

PASSING THE TIME: THE LIVES OF WOMEN  
IN A NORTHERN INDUSTRIAL TOWN

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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LINDA ANN PARSONS







PASSING THE TIME:  
THE LIVES OF WOMEN IN A NORTHERN INDUSTRIAL TOWN.

by

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in partial fulfilment of  
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Abstract

Newfoundlanders are generally familiar with both the idea of working in the north and with towns built by resource-extracting companies to house workers and their families. Not as well known is what the experience of migration to the north and life in such a single-industry town is like, particularly for women. This thesis examines that experience, presenting data collected during a two month period of interviews with a sample of female residents from Labrador City.

Relying heavily on a phenomenological tradition of ethnography, the author attempted to allow her respondents to define the aspects of their lives which were of salient importance to their own sense of well-being. This data was then organized and interpreted to bring out the features of migration and subsequent residence in Labrador City which are particularly crucial for women's happiness and to emphasize the strategies which they use to cope with their problems.

The thesis devotes attention, in particular, to early efforts to recruit women to Labrador City, to female migration experience and its motivation, and to women's problems related to the demographic, economic and

even climatic features of life in a northern, single-  
industry town.  
Women have quite different experiences in northern  
industrial towns than do men. This is the focus of the  
following text, which examines the attractions and  
difficulties women have found in living in Labrador City  
and the solutions they've devised for coping.



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## INTRODUCTION & FOCUS

The effects of moving to work, specifically on women who often do not enjoy all the benefits of work migration, have seldom been enumerated and provide the concern for this thesis. Newfoundland has a long history of chronic unemployment so that there are always those who must move "up along". I chose my topic for this, as well as personal reasons since I too have had experience of such moves.

Preliminary observations, to get a sketchy idea of what themes might be worth exploring, occurred during two work trips to Labrador City (covering the bulk of 1976 and 1980) and on a research stint in Lark Harbour, Newfoundland: June-July, 1982. The latter research was undertaken as an interviewer in a study conducted by Dr. B. Richling, currently of Mount St. Vincent University and its results were published in the Canadian Journal of Sociology (Richling, 1985). It focused on the motives for return migration among Newfoundlanders in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Labrador City and other northern and western industrial towns. In this preliminary work it became obvious that a popular notion of migration as a freely chosen means for economic advancement was out of touch with reality. Migrants moved because they had to work:

they stayed on for longer-than-necessary periods because they liked the financial rewards (see chap. 1 which gives an overview of the literature). My two Labrador City trips included employment in fields unrelated to academic sociology: once as a summer-replacement announcer-operator with the local television station (1976) and the second time (1980) as an office clerk. Both stays afforded ample opportunities for observing what life is like as a woman in an isolated industrial community: the roles assigned to women, the common notions of why they "can't handle" such places and the rationalizations for why they must stay within their confined roles. Since little sociological work had been done on women in these communities, I decided to try to provide at least one case study, carried out by means of interviews in the fall of 1982. Many direct quotations from these interviews are included in the thesis. The respondents were quite articulate in describing their lives, which is likely to be the case in any study using the open-ended questioning method.

Though Labrador City is a part of Newfoundland, living there involved migration for all its residents, and particularly for women the incumbent rewards of such a move could be problematic. Still, they pulled up roots and followed their men. I initially set as my problem to

discover how these women were motivated to migrate, what their experiences of moving were actually like, and what they found upon their arrival. In the course of carrying out the interviews and allowing women to define the salient terms of their experiences themselves, my initial focus was expanded. I had originally been primarily concerned with women's migration and with their subsequent employment experience since work and economic opportunity are the major incentives in moving north.

In the light of the interviews, however, I soon realized that women faced important non-employment related problems in a single-industry town, some of them exacerbated by a northern setting. Thus the thesis is to deal, more than I had initially planned, with such issues as housing problems in a company-dominated town, northern climate and the isolation it imposes, concerns for children in relation to the decision to migrate and to stay, etc.

I also focus on the social pressures and beliefs which tend to preserve the status quo for women while still allowing them to survive in Labrador City. Women have their own ideological persuasions that are often contradictory. For example, respondents strongly believed in the ethics of individual achievement and migrant success, although they realized how unlikely it



would be for them as women to 'get ahead'.

Women's understanding of success and well-being is a subject which runs throughout the thesis. Chapters one and two offer a literature overview and description of the methodology which was used in the study. Chapter three outlines the setting of the study, offering a look at Labrador City's history from its early days as a workcamp to its state of development in 1982 when I carried out my research. The process of migration as experienced by women in particular is the subject of chapter four. Women's understanding of their family's welfare and their reasons for moving north are given attention in chapter five, while the problems of their lives in Labrador City are described in chapter six. Chapter seven focuses upon women's work and economic opportunities in a male-oriented mining town and chapter eight offers a conclusion of the thesis.

## CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Since my original intention had been to examine the effects of migration to the north for women, I shall begin this chapter with an overview of the pertinent readings that were initially used. The literature that criticises androcentric social research is also reviewed in this first section since it provides the rationale for an attempt at studying women on their own terms. The next section on the readings used in establishing the methodology describes how this study was carried out in Labrador City during 1982, and the section following that looks at the sources used in understanding the setting. The last three sections deal with the readings that were pertinent to the informants' responses during the interviews for this thesis; topics which they, themselves, raised and expounded upon.

### Preliminary readings and sexism in migration research

The term "mobility" in an industrial society often evokes images of the individual's rewards: success at work, at progressing up the social scale and at finding one's self-fulfilling 'place' in society. Geographical mobility, frequently assumed to be incidental to this process, is often associated with 'male' work in

particular. In North America a willingness to move, if necessary, has sometimes been a prerequisite for finding and keeping a 'good' job and as such, it has become a "taken-for-granted" reality in the lives of many (Martin-Matthews 1980; Demmler-Kane 1980).

In much of the literature on migration the migrant is characterised as male, willing to travel far, and enjoying both financial and occupational advancements after his move. He moves only to those places where he might "maximize" his earning power. Women, on the other hand, are viewed as 'conservative', disinclined to moving very far from home and 'seeking' opportunities in the tertiary sector only. (This latter point is sometimes used as a justification for the existence of the "dual labour market" and the lower wages paid in service-oriented jobs which are considered to be, and often are, the best available for women who must juggle many rôles.) Adams (1968; 1970), Boudway and Green (1975), Gauthier (1980), Kalbach and McVey (1971) are all statistically-based studies of general trends in migration in Canada and in Newfoundland and they represent migrants and women as characterized above. Thus, in a Parsonian model described by Demmler-Kane (1980), the modern working/family man moves for his own advantage, and this, in turn, serves the industrial order well. By moving

along to maximize his returns, the individual is relieving an oversupply of labour at his place of origin and fulfilling the demand for labour elsewhere: the national labour supply is (theoretically) 'balanced' (Copes 1971; Courchene 1974; Kaldour 1974).

Before going to Labrador City for the 1982 fieldwork, I read several of these functionalist and, I would argue, male-biased works on migration and found them to be not only inadequate but also widely used in governmental policy platforms over the past three decades. Indeed, "... (the) primary purpose of labour market policies is to facilitate more smoothly functioning labour markets by increasing mobility." (Employment and Immigration Canada 1981:46).

Migration has been advocated as a method of redistributing the national labour supply in both federal and provincial manpower policies. Over the years, several programs have been instituted in Newfoundland to train workers for occupations that simply didn't exist at home; to induce and direct geographical relocation; and to 'modernize' work attitudes. Specifically, the change of attitude sought was a readiness to move in pursuit of self-interest, rather than staying on at home for the sake of family and 'tradition' (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1953; 1957; 1960; 1967).

This tactic is still being used by both federal and provincial governments to stimulate migration (Economic Council of Canada 1980; Employment and Immigration Canada 1981). Permanent out-migration from underdeveloped to highly industrialized areas, or areas with a high potential for development, is encouraged while return migration is discouraged.

Since 1980 the federal government has actually offered various types of mobility assistance to individuals and their families who are moving for work, with the usual qualifications attached. 'Assistance' is supplementary rather than covering the total costs of moving and the amount allotted to each applicant is determined by a combination of factors: the salary received at destination; the number of dependents that must be moved; and the distance travelled.

But 'real' people don't always match the models of migrants used here and this can pose quite an enigma to the various officials who use such models. For example, Newfoundland return migrants have been viewed by the federal government as a little TOO opportunistic in that their pursuit of their own advantage doesn't always serve to help balance national labour supply and demand (Economic Council of Canada 1980; Employment and Immigration Canada 1981). They are allegedly using

migration as a "stop-gap" source of income and Unemployment Insurance stamps when there are no jobs at "Home", subsequently returning home where it is cheaper to live (ie. in an outpost where each owns his own home as opposed to renting in an urban center). This does nothing for the overall economic development of the country and it can be detrimental to industry when these movers create shortages on the industrial sites. Critics of return migrants claim that if they would but stay and wait for awhile, after being laid off, new jobs would soon open up again and the labour supply would be secure for industry (Copes 1974; Courchene 1974; Employment and Immigration Canada 1980). Such a perspective is governed by the interests of industry rather than the migrants themselves as became obvious to me after working on Richling's 1985 project (fieldwork carried out in 1982).

If the 'functional' model of migration has limitations in the return migrant case, it most definitely has them in the case of women, giving one sympathy with Eichler's (1980; 1983) claim that such research is sexist. When women move away from the island of Newfoundland to work, they must move just as far as men, belying their 'conservative' tendencies. In her 1974 study of Newfoundland migrants in Hamilton, Ontario, Martin (who later became Martin-Matthews) found that

women had moved as often and as far as men. Fully fifty-one percent of the total interviewed in her study were female and more than one third of all of the male and female respondents had made an interprovincial, long-distance journey on their first move. This is not surprising considering the dearth of work opportunities in the Atlantic provinces. In addition, women rarely realize a better income from the move. Demmler-Kane (1980:82ff.) in particular notes case studies which have shown that while men do enjoy better incomes by moving interregionally, both married and single women are more likely to experience a lowering in pay even when employed in the same capacities at the origin and destination.

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Studies with a 'male perspective' miss the import of the discrepancy between male and female migrant experience for women's lives. Regarded an ancillary to her worker/husband, the migrant woman, according to Demmler-Kane (1980) simply becomes "lost" in the "taken-for-granted phenomena" of migration as an opportunity for her husband's career mobility. She is passively "there". Kalbach and McVey (1981) justify this by the "fact" that female migrants are "...accompanying families rather than responding to job opportunities."

The difficulties met in applying much of the migration research to women's experience underline what

Eichler (1980; 1983) describes as the problem of research which takes an "androcentric perspective", implicitly taking male experience as the norm, and in doing so, rendering women invisible or seemingly deviant. Thus, the wage inequality existing between male and female migrants, as noted by Demmler-Kane (1980), is implicitly explained by Kalbach and McVey (1981) as due to the tendency of women to place more emphasis on their familial than work roles. While this may be so, it certainly cannot erase the fact that women may not even have the same opportunities as men when migrating. True to Eichler's description of writing with an "androcentric perspective", the ideal typical migrant is taken to be male while women are described solely in terms of their relations to men.

When women have been the primary subjects of migrant research they are, again, often approached on the basis of some very sexist assumptions. Isolated variables are considered, such as any depression associated with the move, or subsequent contact with kin, or the level of their family's 'satisfaction' afterwards (Krahn et. al. 1981; Marris 1974; Mincer 1978; Viney and Bazely 1977; Weiss 1973) and these often serve to emphasize the 'traditional' aspects of women's roles while ignoring other changes in their lives that may be of equal



consequence to the subjects themselves.

For example, Krahn et. al. (1981) note that family satisfaction while living in Fort McMurray (one Newfoundland-migrant center in Western Canada) is increased when there is more parent-child interaction after the move. Mothers, then, are generally happier if they spend more time with their children. This says nothing of the fact that mothers may have little opportunity to do much else, having few 'contacts' in the local labour market and a sketchy work history from moving. Marris (1974) and Weiss (1973) offer psychological treatises on the causes of loneliness (separation from kin and community, etc.) and point out ways that (more often) women can accept such changes with a positive outlook. As Chesler (1972) might point out, they are providing therapy to women aimed at teaching them to adjust to a situation rather than change it.

Mincer (1978) looks at women as "tied movers" and the study does make some provision for their active participation in the decision to migrate. However, when noting the decrease of female earnings and labour force participation among migrant women, the study again attributes this to "family ties" only, brushing over the fact that women are moving for their husband's careers at the expense of their own, and that the same opportunities

are often not available to them. This study found that women's work deters migration to some extent, but it also contributes to "marital instability" because of this.

All of these works reflect on partial aspects of an entire change in individual lives and tend to regard women as inevitably affected by family roles rather than socially exploited through the migrant process. Few, if any of the circumstances of the woman's life are actually considered apart from her role as mother and wife, and this serves to illustrate Oakley's (1974) statement that women in such studies "...are, in part, the way they are because of the way they are thought to be." They are viewed primarily as housewives and mothers, both in 'academia' and in the real world, and consequently, it is hard for them to break away from such a mold. As Martin-Matthews' (1980) study from a "symbolic-interactionist" stance has shown, people create their worlds, and themselves, out of both their subjective and objective experiences in life; from both what they feel themselves to be and the image that 'significant others' seem to have of them.

What I have attempted, then, is an approach to women's migration which avoids an androcentric perspective and methodology (Eichler 1980; 1983). This means looking at what is important to women; at what

actually happens in their lives while migrating (and not categorizing them exclusively in terms of their relations to family); at the whole of their experience, rather than a small part of it. In this attempt I have found some studies in migration literature to be helpful.

Some cross-cultural studies have recognized women as indispensable to the migrant unit, economically and otherwise. These works are situationally and historically specific, but they provide a framework for a new focus by offering some long-overdue examples of female initiative and entrepreneurship in migration.

Those used for this thesis prior to the fieldwork included Dinerman's (1978) study of illegal Mexican migrants who were U.S.-bound because of obligations within their social networks to pay off past debts. During the actual moves there were "reciprocal household arrangements" (ie. a sharing of accomodation and travel expenses among kin and friends) and women were quite economically active within the family as well as outside of it when their men were unemployed. Boserup (1978) looks at women's economic activity in the context of industrial development in the third world, finding that women often perform much, if not most of the agricultural "coolie" work at home while men migrate to mining, milling or industrial areas to work. While

economically active, the women studied in both of these works still work within a fairly strict sexual division of labour.

Whiteford (1978) describes a change in sex roles as a result of migration from Columbia, as does Bloch (1976) studying Polish immigrants to the U.S. and Denich (1976) who looks at urbanization in Yugoslavia. All three found that by moving to more urban areas women have greater chances to work than they did in a rural setting, and more leeway to do so if their husbands are unemployed. As a result, sex roles were not as rigidly adhered to as they were prior to the move. The work of these migrant women, however, was usually poorly paid and unskilled. Whiteford (1978) maintains that because of this, women became "innovative" and "entrepreneurial" in peddling and other income-generating activities. They would also visit their own families more often in the cities, having moved away from the patrilocal situations of rural settings, and because they could call on family for help, they had a little more power in the household. Nevertheless, this "greater freedom and economic equality" was tempered by the traditional "marianismo" ideal of femininity (ie. female superiority in moral self-sacrifice and spirit).

Bloch (1976) found that Polish immigrant women also went through a change in sex roles, though not with such positive results. Their work as wage labourers and the increased importance attached to their economic gains resulted in "greater individuation" and "family disintegration". Other family members did not always want the woman working for a living. From another angle on the gender role question in migration, Denich (1976) found that a separation (usually state-induced) from rural traditions in Yugoslavia actually resulted in a greater degree of centrality for women in the household, since residence in urban areas was no longer patrilocal. This, of course, served to perpetuate their lesser participation in any sort of public life.

Melville (1978) described the negative results of migration and of the acculturation experience for Mexican women in the U.S. Their difficulties stemmed from language barriers, separation from kin, dependence on the husband for all modes of transport and communications, the fear of deportation, etc. The husbands of working women resented their earning power, felt inadequate as providers, and refused to help with housework and childcare. As frustrating as such situations were, work did ease the tensions of loneliness and dependency for these women, as did trips home and contacts made in

special interest community groups.

These studies present different aspects of the changes that can occur in the lives of migrant women and as preliminary readings, they were invaluable in providing general guidelines for the fieldwork in Labrador City. Many of the issues they raised were also evident in Labrador City, among certain individual respondents. Despite the wide cultural variation in migrant experiences, I found some of this material was more relevant to the Labrador City situation than the statistical works or the studies of more fragmented aspects of moving. The strength of these ethnographic studies was that they described events from an holistic perspective. They inspired me to attempt a similar approach in order to convey the full extent of the effects that migration can have on women's lives.

#### Readings on methodology

One of my concerns in approaching the Labrador City fieldwork was to try to avoid a sexist or androcentric perspective. Oakley (1974:3) advocates studying with the interests of women in "...the forefront of one's mind, in order to make the invisible visible." Lofland (1975) and Eichler (1980;1983) warn against adopting as models

studies with a predominantly "male" view, where men constitute the norm to measure women against, and women and their circumstances fade into a background of unimportance.

Morgan (1985) sees phenomenology as a method helping the researcher to avoid sexism in the study of women because it is composed of an holistic approach and its organizing categories are extracted from the respondents' expressions rather than imposed as a preordained schedule of questions. Morgan's political tract (1985) on the roles incumbent on family members was of some help, as well as articles by Smith (1974) and Turner (1974) on the merits of ethnomethodology and phenomenology.

Spradley and McCurdy (1972) offer a complete work on the use of ethnomethodology in social studies, a type of "user's guide". Oakley (1974), Rubin (1976) and Martin-Matthews (1980) all expound persuasively on the benefits of open-ended interviews, such as were used in this research. In addition, Martin (1974; and later referred to as Martin-Matthews), Matthews (1976) and the Newfoundland Statistics Agency (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1982) all have questionnaires which were useful as guidelines in composing the ones used here (and appended in the back of the thesis).

Readings used in understanding the setting

Material on the historical development of Labrador City was derived from several studies and articles. The older works include a 1962 issue of the Northern Miner, Retty (1951), Ritchie (1955), Young (1958) and Howse (1967). These provided actual data and insight into the ideology which accompanied the building of a "modern industrial center" in the north. The 1972 edition of Bradwin's (1922) classic on bunkhouse life in Canada's work camps provided comparison with Labrador workcamps of the 1950's. Recent retrospective articles were to be found in: Labrador Resources Advisory Council (1975), The Auróra (1980), the Labrador Free Press (1980), the Evening Telegram and works by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador (1977; 1983).

Lucas' (1971) study of three Canadian single- industry communities provides an almost perfect match for the physical exigencies of life in Labrador City, including its history, economy and social life. Historically, Labrador City has gone through at least three of the four "stages" that Lucas drew for these towns. Lucas' painstaking description of the social constraints of life in such towns was also very apt, though he only minimally referred to the effects that these would have on women. The focus of Lucas' work is



more upon the 'worker' (ie. male) population though to be fair, he does offer a few insights into women's experience such as attributing the high population turnover among married couples to "...wives going quietly batty.." (p. 58) while their husbands have work to turn to for comfort.

Foote (1979) also describes a single industry community where the occupational (and consequently social) hierarchies are somewhat similar to those in Labrador City. Like Lucas, though, he devotes little attention to the roles that women play in these 'masculine' societies, and there are features of his study which render comparisons to Labrador City relatively useless. Port Hawkesbury is an established and far from isolated community. People do not live under the same geographical constraints as in Labrador City and they don't have a common social history, complete with a 'traditional' order. In any case, comparisons between the two are marginal, at best.

For the section on the peopling of Labrador City Clark (1978) and Grieco (1981) provided a discussion of migration in the context of unemployment at home. These works are essential in helping to formulate an explanation of why so many Newfoundlanders were incited to move and the benefits that the Iron Ore Company of

Canada (hereafter referred to as IOCC) derived from this. Demmler-Kane (1988) and Martin-Matthews (1988) were also useful since each work describes the experiences of women who migrated with their husbands. Such women were extremely important in the Labrador City case, where the company wanted to establish a 'family' town.

Readings dealing with the experience of moving

The literature used in the study of the respondents' moves into Labrador City (chapter four) include Krahn et. al. (1981) and Mincer (1978), mentioned above, as well as Tilly and Brown (1967) and Miller (1976). These works deal with the effects of kinship in migration and arrive at somewhat different conclusions. Miller (1976) showed that close extended kin ties acted as a deterrent to migration while Tilly and Brown (1967) maintained that kin networks facilitated migrations. If networks already existed at the destinations of worker migrants, they served to assuage the sense of uprooting and isolation that newcomers usually feel. Grieco (1981) adds that these networks are also quite beneficial to employers, an important point in this chapter. Looking at other aspects of the move for women, Martin-Matthews (1977) provides an analysis of the powerlessness of migrant women from Newfoundland to Hamilton, Ontario,

both within their marriages (characterized by traditional and non-egalitarian gender roles) and within the process of migration. Women, she argued, had fewer resources than men with which to adapt to their new environments.

One conclusion common to McAllister, Butler and Kaiser (1973), Jones (1973) and Michelson, Belque and Stewart (1973) is that husbands and wives experience migration differently. Wives must "cope with aspects of the home" while husbands are concerned with such matters as the family's finances, the journey to work and the like. Martin-Matthews (1980) also looks at changes in the female experience of migration during different stages, with consideration for other things that may be happening in the respondent's life at the time. This, and how a woman's self-identity may change with migration are a few of the concerns of this socio-psychological study.

Demmler-Kane's work (1980) is similar to Martin-Matthews' (1980) in that all the respondents are women in the Hamilton-Burlington area, had moved there less than a year earlier and were generally migrating for the better socio-economic opportunities offered to their husbands in the new area. Demmler-Kane spends a great deal of effort statistically 'testing' various hypotheses concerning migrant women, comparing respondents on the basis of

whether they are multiple or first-time movers. She concludes that multiple migrants are negatively affected by their moving in the 'formal' aspects of their 'social participation'. Thus, their employment and involvement in voluntary associations decreases with each additional move. In informal participation, ie. with friends and relatives, they are barely affected at all although multiple movers do report less contact with their own relatives while they maintain the same amount with their husbands'.

In both Martin-Matthews' and Demmler-Kane's studies the subjects usually moved because of their husbands' transfers at work while in Labrador City, many of the respondents were driven north by unemployment. This has a great deal of effect on the mover's concept of whether they have a choice in the matter or not, as will be seen, and it is quite a salient issue.

Readings pertinent to the attractions and problems of life in Labrador City.

Some of the works previously mentioned were useful in multiple contexts, such as Lucas' (1971) study which included a section on company-built housing. A few other works also bear mentioning. Ewen (1976), Leiss, Kline

and Jhally (1986), and Hayden (1985) all provide documentation on the ideology of 'consumerism' which is essential in motivating Labrador City residents to stay there. Another important rationale among women involves their role as mother: those with children would "...put up with anything for their sakes..." Dally's study (1982) of the historical development of motherhood as one of the primary roles of women in our society has applications in understanding the women of Labrador City: Lopata (1971) was also used for this purpose. Barrett and Noble (1973) look at mothers' anxieties about the negative effects of moving on their children and come to the conclusion that these are few and are salient only in the short-term period of initial adjustment.

The section in chapter six dealing with social attitudes towards women in a male-oriented town benefits from these tracts on motherhood, as well as from Ewen (1976), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (1983), Rubin (1976) and Chesler and Goodman (1976). All of these studies look at aspects of women's roles as they are socially determined and ascribed.

Chesler and Goodman (1976) describe the socialization of women to devalue themselves and their work and the expectations that others have of them as wives and mothers. Their discussion of the effects of

divorce on women was particularly pertinent in the Labrador City fieldwork. While much of their study is directed to women in the middle education and income brackets, it does provide an excellent psychological report on why women find it so hard to "break into" a man's world of better-paying jobs. Rubin (1976) provides a similar perspective on women of the working poor. Many of the obstacles described in these two works are quite real for Labrador City respondents as well. With a perspective on housewives, Lopata (1971) looks at the relations involved in marriage, the status of housewifery as an occupation, and the psychological effects of all of these on her female respondents. Her work was also helpful in making sense of women's roles in Labrador City.

There is one other area in which a great deal of work has been done: that of psychological depression. The works of Weiss (1973) and Marris (1974) have already been cited in this review and two other works should be mentioned here. Chesler's (1972) study of women and their socially ascribed madnesses offers a good definition of the consequences of depression for women and an overview of the prescriptions for treatment that are administered. Chesler adds new light to the findings on female depression associated with moving by showing that it is

often dealt with by attempting to change the victim's outlook, which sometimes means denigrating the self, rather than by changing her circumstances. Wives must keep moving for the family's sake, to be socially "acceptable", adjusting themselves to the circumstances of migration.

Weissman and Paykel (1972) report on their study of women being treated for depression that the greater majority had recently made a major move. They question the widespread social assumption that mobility should be regarded as a "taken-for-granted" and unproblematic reality in the lives of women, noting that women in particular must deal with most of the stresses of moving and often do so by internalizing them.

#### Readings on women and work

The initial purpose of this study was to examine the working lives of women in Labrador City, but in the final reckoning this was relegated to a single aspect of their lives since the actual responses covered so many other topics. Readings, however, are widely available in the field of women's work, so this section will touch on only the few which I have found helpful.

Ann Oakley's Housewife (1974) provides an excellent historical review of housework and its relegation primarily to women. Tentler (1976), Pleck (1976) and Wilson (1982) provide additional support for Oakley's argument and Shorter (1977) offers a comparative model which traces the development of the role in psychological and ideological terms.

Oakley's The Sociology of Housework (1974) is an academic study of contemporary housewifery as both an occupation and a role. It was used as a source in the section on housewives. Oakley's (1974) study cannot, of course, simply be generalized but women in her sample and those with whom I spoke in Labrador City were both subject to similar ideological restraints and expectations. In addition, Oakley's definition of modern housewifery was pertinent. Its features include the exclusive allocation of the role to women, their economic dependence in marriage, the status of the work involved as "non-work" since it is neither productive nor paid, and its primacy insofar as it is expected to supercede all other activities in importance.

Similar ideological restraints are enumerated by Lopata (1971), Chesler and Goodman (1976), Chenoweth and Maret (1980), and Luxton (1980;1983). The latter two works look at women's commitment to their various roles



I turned to several readings for help in the section of the thesis that deals with "marginal and tertiary" work, the most common type available to women in Labrador City. The following works outline the conditions of such

dependents.

only one exception, still "working singles" with no women in the same household the younger women were, with much newer town and when I encountered two generations of in the early years of the century. Labrador City is a housewifery since the town she studied had been settled respondents, though, represented three generations of the Women's Unemployment Study Group 1983). Luxton's and families "serviced" as workers (a point also noted by working in the company's interests by keeping husbands to those of Labrador City. Luxton describes women community which afforded opportunities to women similar her fieldwork was undertaken in a northern mining Luxton's work (1988; 1983) is applicable here since

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (1983) -  
discussed in Myrdal and Klein (1978), Wilson (1982) and remain dependent on their husbands: a point also determining whether women will work outside the home or others in the family are extremely important in work outside the home are combined. The attitudes of by degrees and at how housewifery, motherhood and paid

work and try to explain why it has become feminized: Spradley and Mann (1975); Wilson (1982); Phillips and Phillips (1983); Armstrong and Armstrong (1978); Connolley (1978); Women's Unemployment Study Group (1983); and the People's Commission on Unemployment (1978). The latter two studies originate in Newfoundland and note that the high worker turnover characteristic of tertiary jobs is exacerbated there by a high unemployment rate. Women may be laid off more readily than men since it is assumed that they can return to the home when no longer needed in the labour market. Connolley (1978) describes this effect in terms of a Marxist theory of surplus labour, according to which women in Canada comprise the "reserve army of the unemployed".

Various aspects of their lives and socialization keep women in jobs whose pay and status are low and which give little opportunity for advancement. "Service-oriented" jobs are usually semi- or unskilled and are one part of what Wilson (1982) and Phillips and Phillips (1983) describe as the "dual labour market". Jobs in the primary sector of the economy (eg. resource extraction and the production of goods) where the pay, status and opportunities are usually held by male workers. There's an occupational segregation in the workplace, then, and this is often unjustly used to justify the appalling

conditions that some women work under. Part-time workers are particularly susceptible to "ghettoization" as Phillips and Phillips (1983) point out.

In this fieldwork, the actual descriptions of their jobs were left to the respondents. However, as preliminary material for study, Spradley and Mann's work (1975) offered an excellent review of both the participant observation process (carried out by Mann) and of the exploitation of women in jobs with little power. Batten et al. (1974) also included descriptions of such work, but they studied the work of women in "non-traditional" fields as well and proved useful in that capacity.

The final section of chapter eight deals with women in jobs where pay, status, and hopes for the future are higher. Aiming to be placed in such positions is, in the studies of Chenoweth and Maret (1980) and Kantor (1977), largely a matter of attitudes about women's roles. Kantor provides an excellent study on the structure of opportunities available to women and on the problems that working women in responsible positions face. Epstein (1970) also writes on these matters, and on the conflicts women face over familial and work demands. Schroedel (1985) gives a series of personal histories of women working in male-typed jobs which provides comparison with

women in similar jobs in Labrador City. Gutek (1985) is a comprehensive study of harassment in the workplace, a common problem for all female workers, and her analysis of why it occurs is used briefly here.

After running through a "short-list" of readings used in the body of the thesis, it becomes obvious that no single work can be used as an overall guide. All are applicable in some way, yet none are totally comprehensive. In addition, because this fieldwork was carried out with a phenomenological intention, I did not want the articulated experiences of my respondents to simply be "fitted" and conscripted as an illustration of a single work or body of works. The respondents themselves were allowed to dictate the basic directions that the work of understanding would take.

## CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODS

Every thesis must specify its methods, and this chapter is intended to clarify the procedures which were used in this study. I had certain time constraints which played a role in determining the methods I could use. I wished to spend only two months gathering information in Labrador City: an appropriate length of time for a master's level of research, and the maximum span allowed by local airlines if I was to take advantage of flight discounts (a mundane, but unfortunately necessary consideration for a graduate student). With such a brief amount of time it was virtually impossible to follow some of the traditionally recommended procedures of thoroughgoing ethnographic research. I did have a few personal contacts in Labrador City, and certainly intended to use my time well there, attending social gatherings when possible and 'hanging out' in settings which would allow me to participate in informal conversation and to observe as much as I could of the texture of women's lives. On the other hand, I simply did not have enough time to become a thoroughly accepted member of a social network or a trusted, familiar confidante.

This placed limits on the depth of any participant observation which I could carry out in the field, and quickly forced me to recognize that even the approach to

setting up interviews which I had gone into the field expecting to follow would not be feasible.

I had expected to try to locate and work through 'key informants' as well as through subsequent contacts I was able to make through them, a procedure which would have involved working through social networks via 'sights' or specific individuals who recommend friends, neighbours, and acquaintances for additional interviews. I had also hoped to garner referrals from support groups working directly with women, subsequently correcting, if necessary, any biases which appeared in a sample population of contacts reached in this manner. Upon my arrival in Labrador City, the reality of my two month time limit quickly made itself felt and I turned instead to a quicker method of gathering a sample of women for both formal and informal interviews.

#### Selecting a sample

A random-digit-dialing technique eliminated time that might have been spent knocking on doors and allowed a screening of respondents on selected variables, should that become necessary with an 'unbalanced' distribution. The method itself was quite simple: the first four-digit number in a random-number-table pointed at became the

first phone number and every number following was a subsequent attempt. Labrador City has only one telephone exchange, so the first three digits of each number needn't even have been dialed. Calls were made at various hours of the day and time schedules for later attempts were devised after a 'no answer'.

Each respondent was approached in relatively the same manner: after the interviewer and university was identified, she was asked to participate in a student field study concerning women, their work and life in Labrador City.

From a total of 144 numbers dialed 44 agreed to an appointment fixed for a time and place of their choice; 26 refused outright; 72 were ineligible numbers; and 2 numbers never were answered even after the requisite six attempts at various times of the day and week.

The disproportionate number of ineligible calls can be explained from two sources. First, with a larger concentration of males (6,835 in 1980) than females (5,500 in the same year), more households simply included no women. Secondly, certain digits had to be excluded since they headed either an institutional number with various extensions or signified a non-applicable number not included in the exchange at all. Finding out which

these were was a gradual process of having the operator try the number after several of the researcher's attempts, only to return with the information that "the mine office is closed today," or "there's no number like that around here." None seemed to be able to simply list the non-applicable numbers at the beginning, but eventually any set of four digits beginning with 0, 1, 4, 8 or 9 was completely excluded.

Of the 26 contacts refusing to participate, 14 explained their preference not to, expressing exasperation at having their privacy disturbed, often with an added justification that they had no time. A few implied that they regarded sociological interviews as a frivolous waste of time, better left to "bored housewives and that". The other 12 who refused were more apologetic: three were spending all of their time packing to move out; two felt that their command of English wasn't adequate enough; five said that they would call back when time was available to them (and never did); and two made appointments but didn't show up. When contacted later they said they "would rather not go through with it", expecting the worst. This was a fairly common expectation, even among those who did participate.

Names were used during the interviews only for the sake of conversation. Formal anonymity was always



guaranteed and this usually proved to be a positive assurance in enlisting support. Each respondent was assigned a number for reference and was informed that all names in the text would be fictitious.

Forty-four interviews had been rushed through and completed before I noticed certain biases of the random sample by comparing it with census data for the area. Counting back then, 90% (40) of the respondents were married and of these, three were separated. Twenty-eight of this first forty-four were either full-time housewives or currently un- or underemployed. According to the 1981 Census data female labour force participation rates in Labrador City were 49.2% (51.7% in Canada as a whole) - the sample was obviously and drastically skewed, or a lot of women had suddenly lost their jobs in 1982. From the admissions of many, they had: though not quite in such a large proportion.

With the demography and work patterns of Labrador City fluctuating so frequently, comparing the 1982 sample to others before and since is of uncertain value. Nevertheless, fixed data is the only kind available for comparisons and the Labrador City sample did work out favourably on certain variables. In the 1980 Census 73% of both men and women in Labrador City were listed as married, including those separated from their spouses but

not those who had been divorced. At the forty-four respondent mark 98% was an overrepresentation and some weight had to be given to the responses of both single and working women. Five more were purposely selected for this reason. Two were contacted through referrals from friends; one woman attending a local women's center function, to which I had gone for participant observation, agreed to participate and she later suggested two more who would.

