Seamen did not tend to work regular stints at sea. Some were absent for most of the year, others for part of it.

Wives of the seamen reported feelings of loneliness and responsibility for maintaining an intact, unified household. They were stricter than the wives of non-seamen while continually representing the absent father favourably, thus contributing to childrens' idealization of their father.

Many of the merchant seamen interviewed felt guilty about their lack of involvement in the upbringing of their children. Other problems include the sailors double standard of morality, aggressive behaviour spawned by all-male company, and unrealistic expectations of domestic life.

Sears, Robert R., H. Margaret, P. Pintler, and Pauline S. Sears (1946). "Effect of Father Separation on Preschool Children's Doll Play Aggression," Child Development, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 219-243.

Studies the difference in aggressive behaviour between father-absent and father-present children in America. 22 boys and 20 girls in each of twelve day-care centres were studied. Half the children had fathers absent on military service. Data were collected from observation of controlled doll-play situations.

The study concludes that father-absent boys were less aggressive than father-present boys. The reverse was true of the girls.

Seidenberg, R. (1973). Corporate Wives - Corporate Casualties? New York: American Management Association, Inc.

Seplin, C. D. (1952). "A Study of the Influence of the Fathers Absence for Military Service," Smith College Studies in Social Work, Vol. 22, pp. 123-124.

Attempts to assess the effects of father-absence during a child's early years on the child's later development.

Two children were studied from each of 43 families. In the study group the father was absent during the child's formative years, and in the control group the father's absence came later in the child's development. Data were obtained from interviews with the mothers.

The study found that twice as many study group children exhibited behaviour disturbances and that more boys had behaviour problems than girls.

Snyder, Alice I. (1978). "Periodic Marital Separations and Physical Illness." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 48, pp. 637-43.

The hypothesis that wives of submariners suffer from more physical ailments than wives in the general population is tested by a study of wives whose husbands serve on the fleet ballistic missile (FBM) submarines. The husbands have a regular tour of duty of 3.5 months which is compensated for by 3 months on land.

The sample of 48 was drawn from lower middle to middle class, caucasian women between the ages of 18 and 39. A questionnaire was administered to determine the number of physical complaints both when the husbands are at sea and home. Interviews were conducted with a subset of the survey population.

The findings indicate that the wives of FBM husbands suffer a significantly greater number of illnesses during the husband's absence.

Solberg, Anne Kristine (1985). "Dad's Working Offshore: Family Adjustment to Oil-Commuting." Paper for the International Conference on Women and Offshore Oil, St. John's, Newfoundland, 5-7 September 1985.

Discusses the impact of offshore commuting on families in two communities in the county of Rogoland, Norway. Thirty-one families were

interviewed, twenty-three of which are oil-commuters. Rogoland is an area which has historically experienced periods of father absence (fishing, sailing). In such communities, social networks and other types of cooperation may have developed already.

Of the 31 families, 7 men worked on supply ships, all averaged four years oil-commuting, and most had fished or sailed before. The average number of children was 3.1; the parental age mode was in the thirties, the children's age range, 8-13. The usual work pattern was 2 weeks on/2 weeks off, or 2 on/3 off; or up to 6 on/6 off (at time of this study).

The study found that women become more independent over time. Men do more housework (though they're selective) and spend more time with children than most onshore counterparts. Children feel time flies when father is home, but drags when he's gone. Telephone communication between family members offshore/onshore is seen as being very important in maintaining strong family ties.

Solheim, Jorun and J. Hanssen-Baver (1983). Complexity and Communitality on a North Sea Platform. Oslo: Work Research Institutes.

Based on a three-day visit to a Norwegian North Sea oil platform, this paper is part of a larger study of the relationship between work organization in the offshore oil industry, family life and local community structures on shore. The authors contend that the two separate environments are highly interdependent, e.g. how a worker copes offshore will be greatly influenced by his home situation.

Solheim, Jorun (1984). Offshore Commuting and Family Adaptation in the Local Community. Oslo: Work Research Institutes.

This paper is part of a body of research into the relationship between work organization in the Norwegian offshore oil industry and family life, and local community structures on shore. Solheim contrasts the "traditional" family structure with a gender-based division of responsibilities, with the more "modern" family in which husbands are expected to take an active role in the raising of children, etc. and suggests that the former type of marriage

is less problematic for offshore rotational shift workers. Nevertheless, the data indicate that offshore workers play a greater part in housework and child care than they had before working offshore.

Solheim, Jorun (1985). "Offshore Commuting and Family Adaptation in the Local Community." Paper presented at the Conference, "Women and Offshore Oil," St. John's, Newfoundland, 5-7 September 1985.

Examines the conflict between offshore work and family life for the offshore worker (usually the husband/father) and the wife/mother, in Norway.