The final sample then numbered forty-nine, a reasonable size according to Oakley (1974), and it compared reasonably well with the 1980 Census data for Labrador City on marital status:

Table 1:

Marital status	male and female 1980 Census of Canada		all female 1982 fieldwork	
	no.	%	no.	%
single (never married)	5825	n.a.	not included here	
single (never married) 15 years and older	1745	23	8	16
married (includes those separated)	5515	73	41	84
widowed	85	1	0	0
divorced	110	1	0	0

The differences between the two sets of figures are partially accounted for by the difference in the populations each refers to. The census figures include everyone in Labrador City where men outnumber women while the sample population is entirely female. The Canadian census did not break down these figures by sex. Since women tend to marry at an earlier age than men, an all-female population at a younger age would obviously have more 'marrieds' than a total sample would. In addition, Labrador City offers primarily male-typed jobs and many new-comers are young, male and single. Single women are rarely offered the same opportunities as men and this too, might account for some of the sex-ratio imbalance in the town.

Comparisons between the two sets of data are even more favourable on other variables. In the following tables percentage figures are always rounded and may not add up to 100. Again, unless specified otherwise, the census data refer to the entire population of Labrador City while the fieldwork concentrates on an all-female sample of forty-nine.

Table 2:

Mother tongue	1980 Census		1982 fieldwork	
	no.	%	no.	%
English	10785	93	45	90
French	535	4	3	6
Other	215	1	1	2

Table 3:

Occupied private dwellings (including mobile homes)	1980 Census		1982 fieldwork	
	no.	%	no.	%
Owned	2210	71	35	71
Rented	900	28	14	28

Table 4:

Private Household (by number of persons in each)	1980 Census		1982 fieldwork	
	no.	%	no.	%
1	260	8	0	0
2	480	15	10	21
3	605	19	7	15
4-5	1470	47	25	52
6-9	280	9	6	13
10 or more	10	0	0	0
(by number of families in each)				
0	370	11	3	
1	2715	87	45	94
2 or more	25	0	0	0

Table 5:

Population in  
Private Households

1980 Census

1982 fieldwork

no.

no.

Total

11375

179

Average number  
of persons

3.7

3.65

*RR*



Table 6:

Families in Private Households	1980 Census		1982 fieldwork	
	no.	%	no.	%
Total	2780	-	46	-
Husband-Wife families	2640	94	42	91
Lone-parent families	135	4	4	8
Average number of persons per family	3.8	-	3.79	-
Average number of children per family	1.8	-	1.9	-
*Family persons in private households	10435	-	174	-
Non-family persons in private households	935	-	5	-

\*related through marriage or consanguineous ties

Table 7:

Children at home	1980 Census		1982 fieldwork	
	no.	%	no.	%
Total	5020	-	84	-
under 6 years old	1750	34	31	36
6-14 years old	2270	45	40	47
15-17 years old	585	11	10	11
18-24 years old	385	7	3	3
25 years and over	35	-	0	0
households by number of children at home				
0	440	15	11	23
1	665	23	8	17
2	1015	36	21	45
3-4	565	20	4	8
5 or more	90	3	3	6

In table 7 above, the 1982 figures might be biased in favour of lower numbers since pregnancies weren't listed, while the Census included each as one child if due before the end of the year.

Another discrepancy between the two sets of figures was on the 'age of females' variable:

Table 8:

Age of females	1980 Census		1982 fieldwork	
	no.	%	no.	%
15-19	500	14	2	4
20-24	675	19	9	18
25-34	1375	40	28	57
35-44	610	17	7	14
45-54	255	7	3	6

The Census data actually lists all age groups, to a total of 5,500 females but only 3,415 of the Labrador City population corresponded to the age groups used in the 1982 sample. The percentage figures were adjusted accordingly. In 1982 the 15-19 and 25-34 groups are under- and overrepresented respectively. The discrepancy in the younger group might be explained by the likelihood that many were still living at home and the senior female in the household was usually the one who answered the phone or was immediately called to it. For the 25-34 group error, perhaps empathy with an interviewer in the same age category led to members of this age group consenting more readily to interviews than those in other age groups.

#### Techniques to gather information

In spite of all the tabulations above, whether a totally randomized sample would have provided a better 'fit' than the partial one used in the field wasn't a great concern. A balanced distribution was desirable for the sake of representation itself but the numbers were insignificant for any other purpose in the thesis since it was not to be based upon statistical correlations.

The historical and topical information sought during

the interviewing was enriched by the help fieldwork among people who were either working for the mining company or who had been in Labrador City for varying lengths of time. Old friends introduced new ones and simple bar conversations unleashed floods of information. The interviewer's intentions were always clarified for these unsolicited 'interviewees' and due permission asked to use their material.

There were also a few contacts made with local officialdom: one personnel officer working at the mine, one working in a chain food store, a union official representing a primarily female local. A few of the respondents to the formal interview were also in positions of varying degree of authority and offered official information 'unofficially'. This material was of important supplementary value in coming to a better understanding of the exigencies of life for both men and women in Labrador City.

Each interview in the field sample began with a structured questionnaire (see appendix 1) yielding quantitative and demographic information. A period of informal, 'open-ended discussion' would follow. While the questionnaires did remove any ambiguities surrounding the study for most of the respondents, they occasionally set a rather structured pace for later discussions where

little was said.

Respondents answered the questionnaires verbally while the information was written down and by the time all this had been completed, most were willing to have subsequent discussion taped. All of the respondents were told that the tapes would be transcribed verbatim, though not all of the material used directly in the thesis. Only a few refused to be recorded so notes were taken and the conversation was written from these and memory as soon after the meeting as time would allow.

These discussions revolved around a series of points concerning the respondent's move north, first contacts and the constructing of social networks, work experience in Labrador City, and the like: all to be used merely as guidelines should the conversation fail to 'flow' as smoothly as was desirable (see appendix 2 for the complete list). These points were generated through readings on migration and in women's studies which suggested how life might change for migrants in terms of physical, social, familial and emotional environment (Bloch 1976; Boserup 1970; Denich 1976; Dinerman 1978; Melville 1978; Miller 1976; Mincer 1978; Smith 1976; Spitze and Waite 1980; Tilly and Brown 1967; Viney and Bazely 1977; Weiss 1973; Whiteford 1978), as well as through discussions with Dr. Robert Hill. Questions in

the structured interview were derived from these sources, as well as from Martin (1974); Matthews (1976); and the Newfoundland Statistics Agency (1982). After expanding on one or two points raised by me and a few items in the questionnaire, respondents usually raised new or, to them, more relevant issues (an important aspect of open-ended interviewing): how the area had changed since their arrival; the different aspects of their lives that seemed to come under 'mine control'; the effects of a threatened production shut-down; and speculations on their own and the town's future. The repetitiveness of their concerns reshaped my own sense of the determinants of women's experience in Labrador City.

In the probe and query phases some of the points in my initial guideline proved inapplicable to individual circumstances. Examples of the pointless included queries on migration to younger women who had grown up in the area; questions concerning social networks and adjustments to the newly arrived, or of marriage and children to the single and childless. The most difficult question to ask and answer was about possible cases of depression among women living in Labrador City. Inevitably replies referred to the general dilemma of depression in the north and ways to overcome it. Finally, some questions proved simply too dull and redundant in



light of the discussion at hand to use, particularly those listed under 'general migrant adjustments' (again, see appendix 2).

After the initial ten or so interviews the more relevant topics literally established themselves and the 'routine' of interviewing was set. Appropriate to the method of open-ended interviewing (Rubin 1976:12-13; Morgan 1985; Spradley and McCurdy 1972), each respondent was given free rein in choosing the content of discussion unless they preferred a more formal interviewing approach where the discussion guide would be used.

An interview lasted an average of an hour to an hour and a half. When it was obviously becoming a strain to proceed, or when the respondent found time to be pressing, the interview was concluded. The respondent was then asked to add whatever she wished, but few did so. Almost everyone ended by expressing hopes that "things would change", both for themselves and for Labrador City.

Since they took place in respondents' homes, the interviews provided a wealth of additional information that would have been lost had they had any other setting. (The only exemptions to this were with two younger women who preferred not to be interviewed with their guardians

listening and whom I therefore met in a local restaurant.) During the other interviews I was able to observe the type of housing, furnishings and possessions of each woman, her working environment at home, and whether she and her family were indeed 'settling in' (judging by how many home improvements had been undertaken).

Unspoken information concerning family life came through during interviews which were often interrupted by children and occasionally by husbands. In the latter case the power structure within the marriage sometimes became evident: husbands would ask all of the usual questions concerning the interview at its beginning (in some cases this was due to slight anxiety with regard to the IOCC layoffs then imminent) and one even answered the questions for his wife! This respondent was not questioned for as long as the others, since there seemed to be little point. Martin-Matthews (1980) occasionally encountered the same situation during her fieldwork.

Finally the discussion end of the interviews allowed for a great deal of non-verbal as well as verbal expression and provided an opportunity of "...probe(ing) for the meanings behind the experiences" (Martin-Matthews 1980:75). Gestures, intonations and sighs spoke of the feeling of respondents' lives and this led to a deeper

appreciation of just what the constraints of life in Labrador City were for these women. What they felt uncomfortable saying directly would often be implied non-verbally. Interviews were, to a certain extent, episodes of social interaction in themselves and this is crucial in the social sciences since the researcher can never be totally detached from her subjects. In Turner's words, "...sociological discoveries are ineluctable discoveries from within society..." (1974:285). A sociologist is reflecting on her own world and by making this explicit, as in ethnographic research, she is adding a further element of truth to her conclusions.

All aspects of information gathered from the interviews are important to sociological research in that they constitute a part of the total reality that respondents have to communicate. The simple 'bare facts' of their lives would be only a partial representation which could easily lead to misrepresentation. I was searching for the "...stuff of everyday life (reflected) in talk...", essential to a study designed according to what Morgan (1985) calls the phenomenological approach. Morgan goes on to describe various aspects of phenomenology, such as the concept that the sociologist must take the actor's point of view if she is to even approach an analysis of how that actor "constructs" her

world. This is important because of the premise that social actors themselves are instrumental in creating their world through their responses to "external forces or internal drives". Phenomenological research, like Martin-Matthews' (1977:165) "symbolic interactionist-phenomenological approach", attempts to discover how these different processes are integrated by examining the actor's responses to find her "set of meanings".

The emphasis in this type of research, then, is "...on how individuals make sense of their own world, how these definitions are shared and how the individuals, in a sense, create that world..." (Morgan 1985:186). Morgan notes that by not categorizing the subjects of research beforehand, the student can at least avoid some of the biases that previous research imposed on people (1985:206-7).

The tradition of phenomenological research itself has grown out of a protest against applying rigid scientific methods, concepts and categories to the lives of actual people. The danger of this latter approach is that the researcher often imposes a set of preconceived categories on her subjects which are viewed as 'unproblematic' in themselves and when used, elicit only the responses they are designed to seek (Smith 1974). An example of this problem can be found in the 'sexist

research' discussed by Chesler (1972) and Eichler (1985).

Phenomenology seeks to avoid being spell-bound by a 'taken-for-granted' understanding by carefully examining its constituents to find out how and from what it has been constructed and its effects in the real world. It has been my hope to allow women to define their own realities rather than having anyone else's categories foisted upon them, to avoid stereotyping and to present women's lives, problems and ideas in a manner as true to their own experience as possible. For all of these reasons the informal, open-ended interview was chosen as a more applicable research method than any other. It constitutes a "soft" tool of ethnographic research and is widely used in participant observation (Morgan 1985; Oakley 1974). As mentioned previously, time constraints limited this study to a quicker method of securing respondents than true participant observation would allow (ie. through 'getting involved' in the community), so interviews were formally requested and attended, but remained relatively unstructured after the preliminary data had been established. Their most attractive feature was the opportunity provided to respondents to define their life's exigencies in their own terms.

Lopata (1971) used the open-ended question method in her study of American housewives, as did Rubin (1976) and

Martin-Matthews (1988). For Lopata (1971:9-10) this entailed a request for each woman's "...perceptions, conceptualizations and actions in her role as housewife..." and the answers provided a "...source for a constant flow of new hypothesis...". In this manner the researcher is given some leeway to break away from existent stereotypes and find out what the world is like in the eyes of her subjects.

In the spirit of this approach my respondents' words, as quoted in the body of the thesis, were minimally edited so that the flavour of their comments could be preserved. Several women were quite articulate though others were not, which can lead to possible problems in interpretations such as those Oakley (1974) faced. Oakley suggests that the working and middle classes have separate idioms of speech and may mean different things by the same statements, the working classes being more reluctant to express individual sentiment publically while such expression is cultivated as a means of asserting one's individualism and uniqueness among the middle and upper classes. The working classes, in her view, are socialized into expressions of solidarity and consequently everyone will describe a boring routine as "okay", while middle-class housewives will go to great lengths to establish just

what is boring about a particular routine. In the Labrador City case study I found those respondents who took pains to describe their experiences fully were often the better-educated ones and those who had more social status in their own right as well as in their husbands'. Of course there were a few exceptions to this generalization in both studies as well.

One of Morgan's (1985) cautions concerning the phenomenological approach is worth noting here: by concentrating on the views, values and declarations of respondents, the researcher may overlook the structural and historical factors shaping their circumstances. For this reason, as well as for the sake of interest, some background on Labrador City and on Newfoundland women (the greater majority of the respondents) is included in the thesis. In addition various aspects of previous research in women's studies are used for comparative purposes. Needless to say, these were appended after the 'facts' of the research had established themselves.

There was one additional, unheralded advantage in the personal and open-ended interviewing technique used in this field study: it assured respondents that their world and their words were important, contrary to what they themselves sometimes thought. Many remarked on this. They felt that their lives were uninteresting and

of little use to anyone but themselves and their immediate families, which is far from the case here.

Like the methodology, the following analysis is inductive and exploratory. Its basis is the description of experiences that women in Labrador City gave themselves, rather than a pre-defined formula to be tested for whatever truths it might contain. The exceptional cases as well as the majority of migrants' stories were included in the field notes and the following text draws upon both, as well as upon readings used for purposes of comparison.



CHAPTER THREE: A BRIEF TREATISE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDUSTRIAL TOWN AND WOMEN'S INITIAL PLACE IN IT

Northern industrial towns like Labrador City literally 'sprang up' at specific moments rather than evolved. For its architects and builders, the sole purpose of Labrador City was to mine the rich iron ore deposits in the area, so a modern complex had to be designed to attract adequate numbers of workers. Little thought was actually given to the effects that living so far north and away from home might have, except that discomforts were supposed to be amply compensated by other rewards. Whether they were or not is a judgement to be made only by the workers and their families, and is the subject of later sections in this thesis. The following is a sketch of the forces that created the town, and the initial reactions of the first women who came to live there.

Western Labrador, circa 1950: the industrial promise

Single industry communities are the subject matter for many sociological works such as Foote's 1979 The Case of Port Hawkesbury: Rapid Industrialization and Social Unrest in a Nova Scotia Community and Lucas' 1971 study of three separate towns, Minetown, Milltown, Railtown:

Life in Canadian communities of single industry. Foote looks at the industrialization of an already established town, which has only a limited applicability here while Lucas' description of 'Minetown' is an almost perfect match for Labrador City. These towns were literally started from nothing, built by a company, and exhibit a specialized division of labour specific to the industry that they were built for. Labrador City went through the same stages in becoming what it is that Lucas describes: an early influx of construction workers during the initial building stage; a second stage of recruiting citizens and attempting to cater to women (eg. with schools and shopping malls); a third 'transition' stage in which the company tries to induce local residents to take over the running of the town, buy their houses from the company, and so on; and finally a 'maturity' stage of development in which many residents have settled in and must deal with the type of tenuous future a company town can offer. Lucas' (1971) and Foote's (1979) works can serve as comparisons on various points later in this thesis.

During and after world war II Newfoundland was trying to step into an era of modernization and progress with Confederation and social welfare. The province bore an air of social inferiority in comparison to its more

developed North American counterparts and it needed a strategy for industrial growth to alleviate poverty in both real and created terms. In the latter instance, Newfoundlanders were awakening to "the Good Life" offered in North America and they needed cash to buy from burgeoning new Canadian markets. The island's fisheries had long been in decline and offered no hope at all for financial salvation, but the newly-proposed iron-mining development in Western Labrador did (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1957; 1968).

The proposal for mine development came from U.S. steel conglomerates currently in the throws of a post-war depletion of ore in the Mesabi iron range of Minnesota as well as a post-war boom in the demand for steel. Steelmakers needed a steady supply of ore that the mines of Labrador, with a predicted lifespan of 100 years and more, offered (Retty 1951; Howse 1967).

M.A. Hanna and Company and Hollinger Mines were both growing concerns in the U.S. mining industry of the times and the two formed a partnership to send exploration teams to the North Shore of Quebec and Western Labrador. The companies' other options for development lay in Brazil and Mexico, which are occasionally considered as good sources of cheap labour even now whenever the company is in a dire position and needs a trump card in

labour negotiations.

Canada, however, was a much better risk at the time: there was little talk of nationalizing foreign business concerns and Canadian politics were much more reliable (Girvan 1976). Virtually an economic partner to the United States, Canada was shipping an ever-widening variety of resources south so agreements would be easy to reach with little time lost in diplomatic measures. In addition, Canadians had a standardized educational system that prepared prospective workers for the demands of industrialization and they were ultimately more 'trainable'. Best of all, Canadians were close to what might be called the American spirit: the consumer ethic was as prevalent here as farther south and people were willing to work as hard to fulfill their purchasing goals (Labrador Resources Advisory Council 1975; Ewen 1976).

Canadian prospects looked good politically and great, geologically, as exploratory tests revealed quite a profitable potential in ore. Humphrey, the instigator of the mining companies' merger, immediately created the Iron Ore Company of Canada (1949) and in 1982 M.A. Hanna still owned 27% of its stock. Over the years there were talks of increasing Canadian ownership in the company but in 1982 IOCC was still 89.5% American-owned or affiliated with U.S. companies (Statistics Canada Cat. #61-517).

Appending the label 'Canada' to the company name was simple diplomacy, like naming the first mining town the company built in the north 'Schefferville' in honour of a local bishop.

An open pit mine and mill in Schefferville were operating at capacity by 1955 and before the decade was out the venture looked promising enough to consider expanding into Western Labrador as far as what is now Labrador City. Then it was the 'Carol Lake project'. Although the ore there was of a lower grade (only 2/3 iron), its specific combination of elements was better suited to the type of blast furnaces used in steelmaking. And potential demand for steel was escalating (Labrador Free Press 30/4/80). A 'spur line' was added to the railway at Schefferville extending to Wabush Lake (150 km. south) and Labrador City became the new site of an open-pit mine, an ore concentrator, and even a pelletizing plant to convert raw ore into pellets for shipping (Young 1958).

None of these investments came wholly from 'private' sources and neither did the developers pay the opportunity costs of development or fully secure the requisites of a local labour force themselves (Brym and Sacouman, eds. 1979; Barrett 1980; Veltmeyer 1980). One important loss in allowing American investment is the

lack of control over secondary processing that the host province (Newfoundland) theoretically paid. In Labrador City contracts for ore processing, mine maintenance and transport often went to Quebec firms, close to the mine site, and a long-standing complaint of the local steelworkers' union is concerned with this company procedure of 'contracting out' when union members could be hired for the jobs.<sup>1</sup>

The major loss, of course, is with the flow of ore from Labrador City, through Quebec and into the United States, with exponential benefits accumulating the farther south it goes. Aside from the endeavors of the workers' unions involved, none of this was a public issue until the latter part of the 1970's (McCutcheon 1975).

In IOCC's case the company was virtually given an indefinite lease (of ninety-nine years) on most of Labrador West. Its prediction on the life of the mine was one hundred years. Few royalties were required in return for this concession and the company, then and now, is exempt from paying any provincial tax on all goods and services needed in the construction, operation or maintenance of the mine. The province's reward was to be the prosperity promised through the mine and any ensuing spin-off (ie. tertiary) opportunities that local entrepreneurs wished to avail themselves of. The promise

was that Newfoundlanders would finally enjoy greater social amenities in education, health and roads, and the same high standard of living as the rest of North America. They'd have it all within the province, instead of constantly leaving to work elsewhere. The provincial government, anxious to realize these goals, limited its 'intervention' to stimulating the preferred private capital, no matter how foreign or unpaid-for (McCutcheon 1975; Wadel 1969). It offered the concessions mentioned above and directed its policies to 'resettling' Newfoundlanders to Labrador, in hopes of creating a labour force (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1968; 1967; Copes 1971).

#### Creating a labour force: rag and bone...

Once the Labrador City mine finally went into operation, the construction/work camp had to be superseded by a steadier and more reliable work force. Family men were especially in demand, since their wives would help to create a 'community' and their domestic responsibilities serve to keep them at the job. To attract and keep families, the company went to great lengths in underwriting the costs of building the suburban life desired by the 'average' North American. All interest payments in excess of 4% that were used to

buy homes by full-time employees were IOCC subsidized. IOCC's municipal plan was designed to be the ultimate in the 'northern industrial workers' community' (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1983; The Aurora 14/5/88).

There were company subsidization plans for individuals willing to move north, as well. High wages, a northern allowance, travel and moving benefits and double shifts galore filled the worker's bill, had he come to seek his fortune.<sup>2</sup> Double shifts may not sound like a great deal but for a migrant worker, they mean more than double the money during the same length of time away from home. With worker shortages so common during the early years of the mine's operations extra shifts were encouraged on all counts. For those who came in 'green' to the industrial work-world the company offered vocational on-the-job training plans. Incidentally, it took years to get a certificate so the worker taking advantage of this opportunity had an added incentive for staying on, to the maximum advantage of the company's training dollar.

The provincial government of the 1960s worried that its constituents still displayed that 'inherent lethargy and inefficiency at work' commonly ascribed to the independent fishing families of the sadly declining



inshore fishery. They had never been subject to industrial discipline and they supposedly didn't know how to work in industrial settings. Since Confederation, the numbers registered in the provincial welfare program were increasing with the ominous threat of draining the province's financial resources and 'wasting tax dollars' on those who could work but wouldn't. A common assumption of the state was that Newfoundlanders could find redemption from poverty by moving north, and it felt obliged to provide workers to IOCC (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1960).

Feeling both social and financial pressures to work amidst a decided lack of local opportunities to do so, the only recourse of many Newfoundlanders, then and now, was to migrate out of the province. IOCC's offer to provide jobs and even train workers arrived as a blessing, even if situated in the rocks and trees of Western Labrador. Indirectly the mine would benefit the general populace as well as the individual. Living standards would escalate and with more spending money, workers would spend. Theoretically the higher levels of consumption in Labrador City would increase the demand for local (ie. Newfoundland) goods and services, boosting provincial productivity. Finally, with all of this modern industrial development occurring in Labrador,

Newfoundlanders and their money needn't leave the province altogether (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1960; 1967; Iverson & Matthews 1967).

This, of course, was the abstract speculation of the provincial government,<sup>3</sup> to be augmented by several explicit measures used in creating Labrador City's new labour force. In the resettlement program the province set Labrador City and Wabush as primary destinations to move to and receive subsidization. Federal programs also served to promote the area through manpower counselling and state employment offices were often used in recruiting workers throughout IOCC's history at no expense to the company (interview with a personnel director of IOCC). All of the measures to centralize a labour force and stimulate an ideological acceptance of industrial work among Newfoundlanders were perfect complements to the company's needs.

It's debatable, though, whether the government even needed to go to such lengths to 'condition' Newfoundlanders, given the high unemployment rates at home, low skill levels and 'marginal' work conditions that existed at the time (People's Commission on Unemployment 1978; Grieco 1981).

The social aspects of industrial development: do people really matter?

The rationale for IOCC's virtual control over Labrador City is that it earned this right by taking the initial capital risks of development and that it still provides the jobs. One argument against this is that the conglomerate can't feel the cold of the northern winters and isolation as people can, and did. While constructing the railway, mine and town sites, workers lived, worked and breathed together in several row-bunkhouses, an embellished and winterized version of the classic bush-camp structures. They were always thousands of miles away from kith and kin.

Few studies exist to highlight the individual worker's experiences in northern, single-industry communities, and fewer again are concerned with the effects of such a life on women. Academic focus is usually on the grander scale of investments, politics and the 'company role in regional development' while workers are dispensed with by short and rarely realistic descriptions of a macho ideal-typical man serving his employer:

"...(they)...are glorified as demi-Paul Bunyans alloyed with Horatio Algiers, rugged individualists who worked their guts out taking whatever wages and conditions were offered

without bellyaching... Naturally, the company lived on these tales..." (Knight 1975)

The north was, and often theoretically still is, a land reserved for 'real men' only. Lucas (1971:145) also notes that "...mine, mill and smelter towns epitomize masculine work in a male society." Paid workers in the early years of IOCC's entrenchment were invariably male and were examined upon hiring for their abilities to withstand the rigours of living and working in the 'bush'. The occasional female was flown in for temporary nursing duties and the like, but generally women were considered to be rather slight of constitution to live in Labrador.

Like the historic model of bush-camp workers, today's IOCC worker is often described as a roughneck: "...raw and rather querulous, but above all, affluent" (Gwyn 1978; Bradwin 1972). Variations here include the "...union members... strikers and political activists...", the men who won't be lightly reckoned with (Ross 1982).

IOCC is also historically notorious for elevating supervisors and technical staff to various pedestals replete with extra benefits and conferred status while labourers were treated as dispensable items. For the non-salaried, wages by the hour were supposed to be sufficient reward alone and these men were also getting

northern allowances and a free trip home on the company plane every once in awhile. Management had life a little better with paid time off, a myriad of special company benefits and pensions and larger accommodations.<sup>4</sup> The company felt that it was more important to keep them satisfied and settled in Labrador since they could always get work elsewhere. Few managers recognized that comparatively menial treatments might lead to labour confrontation, so '...wildcat strikes and on-the-job-sit-downs' were a working norm at IOCC for almost two decades' (Ross 1982).

Labrador City unionism is quite like Foote's (1979) description of the union militancy in Port Hawkesbury, although, paradoxically, it is subject to some of the same social constraints Lucas (1971) describes or Minetown. As in Port Hawkesbury and Minetown there is an industrial ethos in Labrador City of individual achievement at work, job specialization, company loyalty and working within the system of stratification set by the company. In Port Hawkesbury these are contrary to the traditional culture of the Cape Breton inhabitants, as they are to that of Newfoundlanders in Labrador City. Traditionally there were the values of egalitarianism on the job since all were occupied in the same capacity as fisherman or miner at home and were 'jacks-of-all-trades'

who could go anywhere and do anything for awhile when the local economic resource fails. The traditional values placed on family loyalties were also counter to industrial work ethics.

In all three towns mentioned here the working class is comprised of 'local' residents (eg. Cape Bretoners in Port Hawkesbury; Newfoundlanders and French Canadians in Labrador City and Minetown) while the more prestigious jobs in management and the professional/technological fields are performed by 'mainlanders', people from central or western Canada or from other countries. Conflicts arise when the latter try to 'get work out of' the former and are frustrated by what they feel are the poor work ethics of the workers. This is common to all three cases, but the workers' responses vary.

In Lucas' work, the local unions are viewed by their membership as relatively ineffectual since both the union and the company's locus of decision-making, the head office, are located elsewhere and are relatively inviolate because of this. This creates a certain amount of apathy among workers and is coupled with a concern to get along with everybody when living in a small, isolated and closed town. Union militancy would be dysfunctional in this light.

Cape Bretoners though, resented being placed 'below' mainlanders. In Foote's (1979) study, the values that they had grown up with dictated egalitarianism. They had such close daily interaction and equal access to the same types of goods, that few could assert themselves through conspicuous consumption.

Among the Labrador City respondents, there was a great deal of conspicuous consumption among all classes, and it was obvious from what people had, and where they lived, what level of the local hierarchy they were on. Those from Newfoundland also came from a tradition of egalitarianism (Nemec 1972) and the stratifications in this single industry town weren't accepted with total equanimity by all. Union militancy had been very high in the formative years of Labrador City, and while the settled residents later adopted some of the constraints described by Lucas, there was still a strong faith in collective bargaining.

There were other problems with living in Labrador City in its early years, too. It was then truly a 'backwoods', totally unpopulated except for construction and mine workers. Winters span nine months of the year with temperatures rarely rising above -18 degrees Celsius. More often than not, the only alternative to working was to stay at home, in the bunkhouse and with

those same guys again. An occasional fight was unavoidable and probably even added a little spice to life, appropriate to the 'real man' ideology of noble discontent.

The attraction of working in Labrador City, according to the company's public relations (Dialogue 1982; The Aurora 14/5/88), was that everyone had at least an equal chance in their pursuit of success, wealth and happiness. Even the guy with little education and less social grace could scale the company's heights with hard work, dedication and patience. The company had examples of those who had and they were its most desired workers.

But even a few years after its operation began, IOCC was faced with dissatisfied workers and union militancy (R. Aubot, local union official, in conversation, 1982). It sought a solution by building the townsite of the Carol project, cheaper in terms of long-run labour demand than maintaining a system of work camps. This town, later Labrador City, would facilitate social networks so that migrating workers would be more likely to stay. They could later invite other unemployed family members to join them, probably 'putting them up' for awhile. This would guarantee a recruiting system for the company, furnishing workers with roughly similar social backgrounds in rural outports. In addition, hiring



through friends is, theoretically, a way to get more loyal workers since they are not only indebted to the company for having the job but also to their fellow workers for getting it when it was so badly needed. They would have to be careful in being militant since the effects of it could reach throughout their network of friends and the network could serve as a social control (Grieco 1981; Lucas 1971).

For women, the effects of a company town in Western Labrador were quite predictable. The company provided the foundations of 'every woman's' imputed dreams: shopping facilities, schools, health services, and a 'nice' home to live in, as in Lucas' (1971) 'Minetown'. But work facilities existed only for men. If the kids grew older and mother became more and more underemployed there were the usual temporary and tertiary jobs that men were unwilling to fill (too feminine or too poorly paid) but at a time when workers were in big demand, women were still not considered adequate to take on positions that men with less training than they, did.

Many of the respondents were satisfied with the IOCC ideal, adding that things could be a lot worse. They had come to Labrador City to keep the family together and "...as long as that happened, nothing else mattered". They were tired of staying at home on the island alone

their families' sakes. had always taken for granted that they were moving for what Labrador City actually del... ed afterwards. Most of discrepancy between expectations prior to the move and as highlighted by Martin-Matthews (1988), is the degree, 'self-development'. The crucial point to be considered, what they had before. They had few plans for their own families' welfare and for many, that was much better than prospects were good for their husbands' careers and their changes cited by the Hamilton movers. Here, the better", though few mentioned the personal positive majority here found that their lives had "changed for the Like Martin-Matthews' (1988) respondents, the

(41 years old, here for 16 years) promoted. "You had to know people just to get a place. It was almost another year then that we were finally able to move up, after he got apartments and Bury's, were always filled. buildings that were around, like the Ashuanipi apartments at all and the few apartment stay permanently. There were no basement you just couldn't get a place for a family to them we had to go back. See, in those days, winter. Then I came up for the summer, but October, so he came up and stayed all that He first got a job up here as a labourer in

towards a reputation of reliability: described her time waiting while her husband was working while their men went north to work. One respondent

'Being there': women's reaction to moving north

Bringing women into Labrador City in the early 1960s meant adding a touch of domesticity to an otherwise inhospitable north. The town was built on the standard assumptions of a sexual division of labour where women act in the roles of housewife, mother, servant and sometimes clerk.

The primary importance of women in Labrador City was that they were 'there':

"By the 'thereness' of women, I refer to a phenomenon...in that portion of the literature of urban sociology (or most instances of research and planning)...(where women)...are mostly and simply, just there. They are part of the locale, or neighbourhood, or area, described like other important aspects of the setting such as income, ecology, or demography-but largely irrelevant to the analytical action. They may reflect a group's social organization and culture...but they seem never to be in the process of creating it. They may be talked about by actors in the scene...but they rarely speak for themselves."  
(Lofland 1975)

As simply 'there', then, women were to be the 'servicers' of family life: they were to cook, clean, raise the children and make life as comfortable as possible for their worker/husbands. As noted by Morgan (1985) however, they were not seen as making a direct contribution to the economy, or to the events that constitute the history of a town. They were not a part

of the productive process, though they were required in keeping one of its most important inputs, labour, in prime condition.

This 'indirectness' by which women are often described was reflected in the initial experiences of respondents here, to Labrador City. They described what must have been a fairly trying time as relatively passive. The first female 'imports' were either young and engaged to be married, or just married to an IOCC employee. Most were qualified to work in those 'feminine' positions deemed inappropriate for men: as nurses, clerical staff, cooks, maids, waitresses and the like. But the first women in were a little better off than those generally hired by the company now: they, like male workers, were able to find cheap accommodations in a company bunkhouse reserved for women. Over the 12 years prior to 1982 women have had to pay dearly for housing since the 'female only' accommodations were eliminated (see chapter on housing) while the all-male bunkhouse was, in 1982, only beginning to be phased out. One respondent arrived just as the female 'staffhouse' was expanding from a three-bedroom duplex to a regular-sized row-bunkhouse (c. 1963) and has been living in Labrador City ever since. The following is her description of what it was like in 'them days';

"I first got here? Oh, it was really funny. I came in on a DC-3, just filled with men, and I was the only girl. They weren't used to women at all. I was 18, and everywhere I went, reactions were, like 'oh my God, you're a girl!'"

And when they took me up to my boss who was a very dry Englishman, he looked at me and said, "A baby! In a bushtown, they've sent me a baby!"

They took me to the ladies staffhouse, and then, it was just a CC, like the duplex I'm living in now. It was all open- they had taken the middle out of the house- and there must have been twenty girls in that place. There wasn't even a bed for me when I got there, so I had to share with this other gal I had known on the Labrador coast. She was a nurse, on night shifts, and when she'd go to work, the housemother would strip her bed so I could get in. When I'd go to work, it was the same process- she'd get in after me.

That only lasted for a few days because they were opening the new ladies staffhouse at the time. Now it's the training department down there (a long, low dormitory). But we all lived there- me, anyway- until we got married. There was probably thirty-five rooms in it in all, with the nurses staying upstairs, because they were always on shift work and it was easier for them to sleep with no one tromping over their heads. They were all hired under IOC at that time- hospital staff, teachers- everybody was being paid by IOC. (39 years old, in Labrador City for 21 years)

Living in a company staffhouse entailed very few expenses for these women, on top of a salary much higher than any they had received at home (although predictably far lower than that of their male counter-parts at similar levels of education). Most found their 'northern adventure' to be quite lucrative and an adventure,

indeed! They were the first in a town of hundreds of men, ever-visible-and, according to all reports, treated with the utmost in deference. If they weren't yet married, it's likely that they soon would be, so these women signalled 'community' in the north and support for all working there. And they were a 'relief':

"Anytime the girls ever went anywhere, there was always piles and piles and piles of men! None of them ever got out of the way, though-not once. But always buying you drinks if you were in anything tight or showing a bit of shape, you know? Hadn't seen a girl in months and months and months. But still in all, they were perfect gentlemen. I think they were just so glad to see a few women coming into town."  
(39 years old, in Labrador City for 21 years)

Their role in the development of the community was to create a home or, if single, 'look pretty' and the effects of this rather passive role are evident in the descriptions of the six respondents living in Labrador City for more than fifteen years.

Few had, or wanted to relate any 'romantic' or 'colourful' stories of northern pioneering such as men often do in Labrador City. Instead, they emphasized the physical transformations of a work camp to a suburban community, the domestication of the wilds, perhaps as they are socially 'expected' to. Myths of the northern frontier were a man's domain and women who entered did so at the risk of their feminine 'reputations' (see chapter

on women's problems, later). The respondent above was representative in giving a woman's view of the town's development, though she was more descriptive than the general:

"It was an interesting time and I certainly wouldn't hesitate to do it again, if I was younger. But I don't know whether I'd want to watch a town grow up now- because you always have to wear your Newfie boots, what with there's no streets or sidewalks and there's mud from one end to the other. Gradually it starts getting better, so that you don't even notice it. It's just accepted that they've started building the church, or the schools, and by the time it's finished, you've already taken it all for granted.

But it wasn't a bad set-up. There was a grocery store over where the freight station is now, and it used to double as a recreation center. And on one side of it Bowring's had a store with everything from soup to nuts in it. The shopping center wasn't opened until the following year, see? The theatre opened about 6 months after I got here, though, and that was the big deal, then!

It was only two streets big- Marconi and Drake- and they were just starting to build Cabot and Cartier. The whole town was just one little square section down there by the Ashuanipi (nightclub); just the men's bunkhouses and the cafeteria where we all ate. You'd go in and the company would issue you a meal ticket and deduct it from your pay. But, there were so few houses...no trailer court.

And that little mall where Woolworth's is was the only sort of shopping facilities there was. There wasn't too much around, and there was absolutely nothing to do- you had to make your own fun.

But it was really fun, you know? Making your own fun."  
(39 years old, in Labrador City for 21 years)

When men were occasionally questioned about the changes in Labrador City over the years, none lingered over the housing and shopping centers available, though they may have interpreted the question differently than women did. In describing the growth of the town, all respondents generally remembered house and street additions rather than the changes in people.

The dearth of any colourful female folklore probably stems from the rather grey positions that women were allotted here. Most came as workers' wives and had few alternatives. Company benefits were designed to appeal to young newly-weds and families (see later chapters) so most of the married migrants had, or were expecting small children to care for. Moreover, their concerns had to focus on the domestic since the world of work was virtually closed off.

Life anywhere can become rather mundane within such rigid social limits and especially in the north where the isolation of mothering is compounded by that of extreme winter conditions and the social isolation of migrating from home. The discontent of housewives in Labrador City was inevitable and one common lore, at least, had them always pressing to return home.

The tedium in Labrador City life was acknowledged as,



part and parcel of a woman's lot and few saw any means of changing it. Most agreed that at least they were materially better off than at home and they were trying to make life as pleasant as possible by forgetting any losses.

The sections that follow describe what women felt in coming to Labrador City; what they had come from; the reasons they found for staying and for leaving in their daily life and work; and finally, how some justified staying for even longer than they had intended.

CHAPTER FOUR: WORKER MIGRATION, SETTLING INTO TRANSICIENCY

Worker migration has long been a means of supplementing family income in Newfoundland, whether one hails from town or outport. Most of the Labrador City respondents knew exactly what they were getting into before they moved themselves: so many of the people they knew had gone to the same or similar places before them. This chapter takes a look at how migration had formerly figured in the lives of the respondents, their expectations prior to moving north, their reactions on arrival, and how they finally established themselves.

This latter point demands a look at the forms of assistance that each woman and her family received (or didn't) while adjusting to the changes and at the networks of kin and friends who were initially in Labrador City and would greet them. This is a prominent subject of much migration literature (eg. Tilly and Brown 1967; Smith 1976; Grieco 1981).

Promises, promises...and northern modernity

Migration from the island has traditionally been applauded as a great escape from the unemployment and attendant poverty of the province, or at least as a temporary means of coping with it (Iverson & Matthews

1967; Mann 1970). However, since Newfoundland's confederation with Canada and the subsequent dissemination of 'mainland' values and ideas<sup>5</sup> through improved communications, the educational system and the 'new' federal bureaucracies, migration itself has changed. The migrant has increasingly become an 'acheiver' seeking self-improvement instead of simply a guy out of work.

As aforesaid, single industry towns were conceived largely in the 1950s and '60s and were heralded throughout the country as the epitome of modernization where women and children were heartily welcomed (Foote 1979; Lucas 1971). In a nutshell, resource extraction on an expanding scale with investments from larger corporations meant greater profits, theoretically, for an entire area as well as for the companies involved. The centralization of surrounding rural populations would inflate the local economic base, increasing the available labour supply as well as local demand and production. Social benefits and services could be made available to a more concentrated number of people at a lower cost to the state (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1960; Brewis 1969).

The Labrador City respondents were quite familiar with these ideas and eleven had actually originated in such 'modernized' towns within Newfoundland where

attempts to stimulate large-scale industrial growth had become something of a Newfie joke to the provincial government, or resources had simply petered out.

"It wasn't all that much of a change, coming here, because Bell Island was just as isolated and it was a mine town and all that. It was closed in. There wasn't any ferry connecting to the highway to town when we left but there was all kinds of stores and shops on the island: it was all just like here, only not on such a big scale.

But it all closed down with the mine, so there's nothing there at all. If you want a job, or clothes, or anything, you got to go to St. John's."  
(43 years old, here for 15 years)

Unemployment is a common memory for most of these respondents so it's of little wonder that Labrador City had always had an aura of an industrial Mecca where money and stamps were easy enough to get, until recently. Wages and jobs were always plentiful for men and even after considering the relatively high cost of living in the north, most respondents maintained that they were better off than 'back home.' Here women could hope for personal gain and achievement for their husbands, even if the fiction of climbing to the top rarely was realized. The money at least made it seem like he was advancing in his 'career' and someone always knew of 'someone else' who had 'made it.'

It should be stressed that the possibility of big

bucks and dizzying social heights in this northern town still applied to men only:

"Well, we came here because the work was here for him. That's the way it was. You had to go to where the men could find work."  
(housewife, 45 years old)

Women always cited money as their motives for coming here, but they rarely made very much themselves. Married respondents especially were ultimately more concerned over the prospects for their husbands and children:

"See, it was either my husband would quit trade school and we'd come here, or we'd stay where we were and I'd go on teaching. He had already been here before and he knew of how you could work and get your trade at the same time, so that seemed like the best thing. I couldn't get on teaching here though, because they wanted more qualifications than what I had. I never did get back to university to upgrade."  
(housewife, 32 years old)

"Oh, I was really disappointed when I had to leave St. John's. I had a really good job (office work) and it was just getting interesting with promotions coming up, but Steve wanted to come back here, so I just had to come back with him. He wasn't working at all and he had a chance to get on here.

We were thinking that his job would make up for what the two of us were making there. Except that now I can't get any work at all and he'll be one of the first to go if these lay-offs come up."  
(unemployed, 30 years old)

This provides a partial illustration of Demmler-Kane's (1980) thesis that migration is often detrimental to the labour force participation of married women who

are multiple movers. Respondents in Labrador City also had a decrease in their employment status upon moving to Labrador City, though not merely because they had a 'sketchy' work history. As Martin-Matthews (1980) noted, there are many other 'status passages' that could be occurring at the same time as a move (eg. starting a family, retiring) that could confound the issue of women's employment. Moreover, in Labrador City there simply wasn't enough work to occupy all of the married women who wanted it.

As an aside, the majority of respondents here came from Newfoundland and subscribed to what Martin-Matthews (1977:163-4) describes as the traditional 'Newfie' role of women as housewives not working in outside jobs. In this ethic, a man is thought to be quite poor if his wife has to go to work. Notions such as this are changing here but it serves to illustrate the marriage based on non-egalitarianism, as Martin-Matthews points out, and the fact that these women have very little control over economic resources or power in the moving process.

The Labrador City respondents above were 'following their men' at the expense of budding and occasionally established jobs and careers, true to the traditional dictates that women do so. Few here, however, were trained for other than stereotypically 'feminine' (and

consequently 'replaceable') jobs. Definitions of 'feminine' work are many and various but the most succinct and encompassing is that it is work for which the majority of workers are women and the pay is relatively low. Inevitably it is seen as menial labour but both single and married women in Labrador City were engaged in such work. They often didn't qualify for any other types of jobs, having a fragmented work history as a result of motherhood and moving. "Previously they had little time in the past to "...develop an image of the self as competent and adequate..." that comes from extensive work-related training (Weissman and Paykel 1970).

The point to be made here is that the husband's work is often a precursor to the family's moving and the financial rewards from the move go to the worker. Women who are following their husbands see little of these 'tangible rewards'. They can be left feeling alone and helpless in a new area with few resources to change their situation (Weissman and Paykel 1970).

The labour markets of northern towns demand traditionally male skills and the prospects for women are never abundant or lucrative. This is amplified by the amenities offered in these single-industry towns, designed for the comfort and convenience of the male

worker and his wife rather than for the single female worker (see next chapter).

Most of the women in the sample wanted to work but their cut in the industrial pie was inordinately small, even compared with men at their levels of training, skill and experience. Of the twenty-one working outside the home in 1982 (excluding those laid off and on UIC) only twelve received a personal income deemed adequate to support one person. Statistics Canada had estimated this to be \$5,954 per annum in 1982. Only three or four of the respondents could have actually supported dependents by themselves. Part-timers never were so by choice and all spoken with were waiting and hoping for more hours to be allotted them or at least for no lay-offs in the near future.

In all, it's better to be married than to try to support oneself alone in Labrador City and moving the household in or out is never in the interest of the wife alone. The married women subverted their own interests to those of their families and they tried to 'facilitate' the move for the others. Just what this meant for the respondents, themselves, is the subject of the following section.



The move up: initially

For whatever reasons, migration figured highly in the personal histories of many of the respondents before they had arrived in Labrador City.

"Before Lab City? All the mines in Newfoundland, me and Jim lived in every one of them: we were always moving to work."  
(cashier, 46 years old)

"Well, Lab City is really the first place we settled in when I was a kid. My father was always moving around: Baie Verte, Gander, Greenland, Tuley and then off to somewhere else. I was fifteen by the time we finally settled here and then I got married, so me and Boyd started, Port McMurray, Edmonton, home (on the island), here, St. John's, and on and on. We're always trying somewhere new and coming back here. It's stayed in the family."  
(unemployed, 30 years old)

These are 'modern' women who no longer wait at home, but differ from their predecessors in that they, too, move to work. For twenty-three of the forty-nine respondents here (47%) Labrador City was a 'first' move and it was usually undertaken with a husband or fiancée. Eight more respondents (16%) had moved one other time previous to Labrador City and eighteen (37%) were what Demmler-Kane (1988) termed "multiple movers", having moved three or more times.<sup>6</sup> Commonly speaking the more an individual moves, the more 'adept' they become at adjusting to a new area. This, of course, is a

generalization and is not always the case.

"It's a big change, you know? But my family all feel that I've handled the move well, and mentally I think I have too. But the first six months were a terrible adjustment and there were points in time when I was very depressed. Very upset and really homesick. But you get over that, you know? You've got to move up here with the idea that you're going to make the best of it- and I did. Otherwise I could be bitching every day of my life up here and I don't want to do that- to my husband or to my children. It's just not fair to them, or to myself for that matter. I don't want to turn into a bitter person."  
(38 years old,; moved 3 times before Labrador City)

For many women, moving involved the pains of separation and even more isolation in an already unpeopled daily routine as housewives. On a day-to-day basis, neighbours simply won't be dropping in anymore as they did 'back home' and there might not be too many in the new town to visit (McAllister et al. 1973). One young housewife in Labrador City summarized this feeling as "Jesus, I'll tell you- it's great to have someone in a place like this!" Without friends or any outside work there isn't a lot of relief from the burdens of life:

"It was horrible! I came in the winter time and that's not the time to move when you're not too fussy about a place! I was bored silly. We had a few friends and we'd go back and forth to their place but we were staying with relatives so we couldn't really have them come to visit us or anything. Many's the night I cried to go home, I'll tell you!"  
(27 years old, in Labrador City for 6 years)

From these perspectives migration is hardly a pleasing prospect, and certainly not when it's permanent. Logically, it would seem all the easier if it were 'only for awhile' and if there were a few tangible rewards for the supportive wife. Many respondents recited demands to 'get out once or twice a year' that they had made, but usually they were successful only when the local economy allowed a vacation.

At the time of the fieldwork a few respondents were wondering why they had even come to Labrador City, let alone were still there. The decision to migrate was made by others, usually the spouse, and having no income, they had to come along. A few of these women resented their husbands and their moves to Labrador City and were very unhappy:

"We were back on the island and of course there was no work come up, so my husband just got up and said 'I'm going- are you going to come?' So what could I do? But I'm telling you, I've been sorry for it to this day! I mean, what am I doing here, these nine years? I got no one, I don't go anywhere, I'm doing nothing all day long now, cause the kids are in school- what's there here for me?"  
(housewife, 28 years old)

In her study of middle class wives and mothers Jones (1973) reported similar finds. Women who helped plan the move and who considered themselves as important factors in the moving process were much happier in their new

surroundings. They may have shown some stress during the actual move but this was generally short-lived, lasting three or four weeks at most. Martin-Matthews (1977; 1980) found that among Hamilton, Ontario migrants, wives whose husbands made the decisions to move and/or moved ahead of the rest of the family were vague in their responses about whether they liked it in their new communities, saying that they "...grew to like it after awhile." The author indicates that this is one aspect of the powerlessness of wives, true in Labrador City as well. Also common to both sets of respondents is the tendency to attribute their "...lack of satisfaction to something wrong within themselves..." (Martin-Matthews 1977:162).

The feeling of having had a choice in the matter of moving is crucial to a subsequent feeling of happiness with the new location. Almost all of Martin-Matthews' respondents who were moving for the sake of their husband's work had a difficult time with it. Most didn't have friends or family waiting for them to provide 'continuity' in their lives and consequently considered themselves as total strangers in a strange new town. Those transferred by their husband's company felt particularly powerless while those who moved because of unemployment back home actually felt that they had more

of a choice in making the move and were relieved that their husbands had found work. Many respondents in Labrador City would 'fit' into this latter description, though some felt it was quite awhile before they could "...look back and see that we were better off coming...."

Jones (1973), Martin-Matthews (1977; 1980) and Demmler-Kane (1980) all look at various circumstances in moving that create strains among women and one of the most oft-cited was the husband's moving ahead to the new community, leaving the wife to pack up the family and follow. She generally feels isolated and must undertake all of the responsibilities of childcare, moving house and taking leave of all the old friends and neighbours. One Labrador City respondent described this as a very stressful time:

"Before we moved up here it was really hard on the kids, you know? Being away from their father for so long and then when they were old enough to see him, he was only home for a short while and then off again. But it was the same way when I was young. My father used to fish off the Labrador coast and when I was born, they had to send him a telegram. That's the only way he ever would have known!"  
(40 years old, here for 16 years)

Information about the destination is another important feature in making a move successful or not, as noted by the authors above. Initial impressions in Labrador City often lingered for months and even the

first few years, so for those with little foreknowledge of a strange and stark industrial town, the first glimpse was often depressing. Appreciation of northern lands and climates usually takes a bit of time to develop and this was more difficult with the physical isolation that these women felt.

"Well, I just never knew a thing about this place! He told me there was no wind here, and no fog like in St. John's, but when we came in the runway, there was no side to the airport terminal, either! You can imagine my shock - it was the middle of winter and I just about froze walking from the plane to the building! And it stayed like that until May! I just hated it here all that first year!"  
(31 years old, here for four years).

'Anticipatory trips', or at least some information about the destination so that the mover is acquainted with the new schools, neighbourhoods, shopping facilities and so on can ease the stress of moving (Jones 1973; Martin-Matthews 1988). The unknown becomes known and substantial enough to deal with. In her study of migrants to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Christiansen-Ruffman (1976) maintains that gaining such knowledge of the destination is essential if newcomers are to eventually acquire a new set of networks and feel "comfortable" with them or even "accepted".

Among the Labrador City respondents, there were a few who knew nothing of the area before coming but

decided to "...make the best of it..." and they weren't too unhappy with their move.

"Well, he had a good job here, you know? So it didn't really matter. Now I didn't have a clue of where I was going. I knew it was north, and cold, but that's about it."  
(housewife, 28 years old)

This respondent and others like her may not have known what they were getting into from the outset, but they did have some help from already-established friends and family in 'getting started'.

#### Networks and continuity

In sum, the move to this cold mining town was indeed disconcerting and with few rewards at the workplace, the attentions of respondents were often focused on easing the family's adjustment to the new area. In many other studies besides this one, the woman was designated as the "key to a successful move" (Lopata 1971; Jones 1973; Martin-Matthews 1988). She usually performed all or most of the tasks necessary to establishing a new home and to "shape the passage" of the others (eg. making life 'nice' for the family by being cheerful and happy). Martin-Matthews (1988) notes that even when husbands did help their wives in such tasks, it was usually more by empathy than by actually doing the chores. Moving, then, was

seen as much more difficult for the wife than for the husband since she did everything alone. The husband's adjustments (usually focused on his work role, a 'ready-made' source for integration in the community.

For the wife, then, the move was all the easier if other friends and relatives were living in Labrador City and were willing to provide social introductions or material help. This concurs with the findings of Martin-Matthews (1977; 1980), Demmler-Kane (1980), Jones (1973) and McAllister et al. (1973) in their studies of female movers. People moving to areas where friends or relatives already lived were less likely to experience 'social disruption' and were more rapidly integrated in the new community.

Migration sometimes proves to be quite an upheaval in life, particularly for those who cannot establish a thread of continuity through their career goals or extra-home interests. No less than thirty-eight of the respondents were grateful for the welcoming committees from their family networks and citing these often evolved into a litany of who's who and where at present:

"The first time I came in here, we stayed with my husband's sister for a little while. But I've got a lot of family here too- a distant cousin here for years now, and we had a cousin of mine living with us until he got laid off. But his sister and her husband and two kids are



all still living here. And last winter he had another sister come in. So there's a few, now. And you need it! It's really great, having someone in a place like this." (25 years old, Labrador City resident for 9 1/2 years)

For some, Labrador City actually provided the setting to reconstitute an extended family when work could no longer be found for anyone at home, a situation noted in previous migration studies (Grieco 1981; Tilly and Brown 1967):

"We'd really miss this place if we left, mostly because of the family, you know! Well, he's got two sisters living here, and aunts and uncles and cousins- the whole works! So we see them all a fair bit and there's hardly anyone left at home." (29 years old, in Labrador City for six years)

Moving was a painful necessity in many of these cases, but with family close there was always something better ahead. Privately, some respondents confided that 'things would be different' if they were single: they could leave when they wished, free of family considerations. But they, and the single respondents below, had come to Labrador City for the sake of someone else or for 'personal and family' reasons as had Martin-Matthew's (1977) Hamilton migrants:

"I came up here to look for work. Well actually, Joan (cousin) was up here with her husband and she was pregnant, after losing one baby. I came up to visit and do her hard work for her, scrub her floors and that. Cause she's like a sister to me and I didn't want her

to lose a second one. Anyway, I came for 2 weeks, stayed for two months, met my husband and here I am still."  
(housewife, 31 years old)

All told, a mere five of the forty-nine moved to Labrador City solely out of their own self-interest, and not all of these were the semi-professionals of the sample. Few, following the traditions of femininity, would wish to be considered as lone travellers, but more important, very few women had, or have, enough resources to make such a move alone. With low-paying jobs, or none at all before moving to Labrador City and little actual income to look forward to afterwards (as noted in Weissman and Paykel 1978), women here scarcely had cause to celebrate migration as a personal 'success' in their lives.

"I was getting unemployment at home and doing nothing- there was nothing to do there anyways. It was only a small town. You had to go sixty miles by taxi just to look for a job in town, you couldn't afford that everyday and there was nothing there, either. Probably I went in there on the wrong day all the time. But anyway, I wasn't doing anything so I just came on up."  
(salesclerk, 23 years old)

"Six months! That's all I was going to stay for when I first came up here. There was nothing home so I got a job, it seemed too good to give up at the time. It didn't pay all that much, though!"  
(former gas station attendant, 26 years old)

Sometimes older teenagers, both male and female,

would come to Labrador City to finish high school since the educational system was so much better than on the island. Inevitably they stayed with family, working as storeclerks, or babysitters by day and going to school at night.

#### Patterns of assistance

Sharing accommodations with friends and family was a vital part of the female migrations to Labrador City, for no matter how important the company regarded women to be in creating a social structure for the town, it never provided them with the same accommodations, bunkhouse or otherwise, as it did for men after the early 1960s. Moreover, women were barred from property-ownership by varying degrees (see section on housing) since their men were supposed to 'provide'. However, not all men could, if previously unemployed, and not all women had men, so alternate strategies for accommodation had to be found. Practically all stayed with an aunt or sister or girlfriend, whether they came alone or with husbands and babies in tow, until they could get 'straightened away'. This usually lasted anywhere from one month to a year.

To reciprocate for these accommodations and other forms of assistance, guests often assumed household

duties for their hosts. They also brought news of home and sometimes paid for their keep. Of course, with different people arriving, each experience was totally new.

"My brother was up here working for awhile, last year and stayed with me. He paid board and all, figured he could do whatever he wanted, because he was paying his board! And eat! He used to eat like I don't know what! He only stayed for three months and then he moved out; said he couldn't get along with me.

But I had Cyril's brother here for two years, and he never had a complaint. If I told him he wasn't allowed to do this or that- like late night parties and things- he didn't care. As long as he was fed and his clothes was clean.

And my cousin and her boyfriend were here for a couple of months last year. And my sister-in-law, too. I didn't mind when there was a woman around, cause they always do things for themselves. There'd be no problems- they'd clean their rooms, do the dishes, the clothes, everything! But I don't think I'll ever have another man boarding with me- no way!"  
(housewife, 26 years old)

Everyone is expected to help where they can in such a situation and, sooner or later, it is all supposed to come back as deserved. The logic of this is that none can be too sure of never needing assistance themselves in the future. Moreover, by helping, some were paying off past debts incurred with someone totally different in the network, when they had first arrived:

"Well, you never know, do you? I mean, I do for you and someday I might have to ask you for help, right? We had to stay with my brother and

his wife when we first came down here. So after we were straightened away, there was others behind me coming in. All of my sisters and their boyfriends or husbands or whatever have stayed here anywhere from three months to a year over the last five." (housewife, 32 years old)

This is a good example of the principle of reciprocity in the social sciences and specifically of what Ekeh (1974:47-9) terms "univocal reciprocity". His definition reads: "...reciprocations involve at least three actors and...the actors do not benefit each other directly but only indirectly." For example, I will give to Peter who, in turn, gives to Paul. Paul might then give to Roxanne, who eventually gives to Ramona, who has given to me in the past. In order for this social interaction to continue everyone in the group must consider themselves and others to be equal members, or at least "...status is not a salient issue in the social exchange situation." Exchanges can extend over periods of time as well.

Labrador City respondents often viewed themselves as being 'in the same boat' as other family members; they are all here to work and to try to make a living. Those who were established in 1982 and who had received aid in moving in the past were more than willing to extend help to others who might need it now and in the future. They also expressed hopes that they could again call on their

networks should they need to. Those who were not interested in keeping up with these exchanges and who denied help when asked were seen by the respondents involved as "stuck-up", or having the idea that they were socially better than the applicants for help. True to the principle of reciprocity, they saw the exchange as an indication of lower status which they wished to have no part of.

Nevertheless, refusing to help a friend or relative in the regular migrant network is regarded as absolute stinginess, the host/ess being too mean to share even a little of the good fortune found while away.

"We only had \$50 in our pockets when we first got here. So we went to his uncle's who was after telling us we could stay there anytime at all! But just imagine, now- his wife wouldn't have us. Oh, she'd give you a dinner as nice as pie but she wouldn't hear of putting us up and she with a spare bedroom and a basement all done up and all!

We had to go to the hotel, at 11 o'clock at night, and get a \$50 room. What a miserable night! Nothing worked in the room and it was freezing outside! I must say, I wasn't too keen on staying on in Lab City the next morning!"

(dishwasher, 31 years old)

Of course, there were also those who might be described as going a little overboard in their generosity:

"There was my cousin and her husband and their two kids, and his brother and the two of us, two cats, a dog and a budgie- all in this tiny little two-bedroom trailer! What a time! Good and bad, boy, I'll never forget those few months! You would have cracked up to have seen us!"  
(housewife, 31 years old)

Among many of these migrant workers the sense of family is quite strong. Generally, the problems of conflict between individual goals of success at work and the communal demand to maintain the tradition of family support seem to have been solved in Labrador City and places like it. Rather than weighing down the 'mobile', familial bonds often serve to help in getting around. Communal help and sharing was at least a necessity for the poorest among the migrant strata: women, the unskilled and the inexperienced at work (Richling 1985; Tilly and Brown 1967; Miller 1976). It may even be viewed as a resource used to 'get by' or 'get ahead'. In her study of Hamilton, Ontario migrants, Martin-Matthews 1977 noted that wives who are powerless in the decision to move and in the actual process have even less of a powerbase if the receiving kin network is her husband's rather than her own. In this respect kin are essential to a successful move and as such, constitute a 'resource'.

Individualism and communal values were never mutually exclusive in Labrador City. The most 'other-

centered' people entrenched in strong migrant networks were also quite materialistic: they, like everyone else, had come to Labrador for the sake of making money. They recognized the importance of kin-coöperation and of practicality, essential if they were to get that new car! But again, giving assistance to family involved a small expense and a bit of goodwill and patience when one's privacy is interrupted.

Naturally enough human relations are such that disputes and conflicts of personality are inevitable somewhere down the network line but, no matter how far fallen from grace, most tried to tolerate their family antagonisms. Any tie is better than none at all.

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"See, I always believe in everything being 50-50. You do your bit and I'll do mine and then we'll all get through it. But my sister? No way! She's just too much for herself and no one else. I'll never live with her again! Where? Oh, she's a few blocks down from here now. I still see her a couple times a week, but that's just for coffee and that."  
(housewife, 29 years old)

In sum, social networks are indispensable to both the newly and not-so-newly arrived in Labrador City. They provided continuity in the absence of home; relief in an unfamiliar environment; material support in the (hopefully) short transition to a new job and house; and even for those women who need no financial assistance they alleviate some of the dependence on spouse for



company and commiseration. Kin networks generally facilitated instead of hindered the move itself, although there were some exceptions.

#### Alone and proud

Only eleven of the forty-nine respondents claimed to have been completely alone on arriving in Labrador City with no one to greet them, but two of these later sent for others left at home to come and try their luck at getting a job. Some were young and trying to establish a career so they weren't interested in forming too many binding ties anyway:

"Well, I was boarding at first, and it was the first time I ever done that in my life! I didn't know the people at all. It was \$30 a week then and I did my own laundry, bought my own shampoo, stuff like that. They were nice but I couldn't speak to them very much because I didn't know much English. But I was there a year when they moved. Then I just went somewhere else. It didn't matter much- I was working and had a good job and that, so who cares, really?"  
(key-punch operator, 33 years old)

In the ideology of 'making it' and achieving success in life there is a common notion that the truly adept do so alone. Many Labrador Cityites who had been there for years and had attained some social standing in the town cited little help from their families and friends when starting out, even though they probably knew at least a

few. For others, coming north alone was simply a lonely time:

"No, none belonging to me. I still don't know nobody. And his sister- I never met her till we got here, but we didn't hitch- there was no way, and we still don't. There's no one at all. Time goes slowly like that too."  
(housewife, 28 years old)

Unless a new arrival was adept or lucky in making friends, an industrial northern town can be a cold and barren ground for depression:

"We were in a basement apartment that year- just a bedroom and a kitchen. No windows, so the lights were on day and night. It was so gloomy- you had to stick your head out of the door to see what it was like outside. I thought I'd go nuts that first year!"  
(unemployed salesclerk, 31 years old)

Generally those without family developed close ties with neighbours and fellow workers, creating some of the emotional support needed to 'get through it all.' McAllister et al. (1973) and Jones (1973) note in their studies of women adapting to residential mobility that this is much easier if they had moved before and know the processes involved in meeting new people; if there is a pre-school child to serve as a contact and common interest with neighbours; and if the woman assumes 'non-traditional' roles (working outside the home as well as in it). These women were more likely to have or create more opportunities for interacting with others, at least

in the initial period of adjustment after the move.

Demmler-Kane (1980) found that the multiple movers in her study (married women who had moved more than three times) created as many ties in their new neighbourhoods as did the less mobile and they maintained contact with friends from previous moves, but they had reduced interaction among their own set of relatives. Similarly, Christiansen-Ruffman (1976) found that newcomers to Halifax, Nova Scotia would be more likely to feel 'comfortable' and 'accepted' if they were 'entrepreneurial' within the move. Their passage into new networks and neighbourhoods would be quicker and easier if they took the initiative in making new friends and participating in local events, rather than passively waiting to be welcomed. Christiansen-Ruffman did distinguish, though, between close, intimate ties (Gemeinschaft) based on personal knowledge of the others which took time for any newcomer to develop, and open, universalistic ties (Gesellschaft) based on easily acquired information about the other. In Labrador City, some respondents were quite comfortable within the latter sort of network while others longed for the closeness of home (if they had no family here).

Women particularly dependent upon friends could understand the 'good-byes' of their new friends since

eventually they might also have to leave for greener pastures and couldn't afford binding ties themselves. But all understanding aside, several of the longer-term residents were still mourning the loss of close friends three and four years after they had left. They often kept in touch with phone calls and arranged annual vacations so that all could meet again. All planned to retire in close proximity to each other, as if retirement in a migrant life is the time for reconstituting community and stability.

Despite their claims of independence from family, all of these women did have their current or prospective husbands waiting for their arrival. Their idea was that 'Labrador City would be a great place to start out,' especially when both partners in the marriage were working, childless and could save. As far as friendships and emotive bonds go, there was always the workplace—the only place for socializing in the earlier years of the town's history and still prominent in sparking new acquaintanceships.

Most of the Labrador City informants who arrived as newlyweds believed in the promise of Labrador City and of social mobility with migration just as the respondents in Jones' (1973) and Martin-Matthews' (1988) studies did. They were quite happy with what they and their husbands

had attained here. Migration had delivered them a genuine experience of social mobility impossible to find 'back home.'

The promise of unhindered freedom to create a place of one's own is among those used by governments and companies alike to attract new residents to the newly developing north. It contained some elements of truth and fiction, but virtually everyone believed in it and many of the Labrador City respondents intended to stay for awhile longer, to get established. They also still needed some semblance of sociability in their daily lives to be able to stay.

In sum most of the respondents felt that friends and family made the biggest difference to them in Labrador City while achievements at work or personal goals were only occasionally cited as helpful in making the transition to a new place. There is, of course, a very prominent reason for this: success for women here was defined in the North American tradition of their relations with others and these were the principal sources of any satisfactions they might derive from life, since work for women in Labrador City left a lot to be desired. Even the major attractions for women to come to Labrador City were designed to appeal to their emotive, maternal sides, as the following chapter shows. They

weren't counted as workers.

CHAPTER FIVE: NORTHERN ATTRACTIONS FOR WOMEN

If IOCC wanted women coming to Labrador City, it had to offer something to entice them up. This it did by appealing to their domestic and nurturant 'tendencies', since they weren't coming to make money themselves, but to support husbands and lovers who would.

Labrador City in the 1960s was promoted as a town where anyone could get a nice home and a good future for their children. The following sections are concerned with exactly how these lures to women measured up. Below I will discuss such lures as housing sold and subsidized by the company, entertainments available to women, provisions made for workers' children as well as the reasons why these were such important considerations for respondents, and what, if any, were their misgivings after having responded to them.

Housing: how to get it and what could be had

Addressing one of the foremost complaints among the men of any work camp, that no women meant no reason to stay after the money's made, IOCC decided to build a town for workers and their families. First of all, housing was needed: an endeavor that would take some time to complete since there were hundreds of workers willing to

move their families in to ease the loneliness of everyone concerned. If the company was to have a settled and reliable work force in Labrador women would have to be appeased by no less than decent accommodations, the home being "her workplace." This was likely the extent of the company's consideration of women, as domestics. That they might have other interests in life such as working outside of home was never indicated by company policy. Services were built for male workers and their domestic wives. Women never had much of an input or choice as to the types of houses they would live in, but simply had to take whatever was offered, if indeed, they really wanted the family to stay together.

The issue of control over the town's development began at an early point, when all land-holdings in the Labrador City area became IOCC-owned. In the early 1960s, then, the company began building its town just as the companies in Lucas' (1971) study did: by letting contracts to construction firms able to follow the two or three models of the standard suburban-type bungalow or row-houses that were relatively suitable to northern climates and planned by a small group of architects and engineers. Lucas (1971:185) notes the preference for single-family units among residents in isolated communities, "...despite the difficulties of heating,



weather, distance, (etc.)..." since these provided a measure of privacy and social insulation to the individual which is hard to find in a small town.