The distinction between "work" and "family" spheres is blurring. The emphasis is on personal involvement and closeness, rather than a working partnership, in the modern family. Current work patterns illustrate a decrease in the amount of domestic work and male work time and an increase in female work time and leisure time for both. Increased leisure time is the major advantage perceived from offshore work, not the work itself.

Offshore and onshore activity patterns are fundamentally different. Social relations offshore are characterized by passivity, lack of variation and control. The offshore worker needs a transition period to have life, which is relatively free and unstructured. But his "free time" may become "idle time" if projects are not planned and accomplished.

Offshore work illustrates three distinct social realities: his offshore life; her single life at home; and joint life of "togetherness," all have to fit each other if the offshore family is to survive as a family.

Stoddard, Ellwyn R. and Claude E. Cabanillas (1976). "The Army Officer's Wife: Social Stresses in a Complementary Role." In: Nancy Goldman and David Segal, eds. The Social Psychology of Military Service, pp. 151-71. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Thorsrud, Einar (1982). "New Perspectives on the World of Work: Work-School-Family - Towards a New Career Pattern?" Human Relations, Vol. 35, No. 12, pp. 1085-1094.



The author analyzes the basic nature of changes in the traditional career of seamen in Norway. From a mono-role to a multi-role system, from a life-long career to a multi-phase career system. The transition which has begun among sailors depends on a corresponding change in the school system. A model is outlined to explain how a closed uniform school system is about to change by increasing the autonomy and participation in a learning and development process inside schools, and between schools and other institutions. Some early signs of change in the family pattern of seamen indicate the interdependence between work, school and family.

As work place relations change, so do those of the home. "Flexibility in work organizations...enable both men and women to have a varying degree of work and family involvement during different phases of life. Multiple careers will be more common..."

Tillfr, P. O. (1958). "Father Absence and Personality Development of Children in Sailor Families." Nordisk Psykologi's Monograph Series, No. 9. Oslo: Institute of Social Research.

Trunnell, Thomas L. (1968). "The Absent Father's Children's Emotional Disturbances," Archives of General Psychiatry, Vol. 19, pp. 180-188.

A study of 107 child hospital patients in San Francisco whose fathers were absent from the home, and a control group of 50 children whose names were alphabetically adjacent to that of the study group. Data came from the children's medical charts.

The findings were inconclusive, but tended to support the author's three main hypotheses: first that father-absent children show more evidence of emotional disturbance, and that the severity of the disturbance is related to the age of the child and length of the absence; second, that psychological efforts to restore the missing father result in identifiable behaviour patterns in the child; and third, that paternal absence is not a long psychotoxic agent.

Van Vranken, Edwin W. and Dorothy M. Benson (1978). "Family Awareness and Perceived Helpfulness of Community Supports." In: E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice, eds.

Military Families: Adaptation to Change. New York: Praeger, pp. 209-221.

Tests the hypothesis that the military family's adaptability to the stresses of separation will be enhanced by a greater awareness of the social supports available to them. The study examines the relationship between the wife's awareness of, perceived helpfulness of, and use of community supports, and selected demographic, family and adjustment variables.

Eighty-two families of naval personnel attached to attack and fighter squadrons scheduled for 8 month tours of duty on an air craft carrier formed the basis for the sample. Structured self-report questionnaires were administered to wives 2-3 months before deployment.

Results show that the majority of wives had some knowledge of informal military resources (friends, clergy, wives' groups, etc.) but limited knowledge of formal, military or civilian, services. Awareness was higher among career officers' wives with higher education levels and positive feelings about military life. Length of service and career orientation was also linked to awareness, perceived value and use of services. Concludes that better information about the available services is needed.

Voydanoff, Patricia (1980). "Work Roles as Stressors in Corporate Families." Family Relations, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 489-494.

Routine father absence is identified as a major source of stress in corporate families. The father's attitude toward participating in family life is said to be as, or more, important than the actual length of time spent with the family.

Coping mechanisms for dealing with father absence were found to be similar to those employed by Navy wives. These include maintenance of family integrity, having close friendships, managing the psychological strain, believing in the husband's career and developing self-reliance.

Webster, E., E. Hunter, and D. Palermo (1977). "Changing Roles in Military Families Following Prolonged Separation." In: E. J. Hunter, ed. Changing Families in a

Changing Military System. Proceedings of a Panel at  
84th American Psychological Association, Chicago.

Weiss, R. (1975). Marital Separation. New York: Basic  
Books.

Wood, Chris (1983). "Offshore Cowboys." Atlantic Insight,  
November 1983.

This popular periodical article discusses the lives of workers in the Newfoundland and Nova Scotia offshore oil drilling industry. It includes comments from the workers and their wives. Some wives expressed their dislike of the two weeks on four weeks off rotations, and discuss the "readjustment time" necessary when their husbands return to shore. Other wives say when their husbands come home "it's like a honeymoon every two weeks."

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