Houses were laid out in grid form in Labrador City and conformed to the functionalist aesthetics of the time. In essence this was a rather bare look, having no emphasis on the unique, the individual, or the historic. The style represents the homogenization emblematic of a company town.<sup>8</sup> But in the 1960s such bungalows were symbols of upward mobility (Lopata 1971), and the town had to be built to appeal to the majority of workers and their families. Needless to say, the company benefited from such standardization since it made housing much cheaper to build. Moreover, an allowance for each individual's 'special touch' would have required much more time in the planning stages than was possible or profitable to schedule. The company wanted a settled town and labour force immediately to realize a maximum profit from labour productivity. This was, after all, the reason it was building a town.<sup>9</sup>

In considering their neighbourhoods all but three or four of the respondents preferred this company-housing style or at least they didn't mind it, and they liked the 'nice tidy look of the place.' It met all the standards set by mass advertising, a prominent influence in

Labrador City life.<sup>10</sup> In a consumer culture, meeting the standards set by media is a means of measuring one's success in the society at large and few of the respondents here were not attracted by this idea. Most had come from a background of poverty and 'sub-standard' housing in Newfoundland's rural outports of the 1960s. A major selling point of the provincial government's resettlement program at the time was that all of the modern amenities in homemaking would be provided in centralized areas. For women, and especially those working solely in the home, having these conveniences would, according to the promotion, make their lives much more pleasant. In addition, women wanted these 'aids' to homemaking since their status in the 'consumer culture' was often measured by how many they had and the quality of the home they kept (Ewen 1976; Oakley 1974).<sup>11</sup>

Labrador City was deemed to meet all these 'needs' (i.e. wants), so there was a great demand for the company's houses when they were first built. As soon as each house was completed it would be allotted to whatever worker was judged most in need of it. The new occupant would buy it from the company at a remarkably low price (probably close to cost: some of the earlier prices quoted were in the 15-16,000 dollar range) and mortgage financing was arranged through the bank with a company

subsidy on the interest payable, often amounting to more than half of the loan. The worker's paycheck would simply be deposited into his account each payday by the company, and the mortgage taken out. Lucas (1971) also notes this strategy of companies in isolated, single-industry towns, for keeping workers comfortable and stationary.

The plan sounded great- but there were a few conditions. If anyone defaulted on making his mortgage payment (ie. lost his job) the house would automatically revert to IOCC property, rather than be sold on an open market. Of course, it could always be sold to another IOCC employee in the early years of high housing demand- but no one working outside the company had a chance of owning their own homes in Labrador City until the 1970s. Moreover, no matter who bought the house the land-holding on which it stood always remained in IOCC's name, in case any high stakes in mineral deposits could be found there later.

Few people really balked at these regulatory measures since the houses were so cheap, and they could see little reason to stay around town without a job anyway. Jobs were relatively hard to lose at that point, too. The company, desperate for that stable work force, was willing to overlook several types of misdemeanors

practised at work simply to keep its workers. It could well afford to anyway, since hiring procedures and housing allotments ensured that certain 'undesirable' types would have long been ferreted out of the settled populace. Those left were well-entrenched in the company's work hierarchy and well-versed in its work ethics since 'needs' for a house depended on the supervisor's evaluation of a worker's job-performance, the constancy of his family ties (ie. the more important his family to him, the less likely a worker in Labrador City would be to "pack it all in" on impulse) and of course, his seniority at work. All of these requisites could have been interpreted quite subjectively and in the final analysis, according to many of the respondents here, getting a house "depended on who you knew". The company itself would never admit to such favouritism, or the very human fact that its management personnel may have been biased in their evaluations, and one company official assured me that housing allotments had always been a matter of 'equal access' though his description of the procedure led to a few questions.

"No, we don't subsidize singles yet, but we're working on it and I'd say that probably in a few years, we will. We do give them to employees living common-law these days - if they're reliable, steady, and valuable workers. But that's only been in the last few years now. See, before there was only so many houses to go around and we couldn't even accommodate all the

married couples who were applying. So we had to allot houses on the basis of who needed them first.

"The allotment procedure? Well, I remember when I was young and single and applying for a house - my supervisor had to tell me the whole routine when I couldn't get one!

IOCC would allot so many houses to each department, so all the supervisors would get together and state how many requests for houses they had, from the men. Say one department needs six and another needs four and another one again needs two. Now say there was only six houses to go around - well then, they allot them to the department with the most need. The department needing six would get four, and the one needing four would get two and the one that only needed two wouldn't get any at all.

But we'd always try to stick with the seniority system to figure out who would finally get the houses, so as not to hurt anybody's feelings. In those days you just had to wait. When I finally did get married and could apply, my wife and I had to wait almost a year in the Embassy apartments.

Women getting houses in those days? Well, I don't really know that much about it."  
(IOCC official, October 1982)

Qualifying for a home was never easy for anyone in the first fifteen years of the community's development and the waiting period always seemed long. Lucas (1971) describes the exact same system of company control over the town's property and various ways to allot housing. IOCC's matches the method of having the heads of departments choose which men get what. Lucas sees this as a means of the company's controlling and disciplining its workforce in that only the reliable workers would qualify

for housing. There is obviously a similar case to be made in Labrador City's development. Extended waiting periods on housing may well have been due to shortages but in addition, these allowed the company a fair degree of manoeuvrability in choosing its town populace and getting rid of the 'undesirables' before they settled in.

#### Housing subsidies

To qualify for subsidized housing the first stipulation was that one be an IOCC employee. Even those who were indirectly employed by the company such as school teachers and other 'tertiary' workers to the company's main mining operations were not eligible. They were often invited to come to work in Labrador City, with their wages subsidized by the company and their housing provided on a very cheap rental basis. But no matter how much they were told that they were 'needed' in this newly growing town, they were never permitted to buy property until the real estate market opened to non-company (and non-subsidized) workers. One respondent explained the company's justification for this: they weren't directly on the payroll, and teachers, nurses, etc. had a tendency to leave every few years; while she was indignant in the early years that the company put so little faith in her (and her husband's) tenacity, she was quite pleased now

that the real estate market had bottomed out in 1982 and they had lived there for more than fifteen years at a very low cost.

There was discrimination even among company employees. New home-owners were inevitably male and only since the late 1970s have women received consideration in this area. The men were married, with families, which sounds fair enough in the early years of excruciatingly high housing demand, but rather mean in that married women with families were deemed to be in less need. The 'needs' of unmarried women with children were totally ignored, since female company employees were usually on the lower rungs of the clerical staff anyway and such positions are usually regarded as ever-easy to fill.

By the early 1980s single mothers were regarded as a little more deserving of help. Moreover, since the 1977 change in labour laws requiring that women be given equal access to all company positions, female employees were to be given a wider access to company benefits as well. These circumstances as well as (and perhaps definitively) an easing in the local housing demand facilitated the granting of subsidies to women. In the 1982 fieldwork, however, there were only rumors of two women who actually did get a house this way. Among the respondents, one young single mother who had been with the company for

more than five years was indignant when still refused assistance during the winter of 1981-82:

"Well, she was born in 1978 and I lived with my family until the beginning of 1980, when I started moving into apartments. Pretty bad, for the most part.

"There I was, working at IOCC and trying to get a mortgage from them ever since she was born, but they always had some reason why I couldn't. Finally I just said the hell with it, went to the bank and got a personal loan, and bought this trailer. By that time- it was early this year (1982)- they had stopped giving mortgages on trailers. And even if they did still give them out, I couldn't qualify for a company subsidy.

"Why? Because I'm single. They'll subsidize you if you're married or even living common-law these days, but not if you're single and living by yourself, no matter how many dependents you have. When I applied, I really got the run-around too. Nobody would say anything definite, like "no" to me. So finally I went to the manager of accommodations and said "why not? I have a dependent and need a place" but he just said "sorry, no singles" type of thing.

"So this isn't too bad- it's only \$330 a month for the loan- and they only subsidize houses anyway, not trailers. But you really get the shaft a lot around here, if you're single. Like me, I grew up in Lab City: it's my home and I want to live here.

I'm not going to buy a house for six months and say here, you can have your subsidy back, I'm leaving. Not in the foreseeable future, anyway. And it's not like there's some man around who's going to whisk me away. I do have a daughter to think about. I think I'm a fairly good risk for them. But no go!"  
(23 years old, clerk)

No matter how many responsibilities this woman had, she did not qualify for housing because of her single



status. Life would have been much easier if there was a man around, and they wouldn't necessarily have had to be married anymore by 1982:

"We started living together in a basement apartment about nine years ago, but we couldn't get a house or a trailer, or nothing from either company- he was with IOCC and I was working at Wabush mines. So finally IOCC came across with a trailer because we told them we were married, but we weren't, really.

And we were just on top of the world, in this stupid little trailer! So we never did intend to get married, but then I got pregnant a couple of years later and we needed a house, for the family, eh? So we got married- really, I guess we were ready to, anyway- and we switched to a house. It had to be official, then, because they'd check up on you if you were getting a subsidy."  
(33 years old, secretary)

Commonly, marriage is regarded as a stabilizing factor in the lives of both men and women, and from the company perspective, married women were much more beneficial to the settling of Labrador City (and the 'servicing' of the local labour force).

In the vein of a 'closed' company town, IOCC undoubtedly had Labrador City under control with regard to accommodations, but its argument was that this was only for the formative years. Similarly, in Lucas' work (1971) the company town goes through a 'transition' stage when the company tries to relinquish its authority and hand some of the responsibilities of running the

municipality over to its resident workers. It sells houses to home-owners and grants schools, parks and any other facilities it had maintained to the town council and becomes a tax-payer. IOCC was trying to do this same thing in Labrador City. The motive is to thwart any local "...preoccupation(s) with impermanence..." since people are hypothetically more interested in staying if they feel responsible. Lucas (1971) cautions that the citizens of a single-industry community might not always want to be responsible (particularly if they are only there for the money). There is also some degree of control retained by the company, as in IOCC's case, so that it can get houses back and discharge inefficient workers if necessary.

In any case, the real estate market in Labrador City 'opened up' in the 1970s and women, like all non-company personnel, were more than welcomed to buy the home of their dreams. There were even a few endeavors at constructing municipal and co-operative low-rental units which worked out well but, for the most part, were commonly known as "welfare" housing. The market prices of houses were skyrocketing by this time, far out of the reach of most. Women, in particular those with fairly low incomes, found it hard to qualify at the bank for a mortgage. Few women were working with IOCC and those who

were often didn't meet the criteria to qualify for the company's housing subsidy.

The majority of respondents in this study wouldn't be able to support the cost of living in Labrador City if they were unmarried given the exorbitant rents and prices and the paucity of material resources available to single women. It's of little wonder, then, that the sex-ratio among singles remained askew. The argument that few of the 'weaker sex' could "handle" life in the rugged north is easily tempered by the fact that few women would be able to afford such adventures unless paid on the same scale as men in whatever occupation they chose. (Or unless, as one of my single respondents joked, she "get a man with IOCI".)

Property ownership, for all but a few respondents, was always more attractive than renting:

"Well, we lived in a basement apartment, really, it was just a cubby-hole with no windows, for the first nine months we were up here and then we moved into an apartment building for a year. Both of them were \$300 a month to rent, but in the second rent was going up to \$350. You could get a house for \$288 at the time with a subsidy, so we thought that would be a better idea. And houses and trailers were all pretty easy to get, then, too."  
(26 years old, housewife)

Trailers were often the chosen alternative for those who only planned to stay for five or ten years since they

represented a much smaller personal investment over the long-run, but naturally, certain company stipulations were mandatory here as well. Again, only IOCC employees qualified for ownership in the early years. The company wanted a town with few 'undesirables': transient and temporary workers who had no intentions of making Labrador City their home but merely came for a fast buck.

As with the qualifications for getting a house, working with IOCC indicated that the buyer was making an adequate wage and was dependent on the company to provide it. They could meet their obligations to the bank and still have enough money to keep the area up to suburban standards. The company's investment in establishing the trailer park was guaranteed in this respect and by another stipulation: should the trailer-owner decide to vacate, he would have to sell the property to another company employee, again. According to many respondents, this regulation held even after houses were put on the open market and was difficult to attend to if the property was to be sold at all. Not everyone wanted a trailer. But every effort was directed towards deflecting the possibility of a 'shantytown' development on the outskirts of the company's town. Trailers were so much cheaper that it was feared they would attract a 'shantytown' element: low-income earners (particularly

wifeless men) in marginal, tertiary or temporary jobs. Without wives or money to keep up domestic appearances, such men might let the value of the property deteriorate.

While such discrimination is covert, it is nonetheless quite effective. Since trailers weren't subsidized, the potential buyer would have to provide adequate proof of his ability to pay even more, relatively, than someone buying a house under an IOCC subsidy. He'd have to find his own financing for a shorter-term mortgage (or loan, as in one case cited above) and meet higher interest payments, proving his reliability. Lucas (1971) notes a similar company tendency to plan its community entirely, thereby eliminating any potential squatters or fringe, slum developments on the edges of town. These would be economically inefficient to build and maintain and they could devalue property appreciably.

Company rules and regulations concerning housing in Labrador City had always been justified by the company's investment in the town: undoubtedly a legitimate argument if the workers themselves weren't required to invest so much personal money in company property. They were literally helping to pay for IOCC's interests in return for the pleasure of bringing their families in to live with them. This, in turn, serves the company's

interest again. Few workers had any alternatives to this and some were even penalized if they showed any small measure of disloyalty, such as not particularly wanting to stay and looking elsewhere for work. The following respondent described such a situation:

"Really we've been here for years and this is our second house. We had a subsidy on the first one so it was a lot easier to live then. But last year, I got really depressed- just had to get out of here. So we sold our house and went out to look around, on my husband's vacation. There's just nothing anywhere and we had to come back. Poor Joe- he only left to please me, but you can't tell the company that. They just won't have anything more to do with you if it looks like you might not stay forever. We couldn't get another subsidy.

"So we figured we'd get a trailer- we had the cash to pay for it outright with no problems like mortgages, or anything. But we weren't allowed to, because we had already sold a company house. Now if you had a trailer and sold it to buy a house, that's fine. You're really settling in, then. But they got all these rules and they own everything: the whole town.

"The only thing we could get was this place- a row-house- and with no subsidy we're paying \$488 a month on a mortgage. But it'd be even more expensive if we were going to rent it. Now the mortgage is up in two years so with interest rates climbing like they do, we figure it might go up to a thousand. Just because we wanted to get out."  
(31 years old, housewife)

Again, one condition to housing subsidies was that the property would never be used to the owner's profit, either by renting it out directly or by using it to establish a small business. "Self-advancement" as an

ideal to live by is encouraged within the company's ranks and according to the company's rules of job promotion but it is quite inappropriate to benefit by working for the company and having extra sources of income subsidized by it. For the individuals involved, life was often easier if they abided by these company stipulations and there were several entrepreneurial ideas abandoned both in the housing sector and in self-employment for women. In housing it was obvious that the company didn't want to lose its control over local real estate:

"Say you've built on a garage or any kind of extra thing that would add to the value of the property, and you wanted to sell your place. The guy buying it has got to be with IOCC and he won't get a subsidy on the added price that you've marked the property up to. He's got to pay the difference out of his own pocket, because they don't want to pay you for the extra work you put into the house.

"That's the whole thing, down here. You're not allowed to make a profit in any way off IOCC property. If we had gotten this house through IOC and a subsidy and we decided to build a basement apartment we'd lose the subsidy automatically. It'd be extra income on a subsidized house and they won't help any more. If we did it, the mortgage would be \$671 per month, whereas now it's \$372, so to make up the difference, we'd have to charge the people downstairs \$300 a month. For a crummy basement. With not much privacy since there's only one entrance and you can't renovate for two because it's a row-house and there's the house next door that would be affected too. This is why rents are so high and it's better to be settled in a house.

And we're really stuck here because of that rule, too. We only bought the place because

there was nothing else around at the time, and we had to pay a lot of extra value on it. To sell it now and move into a bungalow, we'd have to ask that extra from the next guy, which means we're 'making a profit.' Which means no subsidy on the next house we want to buy. And we just can't afford to live in Lab City without one. Catch 22, eh?"  
(25 years old, secretary-bookkeeper)

There is a certain justice in the company's perspective that paid workers do not need an extra income subsidized by the company but the effects of this rule are extended to their unpaid wives as well. It curbs the earning power of housewives who cannot or don't want to accept paid employment outside of the home but who have traditionally undertaken daycare, or boarding duties, or even crafts production in the cases of a few respondents here. In this sense, then, many of those interests that women had external to their familial duties were regulated and undermined. Lucas (1971) also describes such company-oriented regulations in buying housing as a means of regulating a workforce though he doesn't carry this to the conclusion that the wives and families of workers are also regulated. By indirectly keeping some wives dependent on their worker-husbands, the company is insuring that its 'stable family man' keeps showing up for work.

In spite of this 'company control', most of the respondents were glad that at least they didn't have to



live and work in Labrador City merely to pay interest to the bank. After the initial 1982 layoffs at IOCC people began to worry about the security of their jobs, and suddenly the benefits offered by the company looked a little more like a burden. More than a few people during this fieldwork voiced the concerns of the following respondent about these worker-migrant 'lures', concerns which have since become an 'issue' in the local regional newscasts:

"Oh yeah. Yeah, it was good. And that's what our problem is now. No one wants to leave here unless they got some money saved up or they've got a job that's going to pay them to move out, because they don't want to lose what they've already put into the place.

Like us. We own this house- bought it about a month before they started announcing the shutdowns. And now, the market is just terrible! There's no resale value on this house because nobody's going to buy it. Not for what we paid for it, anyway. So we're stuck with it, or we lose all the money we put into it.

There's people here who have been here 3, 4, 5 years- and they figured they were pretty safe. The company said "okay, you come on down, we're subsidizing the houses here and we got everything in this town that any young couple would need to start a family," right? So a lot of guys quit their jobs or gave up any other chances if they were just out of trade school or university or whatever, and came on. They bought houses at 55-60 thousand dollars, worked for awhile and then got laid off. So what do you do with that house, now?"  
(29 years old, housewife)

Lucas (1971) describes the corresponding benefit in

the company's control over housing, that its regulation stems the unplanned growth of slum areas in the town.

Again, through controlled growth and admission the company can maintain a fairly high standard of living and 'keep' its steady and reliable workers interested in staying on, for as long as it needs.

Entertainments to lure them to stay

A man's town at its inception, Labrador City grew to accommodate the primarily male work force of IOCC and the persistent imbalance in the local sex ratio. Facilities for entertainment purposes had to be built to appeal to the majority, so bars evolved with a male clientele in mind (ie. night club acts were usually a stripper or two, and most bars offered space and time to any darts league that needed it); recreation centers concentrated on sports; and the local movie theatre then and now regularly offered a plethora of pornographic films. This situation changed somewhat as more women started moving into Labrador City, organizing their own groups of special interests, but in 1982, the major entertainments for women were sports, darts, bingo or night courses and the occasional night out at a bar when music and dancing was featured. One oft-quoted remedy for boredom in Labrador City was to get involved in outdoor winter

sports; "once you get used to the cold, it's fun".

'Getting involved' is another common remedy for loneliness among newly moved and Demmler-Kane (1980) tried to find out if mobility had an effect on the propensity of her mover-respondents to join voluntary associations. It didn't, statistically and although "...multiple movers report greater participation in each type of association, they are only significantly different in their likelihood to join associations which have explicitly social purposes" (Demmler-Kane (1980:120). These latter associations were defined as hobby, recreational and social groups which provided members with a greater number of social contacts than other service or religious groups. Among the forty-nine Labrador City respondents, twenty were involved in such 'social' groups; eleven were members of service organizations; three were in religious associations and fifteen chose not to join anything.

Lucas (1971) adds an interesting twist to this tendency of getting involved which is peculiar to isolated communities with a small number of networks and a large measure of social observability. Recreation actually becomes a social control since 'keeping busy' is a means of keeping oneself out of trouble (and out of a depression, a topic in another section of this thesis).

Isolates are "suspect" in such communities, but by keeping to one's specific age, ethnic or interest group there is a small degree of 'social insulation' achieved, if only in not being pressured by others to join their groups (Lucas 1971:189ff).

For many of the respondents, participation in any activity was often difficult during long, lonely winters "stuck in the house with kids" when there were no friendly neighbours or relatives to provide child-care after first arriving. Several simply depended on their husbands to take them out once in a while.

Under these circumstances, a nice home complete with the best 'personal touch' that money could afford was doubly important:

"Well, I certainly wasn't prepared to move up here without bringing my things, because that's the only thing that made it nice for us. Of course, he just wanted to come in and buy a house furnished, but no way- not me! Not to sacrifice everything: your personal things mean a lot to you. It's not that I'm materialistic, but the pictures of your family and your children, the paintings that you've bought and loved- your own personal things. It's all you really have.

And home is your entertainment center around here, it's really lived in. My husband now admits that these things really did make a big difference. We're going to be here for eight years altogether, and that's a long time. You can't just exist somewhere for that long, because you'll never get those years back." (38 years old, moved three times before)

Having had some previous experience in moving to a new and strange town, this respondent had developed a strategy for adjusting that is quite commendable according to much of the sociological literature dealing with migration (Marris 1974; Viney & Bazely 1977; Weiss 1973). She had provided a "thread of continuity" for herself and her family, running from the old, familiar environment into a different one by bringing some of the old with her. Through these things, the feelings that one has 'lost' something by moving away might not be so encompassing.

A yearning for any sort of connection or news of home became highly valued in Labrador City- respondents often complained of phenomenally high phone bills and they always had a TV, usually turned on, to get any and all news of what was going on in the 'other world' farther south. Television was a primary information and instruction center for living and consuming "the Good Life", and it provided some relief from the tedium of being 'stuck in the house all winter.'

Television provided a primary source of entertainment since the mid-60s in Labrador City and it was always the subject of local demands for better service. Transmissions were first aired by IOCC itself, which offered a 'frontier package' of viewing to its

workers. This was comprised from a combination of English and French shows videotaped in Montreal and flown in, airing in Labrador City about a week after original broadcast. Complaints centered on the quality of the programming which often left the shows indecipherable and TV serials disrupted and incoherent if one or two episodes weren't taped, or were mislaid in transit. Most importantly, there was no current news to be had at all, and the feelings of being cut off and isolated from the 'real' world grew among the town's populace (Davidson, Boyland and Yu 1976).

These early, albeit meager company attempts to provide television service in Labrador West for their 'captive' labour force were lavishly applauded in journalistic accounts (Ross 1982). While this is hardly indicative of worker sentiments, it does underline the implicit assumption that the company wasn't responsible for providing television service to its isolated workers, no matter how important an aspect of their lives it might be.

Many people felt that they were 'stuck' in Labrador City and should have a voice in what kinds of entertainments were available to them. For example, they wanted the right to vote on any action of the Community Recreation Rebroadcasting Service, a late 1970s group

that had initially appealed to the people in the area for contributions to set up receiver dishes for satellite networks from the U.S. The group called this a 'community service.' A few years later, they were demanding a monthly service charge and this seemed a little high handed in what had first been presented as such a democratic endeavor.

Another example is the reaction of Labrador Cityites to the federal government's dictum to 'force' an appreciation of Canadian content. Television was needed as a distraction when winters were confining: it was seen as a solution to some of the problems of living in the north rather than a threat of assimilation into American culture, as the CRTC tended to view it. The following quote was taken from one of many letters of appeal to the Canadian Radio and Television Commission during its country-wide assessment of the state of Canadian culture on TV viewing in 1980. It supported the application of the Community Recreation Rebroadcasting Service to bring American feed to Labrador City by pointing to the relief television gives:

"...In this area we have no theatre for the performing arts. We have no art gallery. We have only the very basic facilities for athletic activities and nothing for other leisure pursuits other than the consumption of alcohol. We have no philanthropists, only our own hard work and imagination. We need help.

We can well appreciate the Commission's desire to maintain control on fly-by-night operators and quick-buck artists....We are concerned about the diminishing of Canadian culture and the influence of foreign values...However we are equally concerned with the physical and emotional health of our citizens. We have six or seven months of winter here. It costs us nearly \$300.00 for a return trip to the nearest large center (1982). We have no roads by which we can drive to the nearest town for a change of...scenery. In the winter the temperature sometimes drops to 40 degrees below zero and stays there for weeks at a time. In the spring our hospital is crowded with people suffering emotional, and psychological problems. We have one of the highest divorce rates in the province and a growing alcohol problem.

In the Community Recreation Rebroadcasting Service we have one means of alleviating some small part of this situation. It is a group which...can build something which is uniquely theirs. Pride of ownership, partnership and self-determination can, by itself, probably do more for the morale of this community than even a new recreation center."  
(Labrador Free Press, 6/5/80)

This issue of what should be broadcast addresses the problem of "Canadian identity," defined by the federal government through the CRTC as a combination of indigenous and new ethnic cultures expressed in local arts and by 'concerned citizen's groups.' In Labrador City, the local history and culture spans a mere thirty years at best and the local population is quite diverse as to origins but the common thread is that everyone came under the auspices of an American multinational. The 'local identity,' then, is very largely influenced by the American economy. "Canadian content" seems to be quite



inapplicable, in the minds of many here.

"I can't stand it up here, I really can't! For one thing, you don't get enough television and the CBC channel here is just terrible. All this 'far-north' crap is just for the birds! Nobody speaks Inuit around here and there's no getting exposed to a few American shows - no decent programming at all! You're simply cut off from the world, then. There's an awful lot of good shows on in the States.

And television is the only source of entertainment there is up here. Except the Kaboula bar and the odd movie. I just starve to get out of here once in awhile, for a bit of culture, you know? Go to Montreal for a decent meal in a restaurant and see a few tall buildings. You really appreciate it when you do get out!"  
(housewife, 29 years old)

Television service had always been rather poor here, but in the isolation of the north, it offers some measure of communication and contact, "experience and education" according to the Combined Councils of Labrador, with the rest of the North American world. Since this link is largely to the United States with the new cable/rebroadcasting station in Labrador City, the 'Americanization' of local identity is reinforced. Entertainment in Labrador City provides 'consumer education', and indirectly this serves the company's purpose.<sup>12</sup> Workers learn to keep consuming and to do so, they must keep working. (Ewen 1976).

Of course none of this manipulation is overt and given that most of the respondents preferred such

programming and identification with American culture, it might be fairer to consider this identification as one means of making life in Labrador City bearable.

"The best for the kids"

In Labrador City, the importance of quality in mothering was implicitly stressed in almost all of the interviews held with parents. They were trying to help their children 'get established' by giving them every advantage possible:

"Well, they need good parents so much during their school years- when they get out into brownies and cubs and whatever. We drive them back and forth and give them the money- and a lot of kids look forward to this help behind them. How else can they get into those things? You never know what life is going to be like for them when they grow up, so why not make the first years 'the best you can for them?' (housewife and mother of two)

Krahn et al. (1981) found that in their study of Fort McMurray migrants, parent-child interaction was a determinant of satisfaction with family life and to some extent, with community life. After moving to Fort McMurray, parents spent more time with their children. This is likely to be the case in Labrador City, as well, since children can provide comfort to mothers who may feel lonely and they provide a reason for staying when few others may seem apparent or logical.

Labrador City has long been touted as 'a great place to raise a family' in hopes of attracting families to settle in as a permanent labour force. Mothers, and even those who absolutely hated every moment they had to live there, always cited the benefits of living in Labrador City that their kids were enjoying. Good mothers would put up with anything that will help out the children and prepare them for a future:

"Compared to home, Lab City's got its benefits, I'll tell you! For kids, anyway. There's the sports and rec centers and the school system here - a lot more on the go all 'round. And the crime rate isn't high and you don't have to worry about them getting hurt or any bad coming to them, like hitch-hikers picking them up.

As far as I'm concerned, I'm doing the best thing for them. I might suffer for selfish reasons, but I've stayed for their sake. If I was just thinking about myself and not how they have to live, I'd just leave."  
(housewife, here for eight years)

Lopata (1971) notes the strong child-orientation among women in American society and points out that "for the good of the children" can be a legitimate explanation for doing almost anything (eg. moving to the suburbs or back to the city; working or not working; etc.)

One of the most oft-cited benefits for children here is that Labrador City is a relatively small town with a low level of child-related crime so... "they grow up with no fears," and there are other advantages:

"One good thing about this place is that everything is right there. You don't have to go very far to get anywhere, fighting traffic and all that. You get the kids to their figure-skating or gymnastics or whatever in minutes, no sweat. It's good for them."  
(housewife, 27 years old)

The very best that this modern new town had to offer for growing children, in the opinion of every mother interviewed was the educational system. Mothers did indeed feel 'responsible' for how their children 'turned out', undoubtedly a socially prescribed notion (Lopata 1971), and believed nothing on the island of Newfoundland could rival the opportunities that Labrador City schools afforded. IOCC had selected the 'cream' for its school system and children there practically couldn't fail to get ahead. One teacher described the methods the company used to establish this 'attraction':

"At the time that we moved in (early 1960s), the company had all kinds of money, so they paid our way up. They wanted the cream- or what they thought was the cream- of teachers in Newfoundland and they were subsidizing salaries, rents, the whole shot.

In the class we get all kinds of materials and everything- any kind of equipment needed or wanted. The school board is subsidized by IOCC so/ up to now we haven't had to scrape much, but the company says it's going to start withdrawing funds. And I don't know if you'll get it out of the community either. The way things are with people always moving in and out, they probably think it's not worth it to spend a lot as long as the kids get to school on time. Some people just don't give a damn. I guess school's not everything, anyway."  
(teacher, 42 years old)

In spite of this all of the mothers in the field sample were overwhelmingly concerned with their children's education: it's the best advantage that Labrador City does offer to growing families and they dearly wanted theirs to 'get ahead':

"Up here, you know, the educational system is terrific- covers all the subjects and offers the kids a lot of extra-curricular activities- and the teachers seem to be really good. All kinds of specialists for music, French, kids with problems. And they always have a really good percentage passing in the high schools. I'm not so fond of Labrador City, myself, but for the kids, you just can't take that away from them. It's a bigger center than an outport, so at least here they got a chance."  
(31 years old, mother of three)

#### Good or bad parenting

In Labrador City as in Lopata's 1971 study of American housewives, "good" mothers are those who devote all of their time and energies to the children. This ideal can sometimes be quite a stringent model to follow, and not everyone can, particularly women who are mobile and following a career:

"But there's so many women that just hate being a mother. I have these friends who are split up now and she went off to Ontario to work. So their poor little girl just gets passed back and forth and I'm not too sure that either one of them wanted her from the start. It's like she never really mattered, or was considered, or whatever."  
(housewife, 31 years old)

Interestingly enough, 'bad' mothers in Labrador City are those who neglect their kids in terms of both time and material things. Unmarried mothers are particularly susceptible here since working is the only alternative they have to inadequate support from welfare. Either way, the kids are not getting something they supposedly need. The complete nuclear family with two child-centered parents is essential if women are to fulfill their ideals of motherhood.

Good mothers must spend every waking moment at their children's disposal. This notion is so widespread that even those who must work feel guilty for doing so, using various justifications that eventually end up as more worry over depriving their children.<sup>13</sup> Self-sacrifice on the woman's part is a part of her domestic role and giving her family her 'best' means staying at home to ensure their comfort, not 'selfishly taking on a career outside' (Lopata 1971; Myrdal and Klein 1970; Chesler 1972).

On the other hand, to live in Labrador City means to make as much money as possible: mothers, as well as fathers, try to get work and they must have faith in the rationalizations they have for working lest social criticism 'get to them.' Such criticism is everywhere: from fellow mothers, men who feel that the woman's place

is in the home, and even from those working with children in the schools. Mother-absence was most frequently translated to me as the disciplining problem of Labrador City youth. Mother is always supposed to be there to help the offspring learn to conform: if they don't, she must bear the blame, a point that Lopata (1971) also made in her study. In Labrador City,

"I know a school superintendent who's been coming here since 1965 and he was saying that in those days IOC had a policy- a curfew, that all the kids had to be in by ten o'clock at night. So the police would parade the streets, bringing home any kids still wandering around and warn the parents that on the second time caught, the parents would be in trouble. So in those days they had no problems with drugs, rape, depressions or suicides for really young kids. Now there's nothing for them to do and nowhere to go and they're out looking. The movies are usually X-rated and they can't get in, but they can get in clubs because the lights are dim and they got fake ID's. You see them out, drunk and sick and stoned- and they get whatever money they want for this, because the parents feel guilty.

It's only because the parents are so permissive down here. For instance, say both are working shift work and a kid probably comes home with Dad just gone on 4-12 while Mom is just getting off 8-4 and both are really tired. He's got to do his homework alone, cook his own supper, things like that, so he just wanders off for awhile.

Of course you get the opposite extreme where the mother is never gone and the kids are over-protected. The kids just get depressed- they got this to live with, they're bored. A few teenage dances every now and then and Mom and that's it. And if you're not sports-minded here, you're done for. What's there to do in the winter, but sit at home and hook rugs? At

fifteen you don't want that."  
(secretary, 24 years old)

In the eyes of quite a few respondents, Labrador City was held to blame for a disintegration in child-rearing, a task that is inevitably ascribed to the mother. Lucas (1971) describes a similar development in one newly built single industry community where the local population was relatively young and there were few babysitters available, such as older children or grandparents. Weissman and Paykel (1970) see such a situation as particularly burdensome for women who are moving since there is no one to provide them with some relief from their domestic duties. Lucas pointed out that some mothers did get that 'relief' from working, but their "...children were running wild in the streets..." so the local company actually forbade "double working".

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Labrador City isn't quite as closed a company town as that, though many of the townspeople in 1982 frowned on mothers working. There were other standards for raising children here, as well.

Only two respondents spoke of disciplining their children, and such a small number alone reveals the ideal of the 'good' mother who never screams and is rewarded by her family's contentment and her children's "well-adjustment" (Chesler 1972). However, these two felt that



they had to prevent their children from turning out like the local average:

"I was always strict with my kids and sometimes I used to worry that maybe it was a little much for them but comparing them to other kids now, I'm glad I did it. You know the type I was- if the kids ever raised a hand to me, I'd cut it off! They learned a few manners and common decency and I'll tell you one thing, there's not too much of that around right now."  
(waitress, 48 years old)

When the common notions of child-disciplining today are considered, they can become quite a sore spot for anyone trying to choose. Formulas include positive-reinforcement only and complete non-interference in the child's development and these invariably contradict the strict parental surveillance that most respondents grew up under themselves.

To add to this confusion, some people faced the obvious and saddening fact that perhaps they weren't doing so well by their kids in doting on them entirely:

"Maybe we gave him too much, you know? He has had things a little easy- like the motorcycle and the snowmobile for birthdays, that sort of thing. He's never asked for it, now, but if he mentions something he'd like to have, I feel like I've got to give it to him.

I know what it's like, wanting something. When I was growing up, I always wanted a bicycle, but we had so little that I never did get it. But maybe it was wrong to give him everything with no discipline. He watches TV instead of studying. Whereas my daughter is getting good grades, comes right home and goes at her books.

We were always afraid to give her a motorcycle, so she's trying to get a job to buy her own." (42 years old, mother of two)

Most of the respondents still had fairly young children yet to be raised and they wanted to give them the best of everything that could be had. One then-current example of such extravagant expenditures was 'the birthday party': a minimum of \$100 would be spent for an afternoon tea with cake and hot dogs, party favours, hats, balloons and the like- for kids three and under, and during the two months of fieldwork, there were seven such parties given among the respondents.

Even people trying to save money while in Labrador City felt that they had to meet the consumer standards set for their children in clothing, sports equipment, activity fees, college educations, cars, various motorized gimmicks, and so on. These standards were formidable enough in times of prosperity but the current recessions coupled with local price inflation had rendered them virtually impossible to meet. Herein lay an excuse that many mothers gave for their working even while their husbands were taking home high salaries. None cited their own needs as an adequate enough reason.

Materialism is quite a strong and acceptable driving force in Labrador City and has been incorporated in most of the child-rearing formulas in town. There's a

widespread and subtle system of rewards and denial to teach children social conformity, rather than directly punishing the child for what is wrong, as some would have it translated. Children here learn their consumer codes quite early in life.

"You're not being bad, are you? You want to go into your room?"

"NO!" from the three-year-old.

"Okay, but Dad will be mad when he comes home and if I tell him you've been bad, Santa won't come. I guess Santa is going to have to lose some weight this year, anyway. Tuck in his belt."

(unemployed housewife, 38 years old)

If material rewards are for 'goodness', then recession and belt-tightening seem to be translated into someone's, even of a child's, 'badness'! "If we can't give it to you, it's 'cause you don't 'deserve' it anyway". No one likes to admit a lack of funds!

Misgivings: for kids only?

Only a few mothers had misgivings about raising their kids in Labrador City and these sounded suspiciously like their feelings for their own future. This is quite understandable in a situation where women are discouraged from asserting their own feelings (as discussed later) and must subvert their interests to that

of the family, particularly in a place where she is "only staying for their sake." Mothers' fears and wishes, then, are transferred to their children, and this becomes an outlet for complaints:

"No, I can't really see them staying here forever because there isn't that much here for them except the educational stuff. But they can't get out and live in the winter. You really have to love this place to stay here and I'm not that fussy about it so I can't see them staying on, either."  
(secretary, 34 years old)

As previously noted, Labrador City had the obvious drawback of isolation from friends and family and one of the frequent worries of mothers here was over the effects of isolation from the extended family on the children, perhaps because they were wary of the effects such a situation was having on themselves. In the case of children, they were hypothetically cheated out of both familial ties and the ability to compete that living in a larger world lends one.

In their study of mothers' anxieties concerning their children, however, Barrett and Noble (1973) found that children usually exhibited few of the negative effects of moving that mothers had feared for them. They made friends easily, 'picked up' in school relatively quickly and generally 'liked' their new homes. Older children did have some problems in switching to new

schools and friends and Weissman and Paykel (1970) attribute this to a sudden lack of social control on teenagers from other members in the extended family and the old community. Some of those problems surfaced in Labrador City, but to a lesser degree than was noted in the two studies above. Labrador City respondents in 1982 may have been relatively more 'settled' than the subjects of those studies. Moreover, those who had recently arrived either had young children (ie. to facilitate making contacts) or family already here to help them become 'integrated'.

As far as the future that Labrador City offered the children:

"Let's face it- it's a mining town and there's not much else to find work at. I can't see a whole lot around here for them."  
(teacher, 28 years old)

"Well you always want something better for your kids, eh? I hope they never have to work here!"  
(secretary, 32 years old)

Everything, even down to the school system and the future of the kids, was contingent on IOCC's prosperity. Respondents who had arrived after the 'boom' in Labrador City saw fewer promises in the future for their children, even before the company announced its plans to cut back on such "superfluous" expenditures as subsidizing the local school board. This is the stage of 'maturity' in a

single-industry community according to Lucas (1971), when the company is experiencing low worker turnover and can't absorb all of the local youth in its workforce. By now, too, it can afford to cut back on the 'extras' it previously had to offer to entice workers to stay. There's rarely much industrial expansion in such communities and the future often looks uncertain when the local market is based on fluctuating international markets for non-renewable resources. IOCC in Labrador City is an excellent example of this; the mine was originally predicted to last one hundred or more years but the market for iron ore in 1982 was very unstable and uncontrollable.

The respondents in Labrador City knew that with fewer jobs opening up and an uncertain future, their children would eventually have to leave to get work. As is discussed in a later section, daughters often have even fewer options than sons<sup>2</sup>. They are virtually excluded from all of the jobs to be had in a minetown except in the office work. With a limited choice of youths their own age they, according to Lucas (1971:357) "...are forced to leave the community to find a marriage partner as much as to obtain a job or follow a career line."

When so many women were merely 'sticking it out' in Labrador City for the sake of their children's future, what would happen when the same future held less of a glow and the company failed to meet its promises? This is a question that can only be addressed in another study over a longer period of time.

CHAPTER SIX: THE COLD COMFORTS OF LIFE IN THE NORTH

Physical faults

"You're just not going to find a happy medium up here. People either hate or they love the place but there's no one saying it's okay. I hate hearing about how much they hate it. I keep telling them, if it's that bad, then leave."  
(39 years old, in Labrador City for 21 years)

Occasionally a respondent would truly love Labrador City and intend to make it her home until retirement, at least. Yet for the far greater majority Labrador City had its faults. Complaints ranged from the all-too-visible physical adversities of a northern town, to the less tangible malcontents that they engender and these provide the focus for the following chapter. The physical faults of Labrador City are problems that everyone must deal with. These make up the first sections of this chapter, dealing with winter, an isolated geographical location, the size of the town, the distance from seats of power, the inflated prices common to northern communities because of transport costs, and the effects of a high population turnover. The less tangible drawbacks are described in the latter half of this chapter. They are more specific to Labrador City's female residents than to males and include the ideological restraints that women live with under a



'macho ethos', the strains on personal relationships that living in Labrador City entails, and the problem of gossip, used as a social control. I also discuss how ideal images of women affect the daily lives of respondents here.

By the time of my interviewing an economic lag had changed a few perspectives and was already becoming an important factor in the decisions of many householders to stay or leave:

"Most people just can't stand it here until it looks like they might have to leave because there's no job left.

Before this, I was ready to leave at the drop of a hat. But after you see that there's nowhere else to go, you'd never want to leave."  
(44 years old, in Labrador City for 7 years)

Generally, however, respondents were near disillusionment, having found that the promises of money and modernity in the north were fraught with external bugbears that the company, in seeking recruits, rarely mentioned.<sup>14</sup> In the words of one, Labrador City was "the ass-hole of the world" and many more would have agreed had their vocabulary allowed such allusions:

"Huh! I wants to go home. Eight years here now, and I'm still not used to it. I still hate it as much as ever.

See, I find the time here is long, boring, and I can't go anywhere or do anything. There's no work I can get and there's nothing to keep me

home anymore; the kids are all in school. So I'm stuck. I am absolutely bored unto death."  
(28 years old, housewife)

There were other specific complaints as well.

#### Winter

By far the favored complaint among everyone in Labrador City is over the weather. To women, Labrador City offers very little apart from the modern amenities to housekeeping and for the kids, previously mentioned. Recreational facilities are available and can consume quite a few hours, but then, so can watching the weather and here it offers quite a bleak picture. A dread of winter, and its unremitting effects was the most tangible problem for respondents:

"You could say that the winters are a trifle long, here, yes. It wouldn't be so bad if it started in late November/December, but here it is, the beginning of October. It's late this year. It gets really depressing around April when you phone home and they're saying "Oh, what a beautiful day!" And you're up to your knees in snow. And the summer isn't all that much to look forward to, either."  
(23 years old, in Labrador City for 4 years)

Winter is such a predominant feature of life in Labrador City that stoicisms and folklores abound. A common suggestion is that it must be appreciated, snow and all, and to develop the proper spirit is a simple matter of getting dressed and going out in it:

"Well you can't change the weather, can you? It's the only thing wrong with this place. Now the winters are starting to get to me, at my age and all, but last year we went out ice-fishing and it was a ball! So I'm trying it again this winter. May as well, right?"  
(48 years old, in Labrador City for 16 years)

Usually respondents weren't quite so avid about frolicking in the snow and during the early fall of 1982 everyone was watching (and could read) the signs of how benevolent or not the forthcoming season might be. Current folklores did not bode well:

"Here it is, now, the end of October and still the snow's not staying on the ground. Usually there's three or four feet by this time. So that's an omen of a really bad winter coming, like last year."  
(23 years old, in Labrador City for 6 years)

As Margaret Laurence maintains in The Diviners, the "Canadian" label for extremely cold temperatures is Forty Below, always capitalized and used no matter what the actual temperature. In Labrador City it almost always is 48 below and nearly everyone has an outside outlet to plug their cars in at night; one or two frostbite stories; and an admirable record for driving on ice if they drive at all. In addition, the previous winter had, indeed, been a fierce one with one storm wreaking extensive damages. It had become a reference point for the ills that accompany the season:

"And what can you do about the weather? Like last winter, we had a really bad storm; the

power went out, no one had heat or could leave, and if they did, they got lost in the snow. The windows in this place were ducking right in from the wind! It's the first time I ever saw anything as bad as that, where you'd look out and see nothing at all but white!" (26 years old, in Labrador City for 5 years)

The housewives among the sample described the storm as an adventure story; everyone else remembered the general trials but few specifics. It appears that for some it may have sparked a little excitement via terror in an otherwise dull routine; getting from one trailer to another, and finally, rescued, sometimes became a scene to rival anything MGM has produced.

Whether or not these stories of the storm were embellished, it obviously did take quite a toll in property. Northern winters were a headache and people planned with the worst in mind as a 'sure thing' rather than as a slight possibility. It was the most frequently cited and obvious source of dissatisfaction among the respondents and with good reason. A bungalow in Labrador City is usually lost from view for a good five months of the year while the beginning and tail ends of the season extend the snowfall by another three or even four months. Moreover, the other problems enumerated in the fieldwork were directly or indirectly linked to this rather malignant sore spot.

The great northern expanses: isolation

The beauty of the north is usually portrayed by its huge expanses of nothing but snow, ice and sky and its sunsets on a sea of snow or a lichen-covered rock field. Labrador City, however, is a rather stark industrial town cut out of the spruce woods: its expansiveness was generally called 'isolation'. This was second only to winter on the lists of respondent complaints, and it served to emphasize that dreaded season. There are few physical ways out of Labrador City and the winter snows are sometimes a further barricade around the town. The longest stretch of road in the area reaches only to Fermont, some seventeen miles away on the other side of the Quebec border and this tends to curtail any leisurely cruising for sightseeing. Driving is further limited during the winter by treacherous road conditions: people literally drive on ice, since salt is ineffectual in such cold temperatures and gravel is rapidly covered over once laid. Unless they are willing to throw caution to the wind, people are often housebound for the better part of the season. This kind of situation can be hardest on housewives, who are home all day already. "Cabin fever" can then become a very real prospect:

"And there's an awful lot of people here in the same boat. Can't get out in the wintertime and when you do, God only knows how you're going to

get back home. I have a lot of friends who just stay in from one end of it to the other. Tried to drive once and slid into somebody, or took a spin, so they give it up. And you can't really blame them, because you're swallowing your heart everytime you take the car out. And then you've got to learn how to pump the brakes and stop by driving into a snowbank and judging distances to brake before the turn- that sort of thing. Probably, it's a lot easier for most to take a cab."

(28 years old, in Labrador City for 8 years)

In the summer driving takes up considerably little time here and the 'sights' are quickly dissipated. Many feel they are trapped with nowhere to turn:

"I feel like I've been here long enough now and I really want to get out. See a few different things and be able to drive and drive and drive and not go around in circles. I don't care what anyone says, you can't get away from this feeling of being closed in up here. It's always there, always settling on you, and it won't go away, no matter what. Winters go on and on and there's nowhere at all to move around."

(32 years old, in Labrador City for 12 years)

"You see, the trouble here is that you're trapped. There are no roads out. The only way out is either to go by train, which is a miserable 15 hour ride just to Quebec and a connection there, or to fly."

(30 years old, in Labrador City for 2 years)

The train is one hope to hold onto when desperation sets in, offering that "miserable 15 hour ride just to Quebec," and another over the years has been the rumour (inevitably circulated at election time) that a road would be built. It was to connect all of the major centers in Labrador to each other and to a final escape

route leading into Sept Isle, providing access to the beloved Trans Canada highway. In the spring of 1983, after a winter of extreme discontent, the federal and Newfoundland provincial governments announced that construction would begin on a Trans-Labrador highway, running between Goose Bay and Labrador West. The estimated cost was sixteen million and 85% of this was to be provided federally (Evening Telegram, May 12, 1983).

Undoubtedly this announcement was made at quite an opportune time: a federal election was coming in 1984 and one candidate for prime minister was Brian Mulrooney, IOCC president during the winter of lay-offs in 1982-83.<sup>15</sup> He was far from popular in Labrador West at that time, and providing jobs to those workers that his company had laid off was quite an advantageous political ploy on the part of the still current liberal government.

With a non-existent road system and a discountable mode of train travel, air transport is obviously important here. Flying is practically the only sure way to get anywhere but with its inconveniences, voiced both in private interviews with respondents and publicly in the local newspaper:

"The airlines really squeeze you up here, because they know it's your only way of getting out. Just to fly to Montreal and back for one person, it's almost 400 dollars. Children are

2/3 of that: they don't even go for half-fare anymore. So to just get the family out of here on a return trip is 1500 dollars and that is an awful lot of money, especially for just a weekend or something."  
(30 years old, in Labrador City for 2 years)

With such exorbitant travel expenses, many respondents were vacationing in Labrador City in 1982 and guarding their money against future lay-offs. The only airline that connects the town to the island found that business had taken a bad turn and as a consequence it was trying to reduce the number of flights per week to Labrador West, for the winter. This posed problems for residents who were depending on trips out of Labrador City as a break in the routine and to escape what Lucas (1971) describes as the pressures of too much social observability and the demands to constantly conform to local norms of behaviour. Women are particularly affected by this in Labrador City and many respondents claimed that leaving every once in awhile was what they counted on as a relief.

The airline's withdrawal of its services meant adding even further insult to injury, as it was commonly held that the flights and even the food served on the Labrador run were of an inferior quality to any others in E.P.A.'s offerings. It seemed to be flaunting its power as the only airline serving the area to Newfoundland, and unfairly using it to its own benefit. Rumours of cut-



backs and even a total withdrawal of these services were quite worrisome for at least three respondents with sick and dying relatives at home:

"It's isolated here, and there's no two ways of looking at that. If you have to get out tomorrow, tough. You go when the flight goes and that's not every day. Now if one of the kids happened to get sick, I could get them out by air ambulance, so that's okay. But if somebody in my family died tomorrow and the flight wasn't going, neither do I. I wonder about that sometimes, and worry a bit because my mother is sick and can't get around." (23 years old, in Labrador City for 3 years)

Flight schedules create other, though less catastrophic problems in Labrador City as well. Waiting for goods and information is a daily routine here and with a reduced number of flights per week, no one could imagine the situation getting any better. Mail is already delayed by all of the conditions that affect flying and everyone remembered expected cheques that didn't arrive on time, causing other cheques written to bounce for a lack of funds; car and machine parts for any sort of repair have to be ordered and flown in, taking weeks and even then the recipient can't always be sure that the right part is on the way; a few respondents even described how they had completed part of a university degree through the local night school, but wouldn't undertake the extra three or four courses needed because these involved correspondence through a totally

unreliable mail. They were waiting until they finally left Labrador City to finish their degrees.

Even people who didn't mind waiting for everything or staying here year-round with only an occasional foray into the outside world felt the effects of total dependence on the airlines, if only for future reference:

"I don't mind it that much, except when I think of when the kids start going off to university. They won't be able to come home much, where it's so expensive. Now if you were living on the island, they could come back every weekend, if you were close enough. I'm not looking forward to that stage of my life!"  
(32 years old, in Labrador City for 12 years)

Labrador City kids have no choice but to fly when they leave the nest. With an almost immediate good-bye to the family at the age of finishing high school, it's easy to see how the ethics of individualism and mobility could be well-entrenched in the current generation of Labrador City children. Many mothers here had a vision of being quite alone with their spouses after their children had grown; even visiting would be difficult.

This was cited as a potential problem particularly by those respondents who originated in outport Newfoundland. As noted previously, there is a strong tradition there of maintaining ties within the extended family, even when members have to move away. It's easier to go to where kin already are and mothers 'back home'

often await the return of their children, and grandchildren as inevitable when they are laid off from their jobs 'on the mainland'. Such a migration pattern is part of the subsistence pattern of rural Newfoundland (see Richling 1985), but it was changing for some who had moved north.

Martin-Matthews (1980) noted in her study of recent Hamilton-Burlington migrants that when the 'empty nest' stage of a woman's life corresponded with her moving away, it served to doubly disrupt her life and created problems in that she would blame the move for upsetting her family. This fieldwork did not attempt to examine that problem further.

In Labrador City physical isolation sometimes underlines a heart-breaking social isolation from family, friends, and the outside world. As often as not, those women who felt so desperately cut off and alone after first arriving here continued to do so long after they had settled in and they clung to anything even closely resembling an extended family life. One effect of the isolation was to strengthen and preserve the importance attached to the tradition of the family among its residents.

The symptoms of size.

Another 'problem' with Labrador City was its size. Size is always relative so while some found it a big town, others felt cramped. With Canada Census figures placing it at just under 12,000 population in 1981, Labrador City is a large town on Newfoundland's scale but moderately-sized, or even small compared to the larger centers of Canada. Individual perceptions of size varied, logically enough, in proportion to the size of the place that each woman hailed from.

The 'outporters', having grown up with a longing for 'big and beautiful' suburbs, usually found that Labrador City did, indeed, fulfill their dreams of a 'modern' setting:

"It's alright here. Better for the young crowd than up home. That was a small town with nothing there, no theatres or anything. Down here you got that and restaurants- sure, you got to walk a couple of miles before you hit a restaurant up home."  
(23 years old, in Labrador City for 4 years)

Labrador City's most attractive features for these outporters and other small-towners were the opportunities it offered to work along with improved social and public facilities. And of course there were the oft-cited advantages for the kids: extra-curricular activities, an excellent school system, and a chance to work when they

got out.

Several respondents appreciated Labrador City as a small town, both in geographical and social size, particularly those who remembered growing up or living in 'the big city' where location could sometimes become overwhelmingly impossible to manage. Everything here was close to home, "at your fingertips" or at most, a ten-minute drive away.

There was no wrestling with the size of a large city, which in itself becomes a matter of speed:

"Always rush, rush, rush! Always rushed to go to work and rushed to come back, because it took me an hour and a half to get home. Here, you're at work in ten minutes and making good money; nothing like Montreal."  
(33 years old, in Labrador City for 11 years)

Nor were there any of the big city evils in Labrador City such as vandalism, rape, hit-and-runs, muggings and thefts- to name a few- mentioned in the interviews. But not everyone among the respondents felt so satisfied.

There were also those, often having been there longer, who found that Labrador City was getting a little too big. They preferred and occasionally missed towns of the old 'home size':

"When we first came here, the old mall was about one third of the size it is now, but there were the extensions, and then a couple of

more malls built. Things were better before, in one sense. There wasn't half, or even a quarter of the people here then as there are now, and things were really primitive. Only one little bank and a few stores and in spite of that everyone was so much friendlier and nicer. The place was so small that everyone got along really well. Now they got all these new streets and the trailer park and you hardly know your next door neighbour, or want to. It's grown so much, you don't want to go out and get involved."  
(46 years old, in Labrador City for 18 years)

For the few pining for 'the good old days' the best memory was the camaraderie that everyone felt for each other, simply by virtue of the fact that they were all here together. Respondents who saw Labrador City as a small town even now mentioned this same sense of closeness and felt comforted in such an isolated spot by this intimacy among friends and neighbours:

"There's something special about this place, where it's so isolated. The ties you get with people are closer because of it. You spend most of your time with them and it's hard to get up and leave, so there has to be a closer feeling here. Some can be a bit clannish, I suppose, but within your certain group, it's good. And you grow to like it, especially after you go out and you're reminded of what it's like everywhere else."  
(29 years old, in Labrador City for 6 years)

There was another side to this coin: while the intimate relations of a small town were top on the priority list of some, others found them constricting. Knowing who everyone else was and what they might be up to was an irritating problem according to a few. A

couple of respondents found the interest of their friends and neighbours a bit like a twitch that never goes away:

"Oh, people around here! Especially if you're separated, all they ever do is talk. I was, for six months and every move I made, my husband could come back and tell me every single person I spoke to, let alone who I danced with or if I actually touched him on the arm! Of course no one ever bothered to tell him that I always came home alone so he was always thinking there was someone else.

I told him that if he ever wants to know what I'm up to he can just phone across the street. She's always looking into my window. And buddy on the third floor up there looks down all the time, look! (He was!) I just wave to them both and close the drapes. And you can see them turning away right fast."  
(38 years old, in Labrador City for 15 years)

The intimacy of a small town can always engender gossip; at times funny, but there's always someone hurt by it and as mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, those who don't conform to the common standards of behaviour are particularly good targets.

"I feel like an outcast here, coming from a big city and being a little different from the majority here, or from what they're used to. Not better than them, but not the same, you know? And they can't accept differences at all. When I was working in a store here, the others were constantly running me down behind my back. They made it so unpleasant that I'd get home at the end of a day just hating it. It drained all of my initiative and motivation to work, so I finally just left.

And that's very true of everyone I've met up here. There's a lot of backstabbing and gossiping and it's really hard to adjust to it. In a city, you're not involved in anything like

that; everyone does what they want and it's just fine. You can walk down the street being yourself and no one cares. But here, you go out with this or that on and you're just sliced. Better to just stay home out of it." (38 years old, in Labrador City for 2 years)

No matter what its other effects, gossip helps to create clear-cut social groupings in a town. Membership in one group predisposes an individual to take certain views of those in others. For example, the two 'loners' above saw their hecklers as petty-minded with shallow concerns. Meanwhile, the women who spent years trying to conform to local standards of a 'good' woman probably thought the loners too independent, and perhaps a little corrupt.

It's easy to spot anyone's social category in Labrador City by the complaints they make of others. The local residents can be divided roughly into two camps of either union or management with such subdivisions as good and bad women, family and single men.

Lucas (1971) also points out that in small single-industry communities with a very recent history local hierarchies are generally formed by the occupational order among the townsmen. Moreover, the status of a wife is usually derived from that of her husband (Chesler and Goodman 1976). From the work order, it is easy to derive differentiations along the lines of education and ethnic



or regional groupings. These determine who each member of the community will interact with, as well as how and where. Most of the labouring and lower working classes here were Newfoundlanders and other Maritimers; the managerial classes also included a few of them in their numbers, but had even heavier concentration of natives from the 'richer' areas in central Canada. The two social groups maintain a distance from each other in this very small town by keeping their off-hours activities separate and by some very distinct 'us versus them' attitudes:

"We usually stay out of it, but one thing you find is all these little groups, cliques or whatever. And to get a job or anything up here, it's not what you know, but who. That's really a big thing here, especially when it comes to jobs, is the 'sucking up'." (40 years old, in Labrador City for 16 years)

While workers and their wives complained of being snubbed by those in the ranks of management, the latter developed their own justifications for closing their circles as happened in Lucas' (1971) and Foote's (1979) studies as well.<sup>16</sup> These justifications most notably centered on the general intelligence of Newfoundlanders (the bulk of the 'lower' status) and they still smack of 'racism' of a sort:

"There's just no point in saying anything to them. I have a few clients who are Newfoundlanders and I'm telling you- they don't

give a damn about anything. They're just so stupid. They aren't prepared to learn. It's like they stopped at the age of ten and can't figure out anything beyond that. Maybe I'm coming on a little strong but I've got some friends who are fairly high up here in the company and they all say the same thing. In an eight hour day, they might get three hours of productive labour from most of the men up there. That tells you something, eh?"  
(29 years old, in Labrador City for 1 year)

For Lucas (1971), hierarchies provide a means of controlling the 'frequent interactions' inherent in a small isolated town. There is a "...high level of shared norms, knowledge and expectations..." among members in the hierarchy and a high degree of 'social observability' so each must strictly conform to local standards for behaviour. The author maintains that the wives are responsible for the social aspects of "keeping in touch" with everyone else in the town and they "collect"/"pass along" information that is useful as a gossip control. He fails to acknowledge that men gossip as much as women (and all of the men spoken with during the Labrador City fieldwork most assuredly did). Such male gossip exerts quite a bit of control over women too, a point of discussion in another section in this thesis.

A few Labrador City respondents actually took advantage of these social divisions to change their social environs, if not status, and they were quite pleased to be able to do so. Labrador City might have

been small, but it was big enough to switch friends and loyalties and there were enough cliques to be able to do so.

For better or worse, larger or smaller, Labrador City furnished a variety of opinions for both supporters and dissenters. Its size and isolation were often disagreeable enough in themselves, and had some very real and detrimental consequences in other areas of life: price inflation; population turnover; an invisibility to the bureaucratic heart of the province and country (except at tax time); gossip and rather tight social circles; as well as constricting roles that residents are often slotted into. These are all topics to be considered separately.

#### Distance from power

People in Labrador City live quite far from the main avenues of state decision-making and they feel neglected by both provincial and federal powers. Both Foote (1979) and Lucas (1971) verify these same feelings in their single-industry communities of study. Some respondents here were apathetic when addressing this issue (i.e. "what can you do about it, anyway?") but there were many more who were angry. They had been consistently paying taxes

over the years of their residence in Labrador City and had received little in the way of state assistance in return. At the time of the interviews, during the recession of 1982 such aid might have helped many to hold on in the north until jobs opened up again but few dribbles of support were forthcoming. In this light, even the company had a tinge of beneficence, in spite of what so many declaimed as unfair procedures for lay-offs. At least it had provided those civic infrastructures forgotten in so many government assemblies over the years:

"What really gets me pissed off is the government. They don't even know this place exists except when the company shuts down and that's because the taxes have stopped coming in for them. And then they made this excuse that they couldn't get in here cause all the flights were booked. And this is what bugged me: three days before that it was announced that they (regional politicians) took a plane from Ottawa to go to Newfoundland for a lobster dinner. With us here and this situation getting so bad! Now I know it's like this all over Canada, but we only got the one industry here and it's not like you can just pack up and leave. People are getting desperate.

Okay. So I'm mad at the taxes the government is taking out of here. I can't afford to buy a car but I pay them \$8,000 a year in taxes. And what they proposed to do for us laid off was unreal: A Canada Works Program that adds 30 dollars a week to my UIC and you don't get any stamps. I got to work for 40 hours a week, and pay a babysitter for that: I'd be paying them to go to work!

But they never did do anything for the people here. We never even had a government building

in Lab City. Everything was built by IOCC or the town itself and what the town got, IOCC paid for one way or another. It's just not fair.

And then they're all flap about everything else, like the fish plants closing down on the island. Well they're closing because they're not making a profit, they're going in the hole and it's the same as a store going bankrupt. The government doesn't give stores money to keep two or three people on. So they're giving the fish plants out there 50,000 dollars or whatever for operating expenses to keep 50 or 100 people working. They give out nothing up here and there's maybe 3,000 people at IOCC. So what are their criteria for deciding who gets what money?"  
(30 years old, unemployed truck driver)

Complaints about the provincial government were strong and often bitter, including criticism for the total lack of support for such luxuries in life as sports funding and team travel. Labrador Cityites felt left out in every area. IOCC wasn't alone in wearing a merit badge in these areas, especially where public utilities were concerned. A few respondents pointed to the help given by the Quebec government since it, at least, had done something for its northern communities:

"A lot of people here feel that we're subsidizing the government and let's face it, there's a phenomenal amount goes out every year in royalties alone. That's where the province is getting most of it's money.

Another sore point is that a lot feel closer to Quebec here. You see, very subtly, without doing anything obvious, the Quebec government is doing as much or more as the Newfoundland. On the odd occasion there's been ambulance calls when they couldn't get a plane from

Newfoundland but Quebec has always sent in its aircraft and never asked whether the patient resides in Fermont or Lab City. It's the same with the roads, and that's a big thing. By putting a road in through Fermont and Gagnon, they didn't need to come in here with an army. They're still getting public support and that's the way to take Labrador if they want it, with little things like that. And that road is getting close to being completed.

People here really feel as though Newfoundland doesn't give a damn about Labrador. The province could do a lot more, and not necessarily in expensive things. I'm not a separatist, so don't get me wrong. I wouldn't go as far as to say Labrador should separate, but when they ask me what I am, I say Canadian first and Labradorian second. No Newfoundlanders involved, because anything we've got here, we've gotten it on our own, working hard and because of IOCC and that's it."  
(39 years old, in Labrador City for 21 years)

Not one of those who broached the issue of government expenditures had any faith that more of it might someday be spent for the benefit of Labrador City. Over the years, IOCC had been supplementing not just the education system, but all of the provincial agencies' budgets here. Residents also felt that with their higher wages, more of their salaries went into the provincial coffers than that of their fellow Newfoundlanders. Their MHA was practically invisible except at election times; the provincial Department of Labour was effectively ineffective during labour disputes; there were still no links to the TransCanada Highway, a Confederation promise that almost every island Newfoundlander had realized long ago; and the only state workers, except teachers and

those sent in on request from the provincial craft school, were tax auditors to check up on local business and impose weighty fines.

Historically then, respect for politicians and the government was a rare thing here, and this was heightened by the 1982 economic crisis. While watching the St. John's-based news on CBC, one respondent voiced her idea of complicity between the media and government. This wasn't simply seen as a matter of funding, but also of programming and deciding what people should and shouldn't know:

"Years from now all these politicians will come out on the radio and T.V., looking back on these times and they're going to call it a 'depression'. They'll be all smart and smug, thinking they've come up with some new insight, but right now they just have to go on calling it a 'recession'. It's a lot worse than that! You get people with bills and mortgages and laid off here, and you can imagine what it's like everywhere else. I just don't know how they're getting by."  
(32 years old, in Labrador City for 12 years)

Most Labrador Cityites felt that it was unfair of the state to ignore problems in Western Labrador, and many respondents were identifying themselves as Labradorians demanding the rights to determine their own economic and social development. Years of mismanagement or the non-existence of state assistance in the area has provoked frequent and repeated protest. At the end of

1982 this culminated in a cry for a separate federal parliamentary seat on the part of the Labrador Heritage Society. Their argument, published in The Evening Telegram (December 11, 1982), pointed out the new federal plans to change the boundary of the riding from Grand Falls/White Bay/Labrador to simply Labrador and the Northern Peninsula, with Deer Lake as the cut-off point. The society requested the assistance of civic groups in protesting such a move, outlining the inadequacies in the state's justifications for doing so:

"One justification outlined is the airline connection from Deer Lake to Labrador. This at a time when E.P.A. is downgrading our service almost daily and escalating costs of transportation makes travel to Newfoundland a painful experience.

The other justification is the historic connection of Labrador and St. Anthony with the International Grenfell Association. Undoubtedly the IGA has done some great work in Labrador, but this same organization only months ago deserted its Labrador-based headquarters against the recommendation of its own supervision in Labrador, quite possibly as a result of its own internal politics.

Everyone should be encouraged to take this opportunity to collectively or individually point out to the federal government that Labrador's special needs imposed by geography and a scattered population can only be represented in parliament by a full-time member of Parliament for Labrador alone.... Also the diversity of Labrador life as it relates to economy, history and sociology is entirely different from a broad link tied into the provincial and national grid whereas Labrador is still isolated from the rest of Canada in every form of public transport except air which



is dealt with under reasons for justification. Labrador will only be represented well when it is represented alone- it doesn't begin or end at Deer Lake or St. Anthony."

'Nationalistic' feelings over Labrador are considerably high in Labrador City, particularly among its longer-term residents and the Heritage Society has a wide base of support that extends far beyond its membership alone. With the 1982 developments and beyond, it's likely that they were able to garner a great deal more of public ratification. Demands for state assistance in the ensuing few years have grown in volume, in both senses of the word, and the distinct isolation that is so widespread here is likely to be felt ever more acutely should such demands continue to go unmet.

Moving on: the effects on those left in Labrador City

Another of the obvious and oft-cited problems of Labrador City is the high population turnover here. One indication of this was that no respondent, whether contented or not, was without one or two plans for getting out at some point. The exact numbers of arrivals and permanent departures are difficult to deduce here since people sometimes have to return out of financial necessity but the effects of mobility are poignantly felt:

"That's one thing you can be sure of here: don't ever plan on getting a friend and keeping her. The turnover now isn't even as bad as it used to be, but it's still like that. As soon as you get close, buddy-buddy, and real good friends with someone, either you're getting up to leave or they are. And in every group you see, there's always one couple getting ready to leave; he gets a job somewhere else; she has to go along."

(25 years old, in Labrador City for 4 years)

Friendship is crucial to 'sticking it out' in Labrador City, particularly for housewives who spend long hours in the isolation of their homes, so each leave-taking is a major loss. Few of the respondents were not in mourning for at least one or two friends gone and as noted before, long distance calls often served to bridge the gap, though at a rather expensive toll. Martin-Matthews (1980) also noted this reliance upon friendship among her respondents and McAllister et al. (1973) mentioned the stresses that spatial mobility creates in those left behind.

The basic motive behind this population turnover is easily deduced: working in the north is still seen by many as a temporary venture to get money or UIC stamps until the worker and his family can get back to the land of the living. In this vein, many do not really 'live' so much as they wait.

As in Lucas' (1971) study, professionals see Labrador City as a small and consequently limited town:

a good place to get a start on a career after coming out of school, but nowhere to get ahead or expand in a careerist sense.

"I try to keep up with the things that are coming out in my field, but it's so hard around here. There are no libraries at all, no way to study and upgrade yourself or get ahead, careerwise. There's just nothing. And the provincial association in my profession is none too helpful either. There's just so few of us in Newfoundland. I once asked them to send materials and they did: one journal which I read and sent back and that was it. I haven't heard from them since. Now their fees are two hundred dollars a year, and for what? It's just insane.

So there's absolutely no professional growth here. I was thinking of joining the national association: they usually provide all your literature needs and they have a network for when you want to travel or get another job. They're fabulous! But Newfoundland is so poor and you can see it even in their organizations. The numbers are small and they're all centered in Corner Brook or St. John's, so by the time they get their notices out to us, there's no time to get involved before the event or whatever is over with. As a result, the same people are doing the same organizational stuff over and over again in those things and there's no new ideas at all. It's just pathetic. You pay for sweet fuck-all.

But I got to get out of here anyway. I've done all the stuff you can do around here: sailing, skiing, skating, hiking. It's time to leave." (27 years old, in Labrador City for 1 year)

Of course, the young professionals do get what they had come to Labrador City for: a few skills appropriate to their trades and a legitimate record of work experience. The mines here had a history as a test site

for the untried since it was so hard to attract the experienced in:

"All the engineering department is from all over the place and different specialties, and a lot of them come just for a chance to work under the system. Like the micro-processing control over production: that's a big attraction. So people come in to learn that but they're the type who stay for two to five years and then buzz off. It's really annoying because they don't put a hell of a lot in. They're what I call 'takers'. Just here to get their papers and then they're off looking for somewhere better. I hope they find it, but where?"

(husband of a respondent in Labrador City for 1 year)

Professional training programs often include an internment work requirement of one or two years after academic studies and this can very well be internment in the true sense of the word for those feeling that they had to resort to Labrador City. Many were still leaving and one woman told me of a 15-20% turnover in teachers during the 1981-82 school season, a time when getting a teaching position anywhere was a rarity.

Another beauty of beginning a career in Labrador City was the money. All of the young professionals were paying off sizeable education debts and working in the north has always been a good fall-back when the collection agencies are at the door.

"They get a lot of young doctors here to make some money but after a couple of years they

find it's not to their liking and they leave again. It's getting harder to keep them now too because before, they were getting subsidies on both their housing and clinics; they could turn over a good dollar. But IOCC cut that out about two years ago and now it's almost impossible to see a doctor." (29 years old, in Labrador City for 6 years)

Conditions in Labrador City had been tightening up long before 1982 making it much less lucrative to establish here, but finances were pinching all over the country. Local predictions made during the fieldwork consistently cited a slowdown in the turnover rate, particularly in comparison to previous years of 'plenty'. Cut-backs were settling in, and so were those with any sort of job at all. This was true of every profession except in the medical fields. There were always too few doctors to go around.

Oddly enough, these complaints came out of a question concerning 'health problems' in Labrador City. With only two exceptions, all of the responses here centered on the inadequacy of medical care and related it to the vagaries of professional turnover, a common complaint in isolated single-industry towns (Lucas 1971). In the opinion of the majority of the respondents the only real health problem was not being able to "get any satisfaction from that hospital at all." A nurse among the respondents explained that with so few doctors around, the support staff at the hospital had to handle

everything.

Another too-frequent medical problem that goes with a small town is the lack of up-to-date facilities. These are invariably concentrated in the provincial population centers and it's a long flight to Corner Brook or St. John's to get a specialized test done. Part of this problem, of course, stems from the common notion that nothing but the latest-cum-best equipment can heal and that anything outdated might actually be detrimental to the health:

"I'd rather be home to have the baby, with Mom and them and because I trust the Gander hospital more. They got all the latest stuff so if anything goes wrong, it's right there. And the doctors here aren't too hot. Here I am now and he doesn't know when I'm due because he can't figure out the dates and the size of the baby and all that. When I was home 3 months ago a doctor there just sent me in to have an ultra-sound done, no sweat at all. There's nothing like that here. And if there's something wrong with the baby, you got to pay a fortune to get down there on time."  
(21 years old, in Labrador City for 3 years)

The fears of this young woman weren't entirely groundless, judging from others' accounts: several respondents described situations in which they acted as guinea pigs for the inexperienced; there were numerous stories of horse-doctoring; and, at the other extreme, some doctors were blaming too much on psychological effects while neglecting to look down the throat.

In one case, medical incompetence became a happy error in the right;

"Close to the end of September they put me in the hospital because I was going in every three days anyway for observations and they were going to give me a section on the 30th. But I was after having a bronchitis attack and that put me into labour. Now my doctor had left town and he didn't leave my chart with another one or anything because he wasn't expecting me to go into labour even at that late date. They wouldn't give me a section because they didn't have this chart and I was getting really worried because all my life they used to tell me I could never have kids, too many complications, this sort of thing. So as it ended up, I had no problems at all! An hour and 45 minutes and there she was! So then I figured she'd be really sick with all these 'complications' but the only thing wrong with her was that she was a bit small. It turned out great!"  
(30 years old, in Labrador City for 15 years)

#### Northern inflations

A final and important material problem that stems from Labrador City's isolation and relatively small population is its exorbitantly high price inflation, far exceeding the 1982 Canadian average of 10.8% (Statistics Canada).<sup>17</sup> Shipping charges for food and goods are an undeniable part of this expense, though not all of it. In-store mark-ups are always high and the quality of food, particularly the perishables, leaves much to be desired. So while some things can be brought in in bulk, fresh fruit and vegetables cannot, and the local market

isn't big enough to make their frequent import profitable. Quite a few people mentioned seeing the produce offered in stores outside, while vacationing, and consequently feeling that "we're in the scrap heap here, getting all the leftovers, and paying outrageous prices for them". Lucas (1971) described the same conditions as existing in other isolated communities. To get what is offered in Labrador City, the consumer usually has to get to the store on the same day that perishables and milk are delivered or else face empty shelves.

Everyone lamented the general 'high cost of living here' and some gave detailed examples. Food prices ran as follows:

"We can't sit around here waiting for something we're not really sure of. Not on unemployment. After the mortgage is taken out, there's only about seventy dollars for two weeks of groceries. My grocery bill usually runs from \$230 to \$250 every two weeks for 3 people. And I don't buy much more than the necessities plus a bit of junk food for my boy." (27 years old, Labrador City for six years)

Even if food prices appear expensive they must on all accounts be paid. For luxury items there is room for more discretion. Travel has already been mentioned as one point of contention but other items fill out a rather extensive list, like heating by oil. About six respondents wondered over whether they should get a woodstove as their neighbours were doing, to 'cut down.'



Another saw a certain lunacy in trying such a strategy:

"I can't really see what they're gaining, burning wood here. They're using skidoos to haul it and that takes gas, while electricity is so cheap, subsidized by the company. And we were hauling wood for 20 years on PEI so take it from me; the work involved is incredible! Now down there, a house this size would cost a couple of hundred a month to heat electrically and we didn't have that much electrical stuff; just a couple of appliances, washer and dryer. No hot water or electric stove, so we were hauling wood for heat and the electric bill was still \$60 a month. Up here we're using about four times as much and the bill is \$12 a month - the only thing that's cheaper. But it'd be nice to have a bit of wood for emergencies." (29 years old, in Labrador City for 1 year)

If electricity and house mortgages were company-subsidized, nothing else was. In addition, there were exorbitant taxes. School taxes, clothing taxes, taxes imposed on school supplies in the stores and a five dollar surcharge per head for the school bus were all points of contention, especially with those respondents who had more than two children. Cigarette and liquor taxes, imposed by the provincial government, were causing a dramatic decline in business according to the Wholesalers and Retailers of Labrador West (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1983) since consumers could cross the border to Fermont, Quebec and buy cigarettes for \$7.50 less per carton and forty ounces of liquor for \$4.50 less. Clothing and footwear in Labrador City was a hypothetical 12% higher in Labrador City than in Fermont

(actually, Newfoundland's provincial retail tax rate at the time) but the Task Force reporting these complaints did not investigate further. These price differentials are, of course, felt on the island of Newfoundland as well, but when lower Quebec prices (from lower sales taxes) are so visible in Labrador City, the complaints are that much louder.

For housewives trying to manage the family budget there was a certain stress in shopping. Lucas (1971) describes this as a particular problem for women in single-industry communities where there are few competitors in the retail sector and consequently little leeway for "comparison shopping". Housewives in his work felt victimized by the storeowners who had a monopoly, Lucas (1971:232) went on to state that "...it seems important to the urban housewife...to spend a great deal of cunning, money, time, gasoline and car depreciation in order to save three cents on a 'special'." This seems to trivialize the houseworker's role as the family shopper and as such, it is quite unfair. Many family budgets depend on three cents saved here and there and many women create a legitimate identity for themselves as a 'smart shopper', a necessary role in the family's economy. While Lucas describes the exigencies of life in single-industry communities adequately enough, he does tend to

overlook some of their real effects on women.

"Shopping, then, meant trying to justify spending so much for so little. Two of the women here told how their husbands became so exasperated after having the bills presented to them that they decided to take on the shopping duties themselves. They both found they could do little better, even with careful plans to 'economize':

"His pay all goes into the bank, straight into his account. Nowadays, he'll go there- and I'm only too glad to get out of that- and he goes over the bankbook to see what comes out for payments, what he's going to spend on groceries and what's left over to drink. But one good thing about him is that he pays the bills. I keep my mouth shut about it all, like if I think more should be paid here or there; he doesn't trust me much with the money, so I never have any of my own. But at least I don't have to worry over it either, and if he wants to take on that responsibility, the hell with him."

(28 years old, in Labrador City for 8 years)

Cutting household expenses is a major task among the housewives of this sample, and even those who work and live in a double-or-more-income household spend a great deal of time looking for good market deals. As in the case of housing, sharing routine expenses was a common strategy in 'making do with less' financially and single women found this to be much cheaper, though difficult at times if the parties involved weren't companionable. For single women with children this was rarely an alternative and they had to devise other means:

"He's been gone about four months now and I haven't received not two cents from him all this time. I got a mortgage of \$538.00 a month and if you really scrimp you get by on \$75.00 a week for the three of us (she has two teenage boys). There's the lights, but this year I'm cutting out oil altogether. I bought five heaters and put them in different places, so the heat will be cheaper but still, it cost \$200.00 to buy those things in the first place. And I had to clothe the kids for the winter and that's not easy! The eldest is a man's size now. And then get them in school with books and supplies and all. So it all adds up, and then the car has to be fixed and gas kept in it. But then again, that's a lot cheaper than going to work in taxis. It's really getting hard on just a waitressing salary, so I don't really know how long I'll be able to last up here."

(40 years old, in Labrador City for 14 years)

If spouses were still together there was the old strategy of both working, or at least being in the work force long enough to draw unemployment. And many women justified their work outside of the home in these terms: "It's not two people you need working, for Christ's sake, but three! One for the oil bill alone." When the presence of young children required one parent to stay home, the other inevitably worked longer shifts or added a moonlighting job. Not all found it quite so rough and several tempered their complaints of inflation with such comments as "At least we're not starving here." But they still wanted to make sure that no one might be duped into thinking of them as 'rolling in it':

"Sure we can never get a savings account together. Every time we build it up a little,

something or another happens to wipe it out again. The strike four years ago or the shut-downs last year, and now this. We're comfortable and all, but it's not like going home and everyone thinks you're rolling in money because you're up here. You might indeed be making \$2,000 a month but there's \$1,500 going out in bills and \$500 left for groceries, which isn't a lot here. So although we're never wanting for a dollar, we don't have piles and piles of money. I guess if you got it, you gotta spend it, like everyone else."  
(23 years old, in Labrador City for 7 years)

The myth of big money in Labrador City is definitely an exaggeration, but the population isn't in dire straits, either. One of the obvious reasons for this is the town's rather unnatural population distribution with relatively few single women and unemployed men to constitute a poverty sector. In spite of all the price complaints, legitimate enough here, only two respondents voiced any ideas about actively organizing to try to change things. One described the local apathy that would thwart any such attempts:

"It's the people that have been up here for 10, 12, 18, 20 years and they've always been used to a lot of things. Of course, there wasn't much when they first came here 20 years ago, but they've come a long way since. So they're at the point of saying 'Well, we had it good' and they're not the fighting type. They never had to live through economic recessions and times when the money was tight and they'll just pay out a fortune for everything rather than go to the trouble to dicker. It's unbelievable, some of the prices on things up here and they just go on paying it because there's no other way to get food, or out of here, or whatever."  
(26 years old, in Labrador City for 2 years)

Another was taking a route of cost-cutting that a great many more in this union-oriented town were trying, the 'co-op':

"It's the only good thing around here for people who spend money- and who can get away with not spending it?- is the co-op. You get a rebate back at the end of the year if you buy a co-op number. At the end of December they figure out the amount of profits they make and the number of members they have. Last year people got a 4% rebate of their total bill.

You see, you pay \$300.00 for a membership but you can pay a minimum of \$5.00. Everything you buy from then on, you tell them your co-op number and it's all credited to that account. So if you spend \$5000 in the year, you get 4% of that back at the end. They'll take that amount plus the \$5.00 you paid at the beginning and deduct your fee and the rest comes back to you from then on."  
(25 years old, in Labrador City for 4)

Only those in the lowest-income brackets (i.e., single women and the unemployed) suffered to any great extent and they were few enough, although their numbers could rise with the company's new policies of cut-backs. Inevitably those who can't 'make it' leave, so even with lay-offs it's doubtful that those remaining would find the going much harder. Standards of living here were quite high in all the homes visited; they were well-furnished and well-stocked with various recreational devices and only those who could afford a mere one trip out a year felt very deprived. Material complaints, however, weren't the last on the list of problems,

particularly for women.

#### Marriage and divorce

In all of Canada, divorce, single parenting and female employment had all been rising prior to 1982 and this served to change the entire familial structure, along with attitudes towards it. Not all want the one-career, male-dominated family any longer and for those who do, price inflation and economic uncertainty are pushing it ever farther beyond their means.

However, in Labrador City there are counter pressures. New attitudes may spell individualism and control over one's own life but social and material forces here are geared to the housewife and discourage any aberration from the role. Labrador City was built in the 1950s when marriage was accepted as Everywoman's final career and alternatives were few indeed; it still attracts (as it is meant to) people with those same ideals. The atomized forms of family found to varying degrees in other places hardly exist at all in Labrador City: the sample breakdown of married, single and divorced women read as 38, 8, and 3 respectively. In addition, the communal activities of extended families might have been strong among some groups, but sharing was

usually on occasions of crises and celebrations; daily responsibilities were still handled within the nuclear family with each mother caring solely for her own and taking care not to ask too much in the way of help from anyone else. Her role hardly changed at all (Dally 1982; Moss-Kantor 1977).

With all of these factors and the difficulties of earning a decent wage among single women, it's logical that the ideal of the nuclear family is so strong among Labrador City women: they have little choice. Any dissonance was something that economically dependent women had to overlook if they were to maintain their status. Similarly, in Lopata's (1971) study women in long-lasting marriages usually did start to ignore inconveniences which, if taken to heart, could dissolve their marriages.

The younger women in the sample were generally a bit more venturesome than those older when considering marriage and careers, and this was probably due to a greater exposure to the world of work, or to a fear that they might always have to work should the economy deteriorate much further. Some were considering delaying or even foregoing motherhood, both out of an urge to get whatever they can out of the consumer culture (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1983) or because raising



children threatened to tax their means.

"Me? No way! I don't really like children all that much. Okay for a half an hour type of thing. And maybe I was spoiled too, because right now I can have whatever I want. If I had to give up this or that for the baby, I think I'd hate it. It costs, these days.

Of course, my husband wants a couple so we probably will, someday. Not here, though. Can you imagine staying home with small youngsters in Lab City? No way!"  
(25 years old, in Labrador City for 4 years)

Motherhood, of course, is an important consideration for most women and traditionally it has always been linked with domesticity. In Labrador City most mothers do stay home, at least while the children are very young. The stereotyped housewife/mother image is strong here, as indicated in the advice of one mother to her 17 year old daughter (bringing home news of a classmate's pregnancy):

"I was 21 and that's a good age. You get married and have kids when you're 21 and it's the best way to live. You don't get into any trouble that way."

"But I want to wait for ten years or so, go to school and do something first!"

"Now don't go on with that! I do want grandchildren you know! And you'll never get married after 30."

"But, but..."

Divorce rates in Labrador City were reputedly high, though not among the respondents. The town was, of course, started as a single men's work camp and some of

its ethos may have remained, but it was also built on the assumption of geographic mobility among its residents. Demmler-Kane (1988:11) attributes "...increased expectations associated with the marriage bond..." to this moving about. Where there is less involvement with family and friends there is less of an emotional support system for the individuals who are moving and this can place a great deal of extra strain on the marriage. Krahn et al. (1981) also found that respondents who moved to Fort McMurray cited marital infidelity and family breakdown as common problems in such a single-industry town as theirs.

"Twenty-six cases went up Monday for divorce here in the Supreme Court- it comes around every four or six months. And they got four more cases to go. It's the big thing here now! You're either separated or divorced, or about to be."  
(23 years old, in Labrador City for 2 years)

Marriage in a mobile industrial society is not to be depended on and while the young in Labrador City aren't exactly putting tradition on its ear, they are taking a bit of time to reflect on this change. There were three or four mothers in the sample who advocated caution as well:

"I don't want her out making the same mistakes I did. She's got to get her education and be independent, take care of herself. I know she'll probably get married someday and hopefully it'll be okay, but you never know."

She might get stuck with some creep and want to get out but not be able to. She'll need something to fall back on then.

And women really need to know how to do a lot of different things to get by. They'd never find a good job in one field and that's it because those just aren't available. So my daughter really hates school, but I'll make her stick it out if it's the last thing I do." (36 years old, in Labrador City for 16 years)

Many people complained that it's too easy to dissolve a marriage 'these days,' when any minor problem comes up. "They would have had to learn how to deal with these little aggravations in the old days." But for the few respondents here who had gone through or were in the process of separating and divorcing, the situation was anything but easy. Their problems were neither romantic nor petty and all had lived through years of "trying to deal with it before throwing in the towel." They felt responsible for the 'break-up', since traditionally, women are supposed to be adept at keeping a home harmonious and happy.<sup>18</sup> However, some no longer had the time:

"The problems started when I got a good, steady job at a rate higher than his, and he was only doing seasonal work. He never said anything, but he started using all his money to fix up these old wrecks- I was paying all the household expenses out of my money alone.

And then he'd never do a thing around the house, even when he was unemployed and I was at work. I'd come home and he'd be sitting at the table, waiting for me to get his supper on! The dishes he used all day would be there in the sink waiting for me. His attitude was that 'it's okay for you to work as long as your work

at home is done.' And what could I do? We couldn't afford not having me at work. So over about a year things got more and more strained when once, when I was sleeping in the days and doing midnight shifts, he called me to wake up and get him a glass of water. Sitting at the table, three feet from the sink. I did - and then I went back to the bedroom, packed my things and left."  
(38 years old, in Labrador City for 15 years)

Some women were financially able to do something about their souring marriages, if only to get away and live at a lower standard of consumption, but housewives who couldn't get work or adequate training for a job were literally stuck in whatever predicament they might find themselves.<sup>19</sup> A few mentioned husbands who rarely came home, and never for entertainment; who left their wives with no cash at all except lunch money to give the kids; who pointed out that any emotional problems their wives might have "must be nerves" since they were provided with adequate food, shelter, and a T.V. These women could see no way out.

In any case, none of the respondents took divorce lightly and marital stresses usually lasted years before either partner would consider it. Still, people felt that the conditions of life in this small and isolated town contributed to its surging divorce rates. People can get quite lonely here, with depression or acute boredom taking its toll. And often they are simply looking for something new and exciting to stimulate them.

Such a search, of course, can have loaded consequences if it leads to marital infidelity, a common problem in Labrador City according to all reports. Some of the respondents explained this in greater detail:

"Oh, you get all these single guys here, out spending money and trying to impress somebody. So say there's a woman home with the kids and a bit depressed with the place or with her husband because he's always working shifts and never comes home after and she goes out for the evening. Or a man and his wife are always on different shifts, never seeing each other and they always go out at different times. She sees an attractive-looking man spending a bit of money on her and the next thing you know they're having an affair. Usually it ends in a divorce after which the woman is left with all the kids, no money, and her lover is after taking off. And that's it.

It happens all the time. You'd be surprised, the number of people that you've known for years here, never suspecting them of anything, and then you suddenly see them screwing around right before your eyes. It's so small here that sooner or later, everyone knows everything about everybody. You need an awfully strong bond to make a marriage work in this town." (23 years old, in Labrador City for 22 years)

Love affairs and soap opera dramas were commonly-cited scenarios throughout the fieldwork and perhaps they do relieve the tedium of northern isolation by providing a juicy bit to gossip over. There were a few respondents, however, who refused to speak of such things flippantly, having gone through similar experiences.

On being single in Labrador City \*

Whether young or old, all respondents were well aware of what it meant to be single in Labrador City, both financially and socially. The financial aspects are easily dealt with but the social aspects are a bit more elusive to describe.

To begin with, younger women wanted to postpone marriage and children, generally in hopes of establishing themselves in a career first. They wanted a more equitable division of labour, both in and outside of the home. In spite of this, the traditional economic roles of women here persist and most respondents ended by relying heavily on their men (ipso marriages) to maintain even an adequate standard of living. For them, underemployment generally meant reverting to housewifery as an occupation and this reinforced the idea of the home as their only domain, as it is so often portrayed in popular magazines and on television (Ewen 1976).

For those housewives who had dutifully lived up to the ideal of a Total Woman, who 'created' a wonderful home for her man and then found him gone, there was abundant pity. She had made a "total commitment" to him but he didn't reciprocate. Divorced women here had to stoop low in life: "...cutting the moldy bits off hot

dog buns"; "...living down in the welfare apartments on Cavendish- that's where they herd all the divorced women and kids"; "...getting 'fired' because she was pregnant and he took off, so she had to go on welfare". Everyone had a story of how 'rotten' life could be under those circumstances.

Gossip, of course, dramatizes extremes and these views of the single life may tend to overplay the drawbacks involved. The married respondents here were looking at the situation from the perspective of having children to support and no way to get work. The single respondents rarely had such restrictions on their lives and they weren't quite so morose over their individual trials, although they would have been happy to change some things:

"Sometimes I wish there was someone around to talk things over with, but then, they'd be always telling me what to do, when I should come and go, all of that. At least I don't get any hassles this way.

And I'm not lonely. I've got some really great friends and I'm seeing a really nice man, so I'm enjoying my life. But I don't think I'd get married now- I'm a little old for fairy tales and white knights.

And people do treat you kind of weird here if they know you're single- all sort of touch-and-go, as if you're a hot item and they might get burnt."  
(23 years old, in Labrador City for 2 years)

### Standards of femininity

There were only a few women though who visualized a life other than that of the married housewife and mother. Being single was a short-term interlude of their lives until the right man came along, and even those incorporating fashionable ideas of work and independence for women still kept traditional roles in mind, however embellished. Women were first welcomed in Labrador City as a relief to the tedium of male-only society, largely there to attract and comfort. And for many, this was still their legitimate role.

The problem with this 'tradition', is that in a world of saleable beauty, female 'worth' was often determined by appearance alone (Chesler and Goodman 1976). The initial stories sent home were of the hundreds of guys for every girl; they're all so great here- never let you buy a drink, and so on. Even today women in Labrador City are something of a "hot" item, though the sex-ratio imbalance is lessening. However, the problem with dealing with the world on the basis of 'feminine charm' is that the powers to attract decline with the years. Another drawback was that old "reputation" of sexual indiscretion that comes with counting status points in the number of admirers to be rustled up. This is still an important consideration



according to my 1982 sample. Respondents of all ages complained of the small-town dilemma where no word or act goes unnoticed and a woman's reputation is protected only by careful behaviour. Lucas (1971) explains this as resulting from a high degree of 'social observability', of common knowledge and shared norms among townsmen because of their frequent interaction and discussion. Gossip is quite effective as a social control in a small town since a 'loss of face', can become known fairly quickly and can change an individual's entire set of social relations in the community. Because of this, there is a strict and unambiguous definition of what 'proper' behaviour is and conformity is expected constantly, with no leeway given.

Lucas describes a case of an unmarried female teacher whose spare time activities were carefully monitored by the townspeople to ensure that she lived according to an impeccable moral standard of feminine 'decency'. He also notes that negative sanctions are only effective among those who have a lot to lose economically and in terms of social security, such as the teacher losing her job, or a housewife losing her husband and family. In Labrador City women are definitely the group affected since marriage is one of the few ways to achieve a decent standard of living open to them and it

can sometimes crumble under the pressure of rumors concerning a 'misbehaviour'.

Women in Labrador City have essentially the same standards as anywhere else in North America; the life's progression goes from 'beauty and career girl' to 'housewife and mother' (Myrdal and Klein 1970). The object of femininity is to attract a man or face a life of penury. Few if any other talents or potentials are recognized.

Sadly enough, the premium on beauty involves commercially manipulated ideals of sexual attractiveness as well (Chesler and Goodman 1976; Ewen 1976). In Labrador City men have been numerically and socially dominant throughout the town's history and big subscribers to the pornographic industry so that this, too, has a great deal of influence on intra-sex relations, local attitudes to women, and the local 'standards' of femininity that women are presented with.

A pornographic definition of social relations

It's hard to judge whether pornography is more of an endemic problem in Labrador City than elsewhere but concerns over its influence were quite strong among the 1982 respondents. Porn became established early in the

town's history when entertainments were imported for an all-male work camp by a select few for the sake of the workers' morale. 'Blue' movies, strippers and an occasional prostitute who would set up shop for three or four weeks before moving on were cited by several male contacts who had been here for years as often the only type of leisure activities available at all in these early years.

In 1982 there were obviously quite a few more family-oriented entertainments but it was still hard to find the non-porn magazines in the news stands and movies were usually X-rated. Video tapes were naturally a big seller here, since there was ample money for the equipment in most families and there was so little to see on ordinary T.V. The pornographic influence was especially evident in the bar-life of Labrador City where, with the exception of a few membership bars, entertainment was reliant on disco tapes and a hard-sex-selling type of music. Live entertainment was very occasional and usually any band playing would alternate sets with a striptease act. Porn materials were abundant enough to begin with, and the demand rose over time as money became more available, even to adolescents.

Some respondents provided a few descriptions which also revealed some of their underlying concerns; the

dangers of sexually transmitted diseases; the examples of adult 'fun' set for children; and the inconsideration that men show for their wives and children when participating, both in terms of time and how the family budget is spent.

"Of course there's some that see no harm in it, but it can cause a lot of problems for others, all these strippers and that. So many men here spend all their time down at the pit (male-only bar where women are subjected to a lot of pressure to leave) with the strippers. Some of them are prostitutes on the side and they're the ones that cause the problems, spreading germs around. A friend of mine who works at the drugstore told me that whenever those types are in, they'd run out of everything they got to treat gonorrhoea, syphilis and all such things, within a few days!

You take a married man who goes down to the pit for a few beers with the boys, gets drunk and he puts his money on the table with the rest. Whoever rolls the dice or wins the game of cards gets the stripper for the evening and if he does, he can easily bring home something to his wife a little later on. Happens all the time around here and it's always the wife who gets stuck, especially if she's got kids and can't leave. There's so many of these sex-diseases up here! One friend of mine was with a few guys up here over period of, say, a year and everytime they'd ask first if she had a dose. She gave up entirely after that." (38 years old, in Labrador City for 3 years)

Many of the strippers and prostitutes on the Labrador City point of the club-act circuit also left a little to be desired, both in the standard sense of beauty and in age, the categories used here to judge

women on their appearance. Respondents found it obvious that these standards simply didn't apply where sex was concerned. "You could be the ugliest, fattest, meanest-old bitch alive; it don't matter, as long as you give them what they want!" (28 years old, here for 8).

Pornography in this sense offended the stereotypical ideals of beauty that women here had been fed throughout their lives and the moral ideals that they held for their own behaviours. These included modesty, generosity in emotion and of course, marital fidelity. Prostitutes and strippers were "...just making a living, quite blatantly, on their sex." It was here that they earned such titles as "scum", "sleazebags", "filth" and the like.

Paradoxically, men are supposed to be "attracted" by those pornographic ideals, while women are repelled. The fact that stripteases were now catering to a female audience (and an appreciative one at that) in Labrador City was, in some opinions, a definite indication of moral depravity. Ideally, women are the family's agency for transmitting a 'moral sense' to children and they are not to allow their own tastes and proclivities descend to the same level as that of men. Of course, male acts weren't nearly as common as those by women;

"And certain times of the year this place is packed with strippers, wandering around the

discos and flaunting themselves to pick up customers. Or the men would line up at the back door of the pit and pay their money so the woman could do an oral job, just like an assembly line- It's madness, and it's not just the men anymore!

They brought male strippers in here once and they say the bar was so packed, it was unreal! Women were taking their clothes off and trying to kiss the mens' bodies and all that. And if you paid them \$5 they'd dance on your table or stir your drink with their 'you-know-what,' ice and all! Now it's all funny enough, but this stuff is getting a little out of hand- it's so public and acceptable now, like no one has any shame anymore." (25 years old, in Labrador City for 9 years)

While some respondents could only find oblique terms to indicate their feelings, all felt a sense of outrage that pornography was establishing new and not necessarily wanted standards of sexuality for women.

The tangible effects of an image

Constrained by the physical exigencies of life in Labrador City and a tightly circumscribed social role, women have few avenues for self-fulfillment. Depression is a common problem here. Defining what 'depression' is can be a problem in itself since it varies with individuals. Chesler (1972:50ff) states that it is typically viewed as a 'female' disease and as such, has become part of the 'female role ritual'. Women are socialized to accept depression as a very likely future

development in their lives, so for some, it becomes a fact to contend with.

Women who openly protested against their living conditions in Labrador City were suspect. Depression was always topical during the fieldwork, even when unsolicited. As mentioned previously, respondents always maintained that they were "perfectly happy here" at the outset of each interview but later the majority privately admitted to at least one bout of depression, or the occasional 'down' period which everyone feels quite naturally throughout life. Some described times when it lasted abnormally long. Those who "never once felt depressed" cited formulas they had ready to combat the onslaught. A few people maintained that "women are no more depressed here than anywhere else", but only one of these was a woman and these were defensive remarks made in response to a description of the fieldwork as centering on the life and work of women in Labrador City. No mention had been made as to whether women here were more susceptible to depression or not, so it is telling that many assumed that this was the underlying motive for having any sort of interest in housewives.

Depression was invariably attributed to the lack of enough for a woman to do in Labrador City. Worst of all was the lot of the housebound, but even those working

full-time jobs felt an occasional tinge of loneliness.

"After the kids grew up I started finding the time really long here, and incredibly bad! I'd spend half my days in bed. I was going nuts trying to think of what to do with all this free time! So I started looking for work.

Now, sometimes I really, really want to get out of here, like getting out of a prison. Of course, my work is good, but there's so many other things I feel so lousy about. I try to keep up a pretense that I don't mind, though, or people I work with would worry about whether there's something wrong."  
(45 years old, in Labrador City for 16 years)

The 'cure-all' was for each woman to 'keep busy' and the problem was generally seen as hers, alone, to deal with. As Chesler (1972:188ff) describes "...middle-class oriented therapy for female depression...", no one prescribes collective action or solutions to women in spite of the fact that they have so many problems in common. Joining a group usually involves any other sort of activity rather than directly dealing with depression. The social prescription for depression, moreover, reinforces the dependent state of women here. They must remain in Labrador City, or return to it, if they are to be labelled as 'over the depression'.

Chesler maintains that women are not encouraged to openly express their rage, as this would be too 'masculine' and therefore "...too dangerous...for the isolated and economically dependent woman." Most



importantly, therapy directed at women tries to help them become "normal housewives" (even if they weren't housewives at all, before) and it is designed to help them function in a "...succession of alien and anonymous urban locations...for young, upwardly mobile couples to survive" (Chesler 1972:188).

The housebound felt their 'down periods' to the keenest degree since they had little to deflect depressive thoughts after the children were all in school. They often relied on close friends to 'talk things over with' but for those who didn't feel comfortable unburdening themselves outside the home, daily life could become quite odious. A couple of respondents told of trying to talk about their trials to husbands who, usually confused or afraid of the worst, would reply with "what's the use in talking? All you do is cry!" Both felt they were being too emotional and burdening their men too much but another respondent wasn't quite as complaisant, knowing full well the source of her problems wasn't simply within herself.

Chesler (1972:268ff) refers to this 'female conversation', especially between women, as carrying the stigma of being "mindless and senseless" and sounding like a series of monologues to parallel experiences without any logical progression or arriving at a

resolution. She goes on to define these in that they allow women some measure of comfort that they cannot seem to receive from men who have never experienced similar emotions. Women can "...reflect (each) others' feelings in a sensitive matching process (of) stories, facial expressions, pauses, sighs, and the like." This is an important argument in favour of using ethnomethodology in women's studies as well.

Quite a few women could describe the circumstances evoking depression, and pretty well all knew of the signs to look out for:

"It's pretty easy to get depressed here, I'll tell you! Say your husband's working overtime or two jobs; there's days when you only see him to feed him and give out clean clothes. He's tired when he gets home so he doesn't have much time for the kids, let alone for you. You really have to be careful when you find yourself screaming at the kids for no reason, that sort of thing."

Every couple of months there's a few women in the hospital with nervous breakdowns. Overall, the men are still young enough here to want to go out and drink with the boys. So the women are left home but they're young too, at the age where they have small children and they're going nuts. And fathers here aren't the type to babysit once in awhile- they think that's the woman's place. Now the occasional one will, but even then, where would a woman go for the evening? The pool in Wabush is always crowded, the movies only show skin-flicks and you can't go to a bar alone, or even with a bunch of women a lot of the time. There's just nothing to break up this monotony of staying home."  
(31 years old, in Labrador City for 6 years)

There were several attitudes to depression voiced in these cautionary notes, one of which was a 'time' theory: everyone goes through it in the initial years and if they haven't managed to cope by the end of the second, they never would. Better to pack up and leave. Others saw it as encroaching with the years and regarded anyone who had stayed for more than ten as likely to be "hanging from the rafters" or "taking a good look around the bend". These were the sympathetic and they constituted a minority here. More commonly people touted constant activity as both prevention and cure and saw depression as nobody's fault but the depressed: (s)he simply didn't take the initiative to get out and do something about it before it got out of hand. Even many of those who had been on the 'down side' upheld this idea:

"It's amazing what your mind can do and I know. I was home with two small kids at 20/30 below, when it's easier to stay in than get them all bundled up to go out. But I got involved in things in the evening like community clubs and volunteering at the hospital- that sort of thing. It was okay because my husband would stay home with the kids, and you do need adult company.

But there's a lot who don't step outside the door from the beginning of winter to spring. And they're going squirrely by March- the number of people on Valium in this town is unreal! Women especially. But it is their own fault- they could get a babysitter, if their husbands won't take care of the kids."  
(39 years old, in Labrador City for 21 years)

The answers for the depressed aren't always so simple and at least two respondents pointed out that it was useless to argue with these arguments: no one seemed to understand their situations. For one woman, one solution would be getting out of Labrador City in mid-winter, when the 'down-time' strikes hardest, but the school system forbade any such holidays, and teachers loudly denounced parents who wanted to take their kids out of school as being 'selfish'.

Similarly, another respondent found it extremely difficult to cope with both depression and a general lack of understanding around her:

"You always hear them say 'life is what you make it- it all depends on you,' but then they just can't understand my life. They've never lived through a bad marriage when you really have no other choice but stay. No money, no job, small kids- who's going to pay for a babysitter for me to get out? I really have nothing. All this sacrificing for the kids can really get to you. Everyone seems to think you should be grateful that you got a man to pay the rent."  
(34 years old, in Labrador City for 13 years)

Depression wasn't simply a 'woman's' condition here either. Adolescents and men were often caught up in it as well when they didn't work: long winters meant isolation, confinement, and, of course, dependency.

In this manufactured town the roles created for housewives and children leaned heavily on the suburbia

ideal of a comfortable dependency, where only the male head works and provides (Myrdal and Klein 1970). It's obviously a much-desired goal here, but those who had attained it weren't always pleased with what it actually offered them. Women found themselves in confining roles where they needn't bother to try anything and this often led to the classical cases of 'nerves'. There were other outlets and northern towns in common lore have long been notorious for eliciting high rates of drug dependency, alcoholism, gambling or even suicide. Labrador City was no exception in 1982.

Respondents usually rated these behaviours under 'noticeable health problems': the physical effects of living here were limited to the odd cold when travelling from this dry climate to the 'wetter' ones back home and to problems of getting up in the morning during the first few weeks of living here. Nights of 12 and 14 hours sleep were attributed to the lighter-than-ordinary air here and the abnormally quiet atmosphere. Socio-health problems were another story entirely and even residents who staunchly maintained that social conditions in the north were no different than anywhere else admitted to 'a couple' of these drawbacks.

In search of bottled relief

Alcoholism and barbituate addiction was an adjacent issue to depression and most respondents felt that women, as a group, would tend more towards Valium and other prescriptive drugs, should they become addicted since alcohol is quite expensive for a 'dependent' to buy. Addictions of any kind, however, aren't relegated to the 'bored and lonely housewife' only; the part-time nurse in the study had seen alcoholics here "from teenagers on up. It is mostly the men, though." Everyone agreed that alcoholism is always higher among men in Labrador City and communities like it, but some pointed out that women were increasingly partaking. Those who defended the town as not particularly different from anywhere else usually felt that perhaps this area attracted a certain kind of people who were prone to 'fall under the influence.' Since it is a fairly small town with no outlets into neighbouring communities, alcoholism and drug dependency can be more noticeable here.

But even if women themselves weren't the subjects of high alcoholic rates, they were often its victims:

"That's a really serious problem up here; the drinking and then wife-beating. I've heard of so many cases, it's not even funny. See, people have nothing else to do here so they drink themselves silly. And in doing so, they seem to lose any sense of family. Like on

Christmas Eve- every year there's hundreds of stories of men going out and just getting drunk. Not spending the evening with their family, but with 'the boys'. They simply have nothing stimulating in their lives and everything up here is alcohol-oriented so men just hang out in the bars and then go home to beat up the wife. They're trying to get a transition house in for battered wives, it's that much of a problem and in such a small town!"

(38 years old, in Labrador City for 3 years)

If women here didn't drink, there were other forms of escapism, such as gambling. Traditionally bingo was a favoured outlet and still is; it is mentioned as a weekly entertainment enjoyed by at least a third of all interviewed. Bingo, however, isn't simply gambling for it's own sake since it provides a much-needed avenue for socializing to those 'stuck in the house and up here for years.' Even more detrimental now is the lottery-ticket booth that stands in every shopping mall to devour the hard-earned cash of passers-by and 'regulars' alike, with none of the beneficent side-effects of socializing. Lottery 'folklores' are now on the rise:

"There was a woman here last summer who spent so much money on Nevada tickets that she had to say her house was broken into and a thousand dollars in cash stolen to cover herself. It turned out that no one had gone near the house, but she had taken their vacation money and blown it- didn't win a cent back. And she couldn't face her husband.

And another one, not too long ago, was taken away from the mall on a stretcher. She was after cracking up completely when she didn't win anything and she's still in the hospital.

There's a lot of people here who just spend a fortune on those tickets." (48 years old, in Labrador City for 16 years)

Lottery and 'chance' tickets have become a popular form of gambling here that anyone with a buck can get in on, unlike the poker games of the past that were limited to men with 'money galore.' And the dream of housewives and workers alike was always of amassing the really big bucks while here.

Non-prescription drug-taking is also high on the entertainment list of at least younger people and was seen as a growing problem, particularly where it was so accessible to school children. Several mentioned knowing of this one or that who sold drugs; the typical drug dealer was male, worked at IOCC at fairly good pay, owned a house, car, and generally fit the suburban mode in 'trying to get by.' The use of 'soft' drugs such as marijuana, hashish and various types of oils extracted from the two had become so widespread in Labrador City that there was a public campaign, instigated by IOCC, to heighten awareness in local schools and among parents. Respondents were divided about evenly on this issue, the one side balking at IOCC's 'instant dismissal' policy for proven drug offenders in their employ while the other was hoping that public pressure would deflect their kids from 'going too far.' The former felt that it was unfair to



punish someone already punished by the court for an offense that often posed less danger 'on the job' than prolonged alcoholism. People in the latter group were outraged that "such people could live in our town anyway!"

All of these escapist ventures are full topics in themselves, but mentioning them here shows the need people have to 'get through it all' while in Labrador City. Ironically enough, such 'aids' could ensure a lengthier stay if the parties involved had a personal goal to meet before leaving. Money spent on luxuries can't also be used to pay off the debts or build up the savings account. But people often needed strategies to cope with the burdens of depression or an interminable boredom and those above are some of the more extreme examples gathered through hearsay. There was one other and far more serious reaction to depression here and unfortunately, the examples were always concrete.

Suicide: the ultimate stage of depression

Stories of suicides and attempts seemed to be abnormally numerous in Labrador City, 1982: eight separate cases of successful tries came up in the interviews along with dozens of friends and acquaintances

who had tried unsuccessfully.<sup>20</sup> Of the eight, five were women and only one worked outside of the home.

Speculations of why always began with 'well, they were depressed for so long,' and continued from there to broken marriages, broken love affairs, or a general disillusionment with Labrador City. One respondent described the death of her neighbour and the conditions of life here that might have seemed so odious to her:

"She was having a nervous breakdown just before it, but she was such a young woman, so it all seemed like she did it for nothing. Of course, she couldn't speak English and that was a big problem. She couldn't communicate with very many people and she never went anywhere. She certainly couldn't go to work.

So she shot herself- that's how most seem to do it up here. The kids found her body around noon. I took them in for a few weeks: it was really bad for them. Like the cops asking them questions and here they didn't even cover her body. And one day the older girl was in school about a couple of months later and started to cry. Her teacher told her to watch out or she'll end up like her mother. Imagine! Trying to help, I suppose, but what a stupid thing to say. Anyway, the father finally sold the house and moved back to Quebec, but it was too late for her, eh?

Before that, though, I went to see the social worker about the girl and she was saying that you wouldn't believe the number of people, old and young, who kill themselves up here. They just get so depressed and then everything goes down the drain. She said she couldn't see why because there's no unemployment here, compared to home, and maybe you see it more here because it's a small town, like it's more noticeable but not any more serious of a problem than anywhere else. But that social worker had just

come up, then."  
(31 years old, in Labrador City for 10 years)

#### Conclusion

Happily enough, the majority of the respondents had found various and less extreme methods of coping. 'Keeping busy' was their ultimate strategy and respondents cited a myriad of 'activities' to engage in: bingo, skating, floor hockey, broomball, skiing, tennis, crafts, French lessons, accounting courses, typing, aerobic dancing, walking, and most importantly mixing with people. Suffice it to say that night classes in almost anything are a booming winter business here. After these came volunteer work with the hospital, children's groups, community and civic groups, though generally people seemed more interested in "improving the self" than giving of their time. Demmler-Kane (1988) noticed the same tendency among her respondents and attributed it to their need to join groups with shared interests that would provide more social contacts than service work would. She and Martin-Matthews (1988) both recorded that for newly arrived migrants, voluntary associations are not frequently used for social contacts. This may be due to the plethora of tasks that the mover must finish first. Martin-Matthews does note the prevalence of the mover's attempts at making new friends,

an alternative side of the same strategy for 'settling in'.

Whatever the reason, these involvements facilitated human contact in this stark industrial town, and most respondents felt that by warding off loneliness depression could easily be cured. A stranger to Labrador City can be overwhelmed by the numbers of residents who are so friendly; a resident can understand why friendliness is so necessary.

For most of the respondents, life in Labrador City was full of irks and quirks, constituting a compromise they were making for the 'better things to come.' All were 'making the best of it' in one way or another, while waiting to make enough money to leave and fulfill dreams elsewhere. Martin-Matthews (1988) found that this was one of the features of her 'mover' respondents: they saw their role as a mover as continual and another move existed somewhere in the future for them. Their time in any one location was then affected by their expectation to leave at some point. Christiansen-Ruffman (1976) noted a similar process among her 'newcomer' respondents. Only two respondents in Labrador City decried this tendency, maintaining that it's better to be content with what you have and enjoy it now: they had little to return to and at least here there was work.

Another two respondents incorporated a religious philosophy into their strategies of 'getting by': "Life without a friend (God) just wouldn't be worth it; just living in places like this for 60 or 70 years and then you die and rot and that's it? It don't seem right- or even fair."

All of the remainder of respondents emphasized a material reason to 'hang on'. Life here is meant to improve the individual's situation in some direction or another, instead of simply maintaining it, and the ideals of social progress that the town had been built on were extended to the individual lives of residents.

However, a recent tragedy in the lives of two such adherents caused quite a few of the 1982 respondents to reconsider whether they really should be 'sacrificing' themselves now for greater things to come:

"But plans, plans- I'm beginning to be afraid of them now. It's like this couple, both teachers up here, who had married late in life. They were older than usual to start out up here, in their forties, and they worked so hard for 10 years to scrape up a bit for a retirement because they had so little time. So they worked and saved and towards the end of it, they had a couple of little girls- imagine starting a family so late in life?

Finally he got a transfer as a high school principal in Ontario somewhere and they left. Well, he hadn't even started the job yet but they decided to buy a car. They were out with a salesman, test-driving a Honda, when a van

drove into them and they were all killed. Leaving the two little girls. So after ten years this has to happen- what a waste!

Now we had planned to work for ten years and sort of 'retire' too. Tromp through all these little mining towns, saving money, and then do what we want. But you have to wonder what it's all for when something like that happens. What if you end up like that?"  
(27 years old, in Labrador City for 1 year)

All who reflected on this accident considered the couple's time spent in Labrador City as 'wasted' since they were never able to enjoy the ultimate benefits it was to offer upon leaving. Despite the many claims that 'there's nothing wrong with this place,' it remains a town from which to look beyond. Few wanted to stay any longer than they had to since they risked 'wasting' their lives.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: WORK AND WOMENS' WORK: IDEALS AND REALITY

Like everywhere, women in Labrador City must deal with the social assumption that their primary role is in the home. The entire occupation of housewifery rests on such conditioning. The history of the role and its effects for Labrador City respondents provide the material of the first few sections in this chapter, along with what alternatives are available in Labrador City. There seem to be fewer here than elsewhere. The next sections review the various routes that women have for making their domestic roles more lucrative, both at home and in tertiary jobs; the problems that respondents have found in their outside jobs and in leaving home to work; and the likelihood that a woman can find a well-paying, moderately interesting job in Labrador City.

### A short history of housewifery

As one of the lowest status occupations in Western society, housework is often not considered a job at all. Still, it involves twenty-four hours of work a day for those women who are mothers as well. Twenty-four of the 1982 Labrador City respondents were housewives but a few did get an Unemployment Insurance cheque every two weeks to help out.

Before going on to describe their work, it may be of some interest to trace the development of housewifery to its current humble status, although the scope of this thesis doesn't allow for an in-depth study.

Housewifery as an occupation in itself arose during the last century and a half or less, in response to other, basic social changes. Sociologists often point to the epoch of industrialization (Oakley 1974) or to "modernization" (Shorter 1977) as the turning point for family structure. Oakley (1974) and Shorter (1977) are used in the following both as sources and as examples of how separate perspectives on history can make the same events seem so different.

In the decades preceding the 1750s (or 'pre-Industrial' times), women were very important as economic producers, though different writers stress that import in various degrees. Shorter argues against what he sees as a "black-as-night-repression" theory from "the new women's history" and says that instead of being shackled, "...women were all-powerful within their particular domains..." (1977:66). Speaking of women in rural French households during the eighteenth century he describes a complex division of labour where they are responsible for the "three C's"; childrearing, cooking and whatever cleaning there was to do, as well as various chores on



the farm and filling in their spare time with handicrafts. Men took care of all the large jobs on the farm, like handling the cows while women tended poultry and as far as the housework went, they were beholden to light the kitchen fires.

For one of those 'new woman historians' (Oakley 1974), there's a slightly different interpretation of this division of labour, though it hardly describes a more repressed role for women. Traditionally they had a great deal of power in all domains, and not simply in their 'own'. Though both authors point out that they had few legally defined rights, Oakley (1974) goes on to show that women had a much greater degree of economic involvement in the community and not simply in terms of their roles in the family. From at least the sixteenth until the eighteenth centuries and sometimes beyond, women were property-owners, both by inheritance and in their own right, having worked for it. They were important enough in the productive life of their communities to be admitted into the current guilds for tradesmen on an equal footing with their male counterparts in such 'masculine' fields as blacksmithing and tannery. As tradeswomen they often took apprentices and as workers they received equal pay until at least the mid-sixteenth century.

Oakley admits that there were one or two legal barriers to women but these were far fewer than Shorter implied in such statements as "...the wife's roles were all subservient..." (Shorter 1977:72).

Shorter (and many other historians of a like persuasion) describes the traditional division of labour as strictly defined and enforced through community surveillance. In modern times this 'evolved' into a less rigidly delineated or adhered-to system. Romantic love and living in a nuclear family demands an 'empathy' between spouses which eventually facilitates a 'blending' of sex roles, to today's 'interchangeability' (Shorter 1977:66ff). This is qualified somewhat later in Shorter's book; as capitalist economic growth liberated women in the bourgeois and land-owning peasant classes from the need to work outside the home, it allowed them to concentrate more on mothering and housewifery. Eventually these facets of their lives would displace all others.

Oakley (1974), on the other hand, viewed this as a rather more cyclical than linear 'evolution', involving a contraction of the role of women rather than a 'liberation'. The choice of descriptive terms make the difference here. The period of industrialization (from 1750-1850 approximately) began with an improvement in the

economic conditions of women's work, particularly in the textile trades (Oakley 1974). New machines like the Spinning Jenny allowed for a much larger output in the cottage industries that women generally worked in and, as Morgan (1986) notes, the whole family benefited.

The benefits of increased output were somewhat short-lived. Before the end of the eighteenth century larger and more complicated machines that couldn't fit into small cottages were invented, giving rise to a factory system in Britain of mass production (Deane 1965). Both Oakley (1974) and Shorter (1977) agree that this meant lower wages per worker but the entire family would go to work, hence the 'family wage'. In the working classes at least, women were still fully productive in the financial sense. Their roles as mother and housewife were still only a part of their daily lives.

In the prosperous middle classes of the same era, women's work was changing. With servants and employees enough to carry out the actual work and with the rise of the new sentiments promoting motherly love and the privatisation of the family (Shorter 1977), more and more of the wealthy were keeping their wives at home. Throughout the nineteenth century the fashion to have a 'leisured lady of the house,' unspoiled by work, gained

prominence.

Bourgeois women went from being fully productive workers and equal partners with their husbands to managing the domestic servants in the housework and in the raising of the children. Working class women could hardly afford such sentimentalities: they were required to support at least themselves and often their children as well (Oakley 1974). This expectation continued among the working classes even after the 1840's Factory Acts that reduced the working hours of women and children and eventually eliminated child labour altogether. For Shorter (1977), women then had more time for mothering and housekeeping and family life became a bit more comfortable. In Oakley's terms, the family's finances in the working classes were severely curtailed.

The working class male breadwinner who totally supported his family at home was far from economically feasible in the 1800s with such low wages as either men or women could get. Women, then, were still expected to carry their own and their children's weight, even though their wages were cut and the children were completely dependent. Many working class mothers took up piece work. Called 'sweating', this involved having the pieces of the product delivered to them to be finished and returned. The workers would receive an atrociously low

payment and few could support themselves very well in this way. Nevertheless, it did solve the problem of who would look after the now dependent children. Mother could now work at home (Wilson 1982).

By the 1850s the ideals of the nuclear family and motherly love were filtering down to the working classes (Shorter 1977), as well as being imposed through legislations which forced women into a dependent status along with their children. Either way, the seed of the modern housewife had been sown so that by the late nineteenth century the working class had also adopted the Victorian notions that men alone supported their families and were shamed should their wives have to work.

Concurrently, workers themselves were advocating that women be banned from factory work altogether so that they wouldn't 'hurt' themselves or their reproductive systems through tedious hours of staying in the same physical position. More importantly, the argument was that they would hurt their homes through neglect should they be permitted to work. Another factor of these demands was that women were competition for working men and were suspected of keeping wages low by being too available (Wilson 1982; Oakley 1974). The trend to regard women as inappropriate in industry was growing.

With the ideals of a nuclear family in the late nineteenth century, married women were now domesticated across the classes and totally dependent in their unpaid work as housewives. Oakley notes that their productive work, and the role of single girls and boys, had actually reversed over the period of industrialization. In the 1900s more and more single women were entering the workforce while married women were staying home until it was a norm of the 1940s that unmarried females would be working. A century earlier and previous to that, housework was a responsibility for the unmarried teenage girls and boys of the family while married women were economically productive (Tentler 1976; Pleck 1976).

Another change in the actual role of married women during the early twentieth century concerned their work as housewives. Those in the working class actually did housework which involved preparing food, laundering, cleaning, caring for offspring and more while those in the middle and upper classes were 'home managers'. Out of this latter, more visible role grew the assumption that all housewives had a pretty easy time of it, even after the widescale exodus of domestic workers into factory and other better-paying work after 1900 (Wilson 1982; Oakley 1974). Middle class housewives then had to actually do the work along with their working class

counterparts but even today, this is rarely recognized as 'real' work (Oakley 1974; Lopata 1971). Housewifery became the primary role of women between the two world wars in the West, but some argue that it was then undermined. Married women were conscripted into industrial production, to 'fill in the gaps' left by those men who had gone to war (Wilson 1982; Tentler 1976). Women found that they could perform many more jobs than is normally allotted to them and many liked working outside of the home. In spite of this, legislation after the war guided them back into the home by providing that men could reclaim their jobs from women when they returned. The march of women back into the home always received ideological support from books, magazines and advertising directed at women (Ewen 1976; Connelly 1978; Women's Unemployment Study Group 1983).

Still, once accepted back into the working world women increasingly returned to it. Some had to, given the post-war economic downturns in North America which made it almost impossible for a working class family to survive on one income only. New trends stemming from these necessities and the work of the feminist movement in North America since the 1960s have made the work of married women acceptable, though not always preferable to staying home (Lopata 1971).

Some of the housewives in the 1982 Labrador City study claimed that they wouldn't, or didn't want to, work, but many more wanted to "give it a go." There were many reasons for them to be ambivalent over the role of the housewife. The following section looks at some of what this role entails.

### Today's housewife in Labrador City

All but two of the Labrador City respondents agreed that their roles as housewives were of ultimate importance in their lives and their primary responsibilities were to their families. None attached any status to the work of housewifery itself and Lopata's (1971) respondents reacted in the same manner. The author hypothesizes that this may be due to the fact that the term "housewife" is used to describe everything a woman does at home, including child-care and hobbies. Housewifery is ignored as a separate and legitimate role in itself.

Housework also has a devalued status in economic terms in our society: it is never paid work if performed for the individual's own family; it receives little pay when done for others outside the family; and it requires little formal training (Lopata 1971). Occupational



status in North America is often measured by these features. Among Oakley's 1974 respondents, its low status was one of the points of housewifery most resented.

Housework, then, elicits no visible income for the family and it has little earning power in itself but it does serve to free the rest of the family for wage work outside of the home. Demmler-Kane (1980) describes this in terms of Parsonian functionalism with respect to 'gender role segregation'. Here, industrial society depends on the nuclear family system for keeping people (usually male breadwinners) adequately prepared for work and able to pack up the family and go to where his work is needed. The findings of the study reveal that the work of married women is contingent upon their husband's occupation and the mobility required by this negatively affects their 'labour force participation.' They are likely to remain housewives, in support of the nuclear family and the industrial system.

This, however, is rarely acknowledged as a service worth noting. In such a monetarily-attuned society as this having no income means total dependence and consequently little power over the family's material resources, whether or not a member is contributing in other ways<sup>21</sup> (Wilson 1982; Myrdal and Klein 1970; Chesler

and Goodman 1976).

The 'proper realm' of women is still in the home since housework and mothering is assumed to 'come naturally' to females (Chesler 1972). Both are generally regarded as a biological function of women as are the socially ascribed ideals of dependence and submissiveness (Myrdal and Klein 1978). Current fashion, moreover, suggests that women have an abundance of opportunities to break away from tradition but this creates a confusing array of options (Lopata 1971; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1983). In effect, those once 'chained' to the home in servitude are now commonly supposed to be 'liberated' by mechanized housework and delegated child care on top of 'egalitarianism' in the occupational world. Given these assumptions those who stay at home are sometimes regarded by workers and employers as lacking in initiative or in the ability to work.

It's probably for these reasons that unsolicited justifications for staying at home were offered so often during the interviews with 'non-working' women. Housewives with young children pointed out that someone had to stay at home for the time being while those without them maintained that they had been brought up as domestic souls, inadequately prepared for the work world. Even younger, 'modern' women who had been raised in

Labrador City summed up this argument with "What else can I do?". These respondents were quite defensive about their roles and interviews often began with the greeting, "I'm perfectly happy with my life" as if studies on housework were always geared to find something wrong. They were also defending themselves against that 'liberated front' that portrayed the housewife as a menial and unimaginative 'drudge', although nothing had been consciously said to raise this point. Lopata (1971) and Oakley (1974) found the same tendencies in their studies as well; "...the denigration and trivialization of housework is such a pervasive cultural theme that women feel the need NOT to identify with it..." (Oakley 1974:47).

In this defense, housewives rarely failed to point out how busy their days already were without their having to go out and work. Homes were spotless so housework obviously did entail that each housewife pay stringent attention to the details of cleanliness, childcare and shopping: a full-time job (Ewen 1976; Dally 1982; Oakley 1974). Myrdal and Klein (1970) qualify this, though: housework is only full-time as long as the children are small and physically dependent. After this the authors contend that housewives generally feel discontented with staying at home. They suffer from social isolation, low

occupational status and consequently low self-esteem and intellectual stultification. Undoubtedly this is true in some respects though the 1982 Labrador City housewife/respondents found ways to enjoy their roles as well.

Oakley (1974) found that across the classes, "job enlargement" among housewives, or raising their own standards of the work, is important in that it imposes an order on what is basically an unstructured mountain of tasks. It also establishes their responsibility for the work and the rewards they might expect for doing it (self-administered since this is an unpaid position), which are important determinants for personal satisfaction with the role. They 'create' their own full-time jobs and their role as an irreplaceable one to their family's well-being. Myrdal and Klein (1970) agree that housewives are defined by their work in the home, but they see the job expansion associated with inflated standards as a strategy for eliminating their frustrations with the work. The same principle, then, can have quite different connotations when viewed from different perspectives.

Oakley's (1974) study presents a realistic picture of what exactly housework means to most women. It is characterised by dissatisfaction with the actual tasks to

be performed, long hours, monotony, loneliness and among former career women, a depressing "incongruency" in status.

In spite of this, it does have a few redeeming features, which came out in the Labrador City study as well: the work is, by definition, highly autonomous and it is in keeping with the prevalent "...sense of self as a housewife (or not) (which) is a deeply rooted facet of self-identity as feminine" (Oakley 1974:185). Housewives are performing the work that they have been socialized to do. In addition, there are the common beliefs that this is her natural function and the best that she can offer to her family. These reinforce a woman's orientation to the role of housewife, no matter how dissatisfied she may be with the work itself. Unfortunately, the difference between role-orientation and the degree of satisfaction with housework itself was not investigated during the 1982 fieldwork.

One of Oakley's (1974) conclusions that may be generalized to the Labrador City study refers to the popular belief that working class women are more satisfied with housewifery than are middle class housewives. Oakley argues that this is a matter of socialization: working class females are 'taught' to accept this as the best role for them and because of

this, they look for reasons to be satisfied with it. Middle class women, on the other hand, are increasingly looking towards outside 'careers' as their avenues for fulfillment (also Spitze and Waite 1980; Chenoweth and Maret 1980) and with arguments that housewives are all 'drudges', they don't want to be identified as such. They are then more likely to look for and stress the bad points of their roles and work and are verbally adept at doing so (though the length of their education is not a relevant factor here).

Since workers in Labrador City could afford to support dependent wives and this arrangement was a widely held ideal, it's obvious that the preference would be to stay at home. In Labrador City women were further discouraged from going out to work by the low-wage and low-status jobs available to them: for the majority of those who might have to pay others to do their housework and take care of the kids, it was just as well to stay at home themselves. Moreover, in the 'mature' single-industry communities described by Lucas (1971), there's little room for the daughters of local workers to find work themselves since "the work force is basically male." There are only a few jobs in the clerical trades that have a low turnover rate, so "the girls...marry early" to avoid the problem of leaving town or finding themselves

in unsatisfactory jobs" (Lucas 1971:95).

Many Labrador City respondents had come from small communities where women worked exclusively in the home and, as in Lucas' (1971) study, there were few who didn't think that this was the 'best that life could offer'. Working still carried a certain amount of the shame of poverty that women wanted so much to avoid and it was still outside the realm of a 'woman's place'. The choices that women made, to stay home or work, were conditioned long before they had arrived in Labrador City.

Domestic conditioning: reconsidering 'choices'

Among the employed respondents, only two could be defined as 'careerist'; the rest took great pains to point out that their jobs were meant to relieve the boredom of living in Labrador City, or to 'help' with the family expenses, or to fill in time while they waited for marriage. Only a few would even hint that perhaps their husbands were unable to provide for the family totally in this land of extreme inflation and living expenses. Myrdal and Klein (1978) state that married women generally work for all of these reasons but there's a fine line drawn between the "economic pressure" for them

to work and their "desire (to) improve" the family's finances. Women in this study do NOT intend to "retire into domesticity" and as often as not, they work to escape the loneliness of it. Like Oakley's (1974) respondents, they always viewed work outside the home as more interesting than anything housewifery had to offer.

Work outside the home, then, was often taken as an avenue to a bit of 'pin money' in Labrador City, and it was the type of work that was easily dismissed should it pose a lot of interference with the woman's main role as housewife or with the demands of her husband's work. This is a common finding in many studies (Ewen 1976; Phillips and Phillips 1983; Demmler-Kane 1980).

Nevertheless, some Labrador Cityites still adhered to the belief that for husbands, having a working wife often meant having to justify his imputed failure to provide. This 'traditional' division of labour also held among a small number of respondents in another case study similar to the 1982 Labrador City fieldwork. Luxton's (1983) work carried out in another mining town found that only seven of her fifty respondents agreed entirely with this tenet: men should never do any housework and women should never do anything but. When women were forced to go out and work themselves (their husbands having been laid off), they simply assumed the duties of a double-



day. As Luxton pointed out, these women saw their only power in the household as originating in their domestic control and they weren't about to relinquish any of it to anyone.

More typical of the Labrador City respondents, though, was the position held by seventeen in the second category of Luxton's respondents. They saw women's work outside the home as okay when the need arose and would occasionally ask for help with the housework from husbands and children, maintaining that while men and women should have separate domains it wasn't always possible and an occasional overlap was unavoidable.

Twenty-six of Luxton's respondents fell into her third category, viewing marriage and household labours as 'co-operative' and believing women had a right to work if they wanted, regardless of reasons. Attempts were often made here to prod spouses into accepting some of the domestic responsibilities, though they were not always successful. Only a few in the 1982 Labrador City sample expressed this idea. Luxton's 'mainland' sample exhibited increasingly modern notions of the domestic division of labour while Labrador City respondents of only a few years later, in the same type of environment, professed to less 'progressive' views (progressive can only be used if one scales attitudes on a continuum of

traditional to modern housewife and assigns the modern version a 'progressive' label). Still, these same views were held by some 34% of Luxton's sample and it would be interesting to note how many of Luxton's wives could afford to maintain such attitudes. Many of them had already experienced economic recession and the need to work whereas Labrador Cityites were only beginning to feel this. One guess would be that the views become more 'progressive' as more women are forced out of the home to work.

All of the Labrador City respondents maintained that they would "dearly love to stay home, of course!", and in an outpost they'd have had to anyway. But only eight actually had what has been defined as a 'home career', having never worked for pay, with a "...high commitment to traditional family roles and values, and having spouses who could afford to keep them at home" (Chenowith & Maret 1988).

As a result, and contrary to that body of migration literature which stresses the domesticity of female migrants (Adams 1968; Stone 1969; Mincer 1978), most respondents actively sought work on arriving in Labrador City. One rationalization was, as in Martin-Matthews (1988), that work outside the home would "facilitate the passage" of a woman into a new town, or at least provide

her with an avenue for social integration. The majority of Martin-Matthews' (1980) respondents and of those in this thesis felt that a job could be used as such a resource and was, by male movers. Another point was that "as long as you're there, you may as well get what you can" and as quickly as possible. So while a wife's working is commonly thought of as an embarrassment or an encroachment upon her husband's manhood, defined by his ability to provide, it became an 'acceptable strategy' for making the most out of migration.

For women, working while migrating carried an additional advantage: they could engage in a 'mixed pattern of careers' ie: repeatedly entering and leaving the labour force (Chenoweth and Maret 1980) without threatening the traditional division of labour in the household too much. The working wife in migrant situations is applauded for taking on paid labour in addition to her household duties to augment the family's savings account. However, few would make a 'total commitment' to an occupation, reflecting the primary importance they attached to their roles as wife and mother.

Most respondents felt that higher education was all very well and good, but not really necessary 'for a girl'. Women would have to leave work at some point

anyway, to bear children (Epstein 1970; Dally 1982; Connolley 1978) and the rewards offered weren't anything to strive towards in most 'feminine' jobs. Generally such jobs require a low degree of commitment, both in training and in sticking around and Myrad and Klein (1970) describe the low status and pay as the "price" of uncertainty regarding their occupational futures" that women must pay. Most only need a little more formal education than the skills learned as little girls in our society. Only twenty of the forty-nine respondents had some sort of post-secondary education: fifteen in the clerical and secretarial trades, one of whom received later on-the-job training as a truck driver; and only five of the forty-nine were semi-professionals, typically in teaching, nursing and social work. The latter five were the only ones with fairly well-paying jobs in Labrador City, and all were married to husbands "making good money": a point of contention after the local layoffs in 1982.

The marginal labour market is structured so that a participant can easily enter and leave as family needs change. One woman described such "work flexibility" as follows:

"...the fact that women can always get a job doing anything. Babysitting or scrubbing floors, they'll take anything that they've got

to. But men are picky: they got to have something they were trained for. And you can't really expect to see a guy down on his knees scrubbing, now can you?"  
(housewife, 24 years old)

While women can get work 'doing anything' and they do, continually entering and leaving the labour force for familial reasons, they are not "fully integrated into the present-day economic system." It is assumed here that Myrdal and Klein (1970) are referring to the role of women in the paid work force: as unpaid domestics, housewives are definitely a very important element in the overall economy of North America.

All of this naturally works to the ultimate advantage of the employer. Since women are willing to take anything for awhile, even if they are overqualified and underpaid; since the supply of such workers is so high (intermittent unskilled labour is much more attractive when the worker only has a few years to work before the next baby or move); and since such workers are virtually impossible to organize, employers dictate the conditions and rewards of the marginal labour market. In the occupational hierarchy, then, the lowest status is accorded to 'feminine' jobs and even at similar degrees of training and experience, male workers would be 'labourers' at much higher pay rates (Kantor 1977; Myrdal and Klein 1970; Chiplin and Sloane 1976).

Another problem with paid work for women is that it contravenes the social dictate that their more important roles are as mothers. 'Good' mothers do not work outside of the home, or they risk subjecting their children to feelings of rejection, of a lack of love, or of insufficient attention from the mother. Myrdal and Klein (1970) discount these notions by citing the harmful effects that an overly doting and too-protective mother can have on a child's psychology and they maintain that the children of working mothers are "...sometimes more alert intellectually and socially independent" (p. 133).

In all, mothers are in quite a double bind! They must face the dilemma of whether to work and the total responsibility for their child's psychological outcome, whether they do work or not. If they do, there's still all the housework to do after 'working' hours and there's the guilt that many feel about leaving the children (Myrdal and Klein 1970).

Nevertheless, women in Labrador City wanted to work. The idea that this is psychologically 'good' for the women themselves is gaining in acceptance after many arguments in its favour, such as the study cited above. Myrdal and Klein maintain that working outside the home gives the individual a "sense of purpose" in a society where human worth is measured by the 'social' (ie.

extra-familial) contribution of each member and where every activity is now 'professionalized' and not considered legitimate unless paid.

In spite of all these considerations, Labrador Cityites were more permanent migrants with social ties in the town and their working involved greater contradictions with their roles as housewives than if they were simply there for a few months. They may indeed have been at it only for the money but for prolonged periods, this might mean abandoning the best interests of homes and families. Still, "you just can't live without two incomes anymore..." and even the most traditional housewives were thinking of alternatives.

How to make housework pay: for pin money at least

The daily housework routine could sometimes turn over a bit of money when women charged others, always those outside the immediate family circle, for their domestic services. Crafts production, babysitting and 'taking in boarders' were all socially approved pastimes for women that posed no threat to their performance within the household. They were making their own pin money, thereby relieving husbands of having to give them a weekly allowance, or by 'keeping themselves busy' were

staving off boredom. Most important to all of the respondents trying out such ventures was the 'freedom' it allowed them. They never had to leave their own homes to work or neglect their families and they had total control over both their workplace and time.

Five women in the sample were babysitters, taking pre-school children into their homes while mothers worked. When asked why, the general reply was:

"Of course it's not much money, but I can use the cash and it gives me something to do. I can't go out to work with my kids so at least I can talk to the mother who comes to get her kid in the evening. So it keeps you occupied and sometimes you can do it as a favour for a friend: that sort of thing."  
(housewife/mother, in Labrador City for 9 years)

Like babysitting, 'taking in boarders' was simply another extension of the domestic role that could be profitable, but only two respondents provided services for anyone outside of their or their husband's extended family and these were the only two who charged enough money to make it a viable operation. For the others fees were set at "whatever it cost to keep them and what they made: no more than \$100 a month, for sure". To establish a lucrative trade, it was necessary to be a bit more demanding:

"I had four boarders last year, for 8 or 9 weeks since they were only here on a short job."



The money really helped then, because I charged them \$100 each per week, food and board and cleaning. Now it cost me about \$100 a week to feed the lot of them and the boys helped with the cleaning so it was okay. I'd probably do it again."  
(waitress, in Labrador City for 14 years)

As noted previously, taking in strange male adults was not looked upon benevolently in Labrador City unless the woman doing so had the defense of a protective husband. For the respondents who did sell their domestic services, it hardly seemed likely that their moral fiber would crumble easily and they were at least "making it pay".

Another popular though not very lucrative source of 'extra money' was in the sale of handicrafts. Craftwork in Labrador City is an individual activity, generally undertaken as a hobby rather than as part of an organized industry. According to the Royal Commission on Labrador (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1974:1019) and verified here, its primary purpose is "...to provide an outlet for sociability (and a) source of recreation for WOMEN not interested in sports-oriented or competitive activities." The emphasis is mine: men were rarely considered as potential 'craftspersons' here.

Night courses are available in just about any 'woman's handicraft' such as knitting, embroidery and needlework, and an amazing number of women took advantage

of them. Duffle work and knitting were the really big items here for the obvious reasons of weather, but also because the work could easily be picked up in a spare moment, between household demands. Both crafts produced some rather fancy winter clothing, heavy sellers when people get sick of wearing the same old things after five months of snow, with another 3 or 4 to go.

The market for something 'handmade and traditional' was also expanding in the late 1970s and everyone wanted to display their 'roots' even if they had to adopt them, having come from Toronto. Knitting is common to all of Newfoundland's mini-cultures but duffle work is a specifically Labradorian craft and it was in high demand here. Historically the craft had been sold by coastal dwellers to the Grenfell Association and NONIA for distribution throughout the province and North America. But few women in Labrador City went through such channels. Local demand was high enough to keep them busy. (everyone here really did want a 'Grenfell coat' before they left) and with the cost of materials and labour that went into each item, it was better to simply take orders from the buyers rather than sell through middlemen;

"Well I just started making duffle coats for a few dollars last winter. A friend who used to do it had back problems and couldn't handle the materials any longer (it's really heavy stuff) so she gave me all the patterns and everything.

I needed to get set up. And she referred people to me. I never advertised at all and I made thirty coats last year and you'd clear between 50 and 75 dollars on an adult's coat.

Now if you made it for the giftshop you'd get 50 dollars a coat straight, regardless of how much embroidery was involved or whatever. They make about 10% sending it to places like St. John's and selling it there. But I heard of one lady who made three hundred dollars for two coats from the Cod Jigger in St. John's: they pay better. I never tried to get into that though, because I can just keep up with the orders from Labrador City." (housewife/mother, in Labrador City for 6 years)

Of the respondents engaged in crafts production, many said they made about six or seven hundred dollars extra each year, not much of an annual income, but good as an 'allowance' and the workmanship itself can often be quite self-satisfying. Only two women here looked at their craftwork as an investment where profits could be realized, though rarely are and none mentioned trying to organize to form a co-operative industry. One pointed out that orders came by word of mouth through family and friends, but she never ran out of work. The problem was keeping the materials at a low cost: once the goods veered away from putting dried flowers in resin and involved expensive equipment such as looms, weaving courses and intricate wools, the producer was simply "donating her time".

Making any profit from crafts production demanded

imagination, and it was much easier here to make money selling the knowledge of the skill rather than the result. Three respondents taught their particular specialty to others under the heading of 'adult education': those interminable night courses offered to northern ladies. There's never a shortage of people seeking a new hobby and turning to the 'professionals' to teach them. Yet, even this was a 'pocket money operation' as one respondent pointed out, and not something that could be called a job in the professional sense. She was thinking of establishing private classes:

"The recreational department called me to teach physical education classes, but for what they're prepared to pay it's not worth it. And the head of that department felt it was too much already: it's about twelve dollars an hour. So one class is an hour long and you teach three a week: you get 36 dollars. For a 'professional' job. Of course, the space is donated to them by the schools and since they don't pay the instructors, they're making a bundle.

The women who do do it usually just want to get out of the house and maybe make a few bucks whereas I'm used to working at health spas, taking blood pressures and measurements, talking nutrition and setting up individual programs: not bend and stretch for one hour a night. Really, I'd like to set up private classes if I had the place to do it."  
(housewife/mother, in Labrador City for 3 years)

For such a small town, there's a surprisingly large number of people thinking along these same lines: wishing to start their own little business without any

heavy loan financing, by capitalizing on what they know best. The spirit of entrepreneurship and the drive to make more money is strong in Labrador City. Wishing, however, is quite distinct from doing and entrepreneurial women are often blocked before they get started. If their homes were financed through IOCC they couldn't use them to set up a business lest their husbands forfeit the company subsidy on the mortgage: they weren't allowed to make a 'profit' on company property. The same rules that applied to renting and boarding people extended to crafts production and babysitting.

Another problem involved size: each operation had to meet municipal by-laws and zoning regulations. Once a certain number of kids (specifically, more than five) are coming in each day, a babysitter is in 'big business' and must work in a commercial area as opposed to a residential one. But the existing nursery schools rarely make provisions for working mothers trying to meet the kindergarten swing shifts and many could see an opportunity in providing daycare for whatever half-days were needed, in their own homes.

The main recourse for women here, then, is to enter the official labour market and that, in itself, involves other problems.

Marginal work: a 'subsidization plan'

The needs that bring Labrador City women to seek work have already been established in other sections of this thesis: they have to have something to do to avoid going "stir-crazy" and "this life" is said to require two income-earners per family. "This life", of course, is that of a consumer society where everyone needs those micro-wave ovens, all-terrain vehicles and home computers in order to say that they are 'really living'.

The consumer society is lauded in some areas as having freed women for work: instant foods, laundering and daycare (ie: television, school) supposedly allow the busy housewife the time she needs to go out and 'fulfill herself' in the workforce, and if she really could get those fulfilling jobs, the argument would be undeniably true. Unfortunately, most housewives are merely freed to enter a 'surplus pool of labour', to use Marxian terms, where workers are ultimately plentiful, cheap and readily accessible and industry can call on them as the need arises (Connolley 1978; Women's Unemployment Study Group 1983).

Unprotected by union contracts or by the existing provincial labour legislation, these workers can be quickly dismissed as soon as the demand for their

services declines or if they fail to be consistently pleasant to all and sundry, regardless of what the customer says or does (Spradley and Mann 1975). One respondent described losing a job after management of the store in which she worked changed hands and the new "didn't like the looks of us. Went out and hired all these young fashion plates after firing the lot of us". She and her fellow workers had to appeal to the labour board simply to get their separation slips (a qualifier for Unemployment Insurance) and the final payments owed them.

Many employers would rather hire part-time workers (less than twenty hours per week), then, than full-time (more than twenty hours per week): they have less of a basis for demanding pay hikes because of the fewer hours worked per week (Armstrong and Armstrong 1978). Extra benefits such as Northern Allowances, medical plans and cost of living pay increases needn't always be paid out to non-unionized employees and UIC, CPP and vacation pays are allotted on a reduced scale. On this basis, two part-time workers can be cheaper to hire than one full-time worker. Moreover, part-time workers in Canada are usually women and wages are further depressed by the abundant numbers available to work at such jobs. With household duties to contend with as well, part-time work

is much more attractive.

Demmler-Kane (1980) painstakingly made the point that part-time work for female migrants is not 'dysfunctional' to either their role as supportive wife or mover since such work can be assumed or abandoned with relative ease. She concludes that women who have migrated more than twice in the past are less likely to be employed, although situational factors, such as the presence of young children, are also involved.

One aspect of the migrations of Demmler-Kane's (1980) (and Martin-Matthew's 1980) respondents is that they moved to the Hamilton-Burlington area of Ontario, which is hardly an isolated northern outpost. So while the considerations of the 'disutilities' of part-time work and the 'traditional' norms of the domestic division of labour might be expected to discourage women from seeking work in Labrador City, they do not. The lack of "anything better to do" almost guarantees that women here will put up with a lot just to get the work.

Labrador Cityites also differ from Demmler-Kane's (1980) respondents in what they have available to them in their respective work markets. The author noted that her respondents had decreasing chances for employment and for better earnings with each successive move but for women



from rural Newfoundland, where there are hardly any jobs available at all, Labrador City offers much more. Just what the available work entailed is the subject of the next section.

#### Types of marginal jobs and associated problems

In spite of receiving fewer benefits from the job, part-time workers still have to display the same work ethics that full-time workers do: loyalty to the employer and corporation; meeting time schedules and being flexible when more time is required from them; presenting a pleasing attitude to customers, etc. Low remuneration is often justified on the basis that the supply of part-time workers is infinite and the educational prerequisites for such jobs are low, a few of the aspects of women's work that are justified in the "dual labour market" argument.

This view sees the labour market as composed of separate segments: the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy or simply primary and secondary jobs where service-oriented work is included in the latter category. Phillips and Phillips (1983), Armstrong and Armstrong (1978), Wilson (1982) and the Women's Unemployment Study Group (1983) all analyse some aspect

of this concept. In short, jobs in the primary sector deal with resource extraction and exploitation and large-scale structural developments. In the secondary sector, work is generally concentrated in manufacturing and the tertiary sector concentrates on service. Primary sector jobs involve high levels of skill and competence in specialized areas and this justifies the high salaries offered. Secondary jobs sometimes demand the same inputs from workers and are well-paid, especially when unionized but tertiary jobs are rarely "organized", skilled or decently-remunerated. "Women's work" falls into this latter category for the various reasons mentioned throughout this chapter. Phillips and Phillips (1983) maintain that adhering to this theory as a principle for keeping the status quo intact allows for "female job ghettos" and discrimination against women in the occupational world. Employers can argue that there's a minimum wage for each sector and offer the very least possible to attract workers. In the tertiary sector, then, where the supply of workers is greatest, workers are often not paid enough to live on. The dual labour market, structured as it now is, entails occupational segregation along gender lines and this can create antagonisms between workers, as will be seen later in this chapter. Many people in Labrador City, both male and female, resented the fact that women were 'allowed'

to work after their marriage (since they hypothetically now had another means of livelihood) and were "taking away the jobs from family men." Few seemed to recognize that there's very little overlap between gender-segregated jobs in the dual labour market.

Marginal jobs are, indeed, classed as unskilled labour and qualifications for entry are low, but it's inevitably women who do qualify: even students who try, have little chance if they are male and have had no previous experience in the work. The talents they lack are those that are socialized into every little girl and only girls (Spradley and Mann 1975). In effect, the work involved is to serve and workers must exhibit their 'feminine' capacity for work flexibility, taking whatever is offered. Women spoke of having to be a "jack of all trades; that way you always have something to fall back on if you can't get the same job again".

Altogether, twenty-three respondents combined marginal, part-time work with housework. They worked as babysitters, store clerks, waitresses, bartenders, cooks, bakers and cake decorators, cafeteria workers, dishwashers and busboys, hotel maids, taxi dispatch workers, receptionists, minor office clerks, one gas station attendant and one security guard, usually at minimum wage or little better. All of these jobs with

few exceptions were routinized and dull. Interestingly enough the one job that demanded the most skill in dealing with human beings, child care, was the lowest paid, rating even less than minimum wage. In a money culture, this is an indication of how little the value placed on housework and mothering is. The going rate in 1982 for domestics of any kind, whether cleaners or child care workers, was usually fifty dollars a week plus room and board for a full forty hour week. That this situation has been legislated in Newfoundland's labour laws is an indication of how low the status of women's work in Newfoundland is even today and of the "dual labour market" at work (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1978; 1980; Women's Unemployment Study Group 1983).

Office clerks ranked the highest on the pay scales, but they were also required to have completed at least a year's training in bookkeeping: they might be able to look forward to 175 dollars for a forty-hour week, about a dollar an hour more than the current minimum wage. By contrast, the going rate for male, unskilled labourers in Labrador City was in the 7.50 to 8 dollar an hour range; almost double the pay of the most educated among the female working class.

Between the highest and lowest paid, marginal workers generally received the minimum 3.50 an hour wage

and all inevitably worked with individuals or small business concerns who were perennially trying to cut their labour costs to meet the profit margins demanded on their bank loans. Employers often expected their employees to be further reimbursed through tips, though these weren't always generous or reliable enough to contribute much to a family budget. And one respondent added, "They don't think they have to pay you anyway, because you're supposed to be so grateful just to get out of the house up here".

Another employer strategy for cutting costs was to hire students as well as women: both were in the non-unionized 'marginal labour' groups, and by 'giving them a break' the small businessman qualified for wage subsidies from Canada Employment. Of course, the workers received little more than work experience since pay was still low and they didn't qualify for Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Women who tried to make a little more money by taking on traditionally 'male-typed' jobs were also sadly disappointed in the north since, with the lack of workers, women had already been admitted into certain fields with a corresponding drop in the salaries offered. The 'feminization' of a particular field involves not only an influx of women but also a lowering of status and

salary (Phillips and Phillips 1983).<sup>22</sup> In Labrador City taxing, acting as security guard, and attending gas pumps are all becoming 'women's work':

"My brother was working in the garage there and he got me the job. So I was really thrilled because it was outdoors and I thought I'd be making more money but really, it was just a bit above the minimum wage. And in the wintertime it can get bitterly cold: the wind and frost is so bad sometimes and you have to dress up so much, that you can hardly move. I practically froze to death that year! But all they ever hired was young girls. The guys coming in liked to have a girl to say 'fill 'er up' to, I guess."

(23 years old, store clerk)

The only strategy to get better pay rates that worked in Labrador City was unionization: an alternative for only a few workers in the government and the mines and retail workers in the three chain stores that had branches in the town. Office workers at the mines and in most small business were salaried employees with 'access to management information' and as such, were largely barred from unionizing. Several respondents pointed out the disadvantages that unprotected workers labour under, ranging from half the pay rates, to long hours, to a lack of extra benefits, to even having to buy a complete work wardrobe oneself; fashion stores rarely provided uniforms.

Most of the respondents who worked were "trying to get something better", or trying to get hired by

unionized stores and institutions but only six had ever been a part of a union. These offered paid sick leave and vacations, guaranteed pay hikes at regular intervals, Northern Allowances, medical plans and best of all, a vote in the work process which meant a little power for those who felt totally powerless. Of course there were very few of these jobs available. Phillips and Phillips (1983) and Wilson (1982) present good descriptions of why women have, in the past, realized very little through the labour movement. One "short" point is that many needed the flexibility of entering and leaving the labour force that marginal jobs offered, as well as the part-time hours (ie. to get the work at home done) and unionized rules meant sticking to a system that wasn't always working in the mother's and housewife's favour.

#### Other problems in the work

Unskilled labour invariably called for manual work, especially in restaurants and bars where service is the key component of the jobs. Beer cases and food trays can be cumbersome and heavy and often there is a heavy cleaning routine incorporated into some part of the shift. Respondents who held such jobs complained of long hours on sore feet and a sore back to look forward to when the work finally ended. The latter physical

complaint was true for the completely sedentary jobs as well, such as in office work where the women work in the same position day after day and for hours on end. And the hours were indeed long: many respondents described working during lunch hours and after scheduled shifts to meet a deadline, but at no extra pay. Others remembered months at a time when the office would be understaffed and they had to perform the work of three people for the same pay. All of these respondents could describe the mental effects of fatigue along with the physical.

Marginal jobs are often comprised of a never-ending mountain of tasks set by employers who were only interested in 'maximizing their labour dollar'. One respondent, who couldn't figure out a way out of her fast-food outlet job without getting fired (it's difficult then to get Unemployment Insurance) actually cut herself so badly that the management laid her off, fearing that they would have to pay compensation. Another had been given so many different tasks in her clerical office job that she soon found she was "running the whole show" herself and her boss couldn't afford to let her go. Still, it took her a year and a half to get up enough nerve to ask for a better-than-minimum-wage.

Worker harassment was another common complaint among the female workers here. Being rather low on the mini-



scale of power at the workplace, marginal and female workers in general were often at the mercy of those above them (Spradley and Mann 1975). Gutek (1985) sees this power relationship at work as a 'feminist' perspective on sexual harassment and gives a comprehensive account of other factors, such as sex-role stereotyping and its effects in the workplace. One respondent here described just how miserable such a job could be:

"There was the most disgusting man at the real estate company where I was a receptionist, sitting about a foot away from my desk. Whenever the phone would ring he'd tell me to buzz him, when I could have just reached over! And in front of a room full of strangers he would give me instructions like a child: how to pick up the phone; how to say hello; things like that. And then he'd make all these really sick remarks about me and my love life sort of thing. Would I like him to show me how to do that too?

I couldn't stand being around him and I almost had a nervous break-down worrying about what he'd say next. I really hated him."  
(19 years old, receptionist)

Similarly another respondent remembered the days when she was a single working girl and "thanked (her) lucky stars they were over!" Her boss went to the trouble of posing obscenely in front of her desk while she worked and playing little poking games with office paraphernalia until even the much-needed money was no longer worth it for her and she quit, getting married soon after. She has never wanted to return to work

since, though' would if she had to.

#### Getting a 'real' job

Getting any job in 1982 was difficult enough, let alone 'hooking into' a unionized position that paid well. The Labrador City respondents pointed out that the situation seemed especially hopeless here since the entire labour history of the town incorporated a hiring system quite similar to nepotism: from its inception to at least the early 1980's, application forms for working at IQCC always included a space for listing "friends and relatives already working here". Preference was to be given to the families of loyal employees and this became a rather acute problem in 1982 with lay-offs and rising unemployment. Moreover, the practice extended far beyond the mining companies into every little small concern in the area: it was simply better business hiring someone who is known to an employee and it keeps the employees happy. Unfortunately, it didn't do much for the qualified unemployed who could never seem to get a break.

Job applications for even low-paying\* marginal jobs could number in the eighties and nineties and women were trying to think of new ways to make themselves more appealing on the job market. The common ploy of

enrolling in as many trades as possible (therefore being able to do anything) was transforming itself into learning as many of the new technologies as possible, particularly with regard to computerized office systems. Another coveted qualification was the ability to speak French, particularly here where Quebec is so close and so closely dealt with. IOCC always hired bilingual workers first and gave further credence to its preference for family by offering French courses literally free of charge to any relative of an IOCC employee who wished to take advantage of them. These students were also placed on a preference list for hiring after they had successfully completed the course.

Another option women had to make themselves more saleable on the job market was to take advantage of the Canada Employment training programs for non-traditional types of work, generally in the trades. Two respondents actually did enroll in these, one becoming a machinist and the other a heavy-equipment operator. But if work was scarce in the traditionally female, marginal jobs it required heroic efforts to get and keep a job in these relatively lucrative 'masculine' fields. The federal government was actually offering wage supplements to employers who would hire these 'disadvantaged employees', to little avail; one respondent described how she felt

discrimination not merely from the men who hired her, but from their female secretaries, like one who refused to pass on her messages whenever she phoned and 'lost' her applications rather than giving them to the boss for approval. Epstein (1970) and Kantor (1977) note similar interactions among women in "traditional" and "non-traditional" fields, and several of the following problems with women's work in Labrador City were noted in their works as well.

The response of the secretary above was characteristic of quite a few of the respondents themselves who felt it was unfair that women should be hired alongside their husbands. One reason was that they were supposedly "taking away jobs from the men in these times when jobs are so hard for them to get." Implicitly, men deserve the work more since they supposedly support their families alone. One respondent in a male job was supporting her family alone, as were several in traditionally female jobs, though this was rarely given any explicit acknowledgement.

Another common notion expressed about women getting jobs in all-male fields was that they took "unfair advantage" in getting them. Many are automatically condemned for using feminine wiles to seduce potential bosses and get hired or promoted. Every woman that had

been mentioned as working in these areas in Labrador City 1982 stood accused of this and one respondent actually described what it was like to be so-treated. She had been re-hired with the same company she left after giving birth and had a great deal of both experience and training in her field. Still:

"Everyone was right peevisish around me- or sheepish, until I finally asked one of the guys what the hell was going on. He said, 'Well you're sure of your job, with (the foreman) demanding that you get back on. He must have liked the way only you could do things.' So what can you do? You have to know them to get on and if you know them at all, you're accused of having affairs just to get the job!" (unemployed truck driver, in Labrador City for 15 years)

Over the previous five or six years more women had been hired in the Labrador City mines, and local gossip found this fertile ground. These few token females in traditionally male fields were suspect, and not merely of sexual maneuvering with superiors. Their supposed wild sexual abandon during coffee or lunch breaks, hypothetically caused a great loss in labour productivity to the company. Gutek (1985) maintains that the occurrences of such acts are actually quite rare in the North American workplace.

One oft-cited example in Labrador City was of a rather rotound female labourer who had supposedly carried out scores of sexual contacts with all and sundry among

various imposing pieces of processing machinery and who had supposedly been witnessed by others on several occasions. The story is unlikely: the logistics of the situation would be difficult enough, and having been 'caught', the participants would have undoubtedly been fired under the company's safety regulations. Nevertheless at least four respondents as well as several non-respondents repeated this gossip, giving spouses as their sources. Of course husbands would end each story by abhorring such 'unladylike behaviour' and expressing gratitude that their wives weren't exposed to these 'bad examples' of femininity.

While such stories are funny enough in themselves, they can have tragic consequences for the subjects involved. One respondent found that the wives of her co-workers found her so threatening to their marriages that they would have nothing to do with her at all and stories like the one above were beginning to be spread about her. To minimize such public scrutiny and speculation, she literally kept out of sight, socializing only with family and friends. Another woman was so afraid of incurring similar stories about herself that she refused to have anything whatever to do with her fellow, male workers, even to the point of not acknowledging them and taking coffee breaks by herself.

Such forms of sexual harassment are common, and even likely to occur to women working in 'traditionally male' jobs (Schroedel 1985). Gutek (1985) blames this on a "sex-role spillover" from private life and into the job. Male-typed jobs often contain elements of the traditional male sex role ie. where the male is characterized as sexually aggressive. Men often talk of and compare their sexual activities at work and if so, are also likely to use the workplace as "... (a place for an) opportunity to approach women in a sexual manner." In keeping with sex-roles, they may even see the one or two 'token' females at work as more sexually aggressive themselves because they have taken male-typed jobs and they expect such behaviour from these women.

There are other, though less derogatory implications attached to women in 'masculine' positions all of which serve to describe them as aberrants, part of the "stresses of tokenism," according to Kantor (1977). Gutek (1985) and Lopata (1971) also remarked on this tendency. Some even expressed fears that too many of these women would undermine the social fabric of their town, if not of modern civilization. Women with careers were often described as "trying to be like a man": logically she cannot work in a man's job and be a woman too since she'd "... just be covered in dirt and filth and

sweat all day long!" Wilson (1982) offers an excellent discussion on such ideological structures in everyday life that act as social controls on women working.

The original female 'sod-busters' in Labrador City included a few of such successful careerists and while admired, there was a concurrent note of derision that they had behaved in such an unfeminine manner to 'get ahead'.<sup>23</sup> They were never acknowledged as attractive to men in any way at all and descriptions usually highlighted their idiosyncrasies:

"She's never been married and she's up around fifty years old now, but they say she don't like anyone bothering her. Lives by herself in the woods and won't come out for anything, not even groceries. She just calls up one of her men and has them bring out whatever it is she needs. She really likes her privacy: has dogs guarding the property so no one gets in; no telephones, so you have to reach her by radio and she doesn't have to answer to see who it is calling; and of course she has her 'mechanic' there, or she calls him that and he screens whoever else might get by. Everyone here knows him- they're really lovers, but she can't afford to admit that because people around here would tear her to shreds, talking about her if she did.

But she's really good at her business, and really smart- she can talk about any subject on earth. My husband used to work with her and conversations he'd come home and tell me about! Course she has to be like that to have gotten this far: always in control. The competition can't even touch her or think of ways to get ahead of her because she thinks ahead of them and she's there waiting for them. She makes sure that things run her way. I don't know of any woman who could build up what she did- and



sometimes you wonder if she isn't one of those who, you know, have more male hormones than female, or whatever."  
(housewife/mother, in Labrador City for 16 years)

These women commanded respect for their business acumen and tenacity in the north but they were also notably "hard to get along with", "masculine", and as such aberrant. They did nothing to uphold the moral and social fiber of the community, the role of women as wives and mothers at home and consequently were said to be treading on male territory without good cause. If it looked like they might be 'rolling in money', such people had an aura of decadence and of enjoying themselves while their hard-working counter-parts were at home where they belonged, raising the kids and packing lunches for their even harder-working husbands.

Yet new principles of non-discrimination are in place and many more women are looking for well-paying jobs, if not in the non-traditional fields, then surely in their own (Batten et al. 1974). 'Feminized' work no longer must mean that the wage remains below all other types. Of the forty-nine respondents, nine had or were going back to well-paying positions and five of these were in almost exclusively female fields such as elementary school-teaching, social work, nursing and clerical work. Four were in what traditionally would

have been male positions as a truck driver, plant mechanic, restaurant manager and tourist camp manager.

The latter two workers were exceptional in that they were older women who had climbed their way into these positions without the educational requisites that younger workers seemed to have and at a time when women in these fields were as scarce as male nurses. Both had stories of conflicts with their fellow workers and of how arduous the climb had been, but they were more pleased with their current lines of work than with any others they had undertaken.

Among the younger semi-professionals in feminine fields the jobs were even more lucrative and secure because their employers were usually government or bureaucratic corporations, which are heavily unionized and at their level of education and training, they could command more. In addition, semi-professionals were always high in demand in Labrador City and anyone with a degree, until recently, could easily pick up work here, on their own terms.

Unfortunately, most of the respondents had not prepared themselves to work in these areas, and to earn a living at all they had to put up with the problems of women in the lower echelons of the occupational scale:

low status, power and pay and the subsequent dilemmas of not having enough money to pay for child care, or of having to put up with a fragmented routine day after day, or even difficulty in getting a job in the first place when hundreds of others with similar qualifications were applying.

The greatest obstacle in women's work, though, is that all of these 'problems' usually buttress the argument that women should stay in the home, and because of this, many do or fail to upgrade themselves to the degree necessary to get anything better. Labrador City is still very much a community of the traditional family where Mom is 'simply' 'there' in a passive sense.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings of the 1982 Labrador City fieldwork and to present conclusions. For the sake of consistency, each chapter will be dealt with in turn, excluding the literature review since most of the works it covers turn up later in the thesis.

To begin at chapter two, the fieldwork methods were reviewed and the sample's 'representativeness' was established as far as can be when comparing it with statistical data from the 1980 Canadian census. To obtain the necessary data for the Labrador City case, a 'formal' questionnaire was administered to respondents at the beginning of each interview. This material, however, was not used very extensively throughout the body of the thesis.

What was left of the interview time was spent in an open-ended discussion session with each respondent in accordance with the ethnomethodological approach. This part of the research was quite successful, both in terms of the response that the approach engendered and of the quality and quantity of information subsequently gathered. Most importantly, respondents were able to describe their lives in their own words and not in any

terms categorically imposed on them.

Open-ended discussions were carried out in such a way as to allow these female respondents free rein in defining the topics to be covered. This procedure has been recommended by feminists concerned with avoiding the pitfalls of androcentric research. Respondents' concerns as women were foremost in this thesis. Chapters four to seven were derived from these discussions and they comprise a descriptive ethnographic study in what it is like to have migrated as a woman to a very male-centered single-industry town.

The setting of the fieldwork and the town's history were the subjects of chapter three. Labrador City is a single-industry town built in the 1950's by IOCC (with some provincial assistance) expressly to house its workers. It grew under the ethos of modernization in Newfoundland where efforts were being made to concentrate populations and build up the local supplies of labour for large-scale industrial projects. The provincial government of the 1950's was quite amenable to IOCC's proposals to develop Labrador City and it offered such investment incentives as land grants, few royalties or taxes demanded from the company, infrastructural development of the town, and so on.

The early years of Labrador City's development parallel the stages of growth that Lucas (1971) described for single-industry towns and IOCC undertook many of the same labour relations strategies that other companies noted in that work did. These included offering certain benefits to workers to attract and keep them in Labrador City, but it also included the establishment of a rigid occupational and social hierarchy as is noted in Foote (1979). Labour-management relations were anything but 'smooth' and strategies for reducing worker militancy, noted by both Lucas (1971) and Grieco (1981), were in evidence here as well.

One of the biggest problems IOCC faced was how to keep a steady and reliable workforce 'at home' in Labrador City and this is where the women came in. Or rather, were enticed to move in by the abundant facilities the company offered for family life (though not for women themselves, as will be seen). A few respondents were among these first women in and their descriptions form the latter part of this chapter. These centered on the former female staffhouse, on how they were treated by the primarily male populace in Labrador City and on the changes in housing and facilities that grew up over the years.

There was a marked lack of very much positive female 'folklore' or many 'colourful' characters in these discussions. Women that were spoken of in this vein were usually treading on 'male territory' in some way or another and they were socially outcast for doing so. This dearth of accepted female entrepreneurs and adventurers could be a reflection of the very colourless position of women in Labrador City and the strict social control exerted on them. As noted in Luxton (1980; 1983), Martin-Matthews (1980), Demmler-Kane (1980) and Lofland (1975) women are often viewed as simply another aspect of the setting rather than as active participants, both within social research and daily life. Subscribing to this norm, women themselves may tend to denigrate their activities and describe them as unimportant. If a more positive feminist perspective could be taken, it would be obvious that women play very crucial roles in their families' maintenance and survival and in the development of the north.

Chapter four dealt with the experiences of moving and the first impressions of Labrador City that respondents had. As in many of the works cited, women here were generally happier with their move if they had a pre-established network of family and friends in Labrador City, if they knew something of the place before coming

and if they were active in making the decision to come here. First impressions of Labrador City were important in that they lingered far into the first year or two of residence here. Martin-Matthews (1980), Demmler-Kane (1980), Jones (1973) and Grieco (1981) were pertinent readings to this section.

Women in Labrador City realized few financial or careerist rewards from moving while their husbands did and this, combined with the "Newfie" tendency to keep wives from working (noted in Martin-Matthews 1977), probably served to reinforce the traditional stereotype of women as economically dependent wives. This corroborates evidence in the works cited above as well.

Martin-Matthews (1977) also speculated on the 'powerlessness' of wives in the migration process and Jones (1973) noted a similar finding in looking at the degrees of input that women had in making the decision to move. Those women who did 'have a say' were generally happier with their move and this was the case in Labrador City as well. Martin-Matthews (1980) found that wives who were moving because their spouses were unemployed at home, rather than for a spouse's 'career advancement' within a company, felt that they had a more active role in the decision-making. This also was true in Labrador City simply because, as respondents said, they had no



other choice. Like Martin-Matthews' respondents, they were relieved that at least someone in the family had a paying job.

Demmler-Kane (1980) noted the stresses that women undergo when they must move a household alone and a few of the respondents did in Labrador City as well, though this wasn't an issue with most. As in studies by Jones (1973) and Lopata (1971), though, they did see themselves as the 'key' to a successful move for the family. The difference between Demmler-Kane's study and the fieldwork here is that the far greater majority of respondents here had extensive networks of family and friends to give material and emotional assistance and to provide some continuity in their lives.

This is important in many works in migration studies: notably, Martin-Matthews (1980); McAllister et. al. (1973); Tilly and Brown (1967); Grieco (1981). In the latter two works, and in Labrador City, family bonds actually facilitated migration rather than hindered it and they incorporated an ethos of materialism. As Martin-Matthews (1977) suggests, the receiving kin network can constitute a resource for an otherwise powerless wife if the kin are hers instead of her husband's. This is a direct result of the dependence that new arrivals so often have on extended kin in these

cases.

There were, however, eleven Labrador City respondents who did express sentiments similar to those of Demmler-Kane's middle-class respondents, maintaining that they had been freed from their family bonds by their mobility. They believed in trying to 'get ahead' on their own with no one to be 'indebted to' later and in making new friends at their destination rather than carrying the old along with them.

The attractions that women found in living in Labrador City were the topics covered in chapter five and these were quite situation-specific, as were the issues in chapter six. Consequently, there were few precedents for comparisons in the literature reviewed. The 'attractions' cited were limited to the housing offered and the quality of life for children in Labrador City.

Female-oriented entertainments were few enough but they were mentioned in this chapter as part of the process that kept women from leaving. In effect, television viewing was the most oft-cited form of entertainment and its messages were all directed at shaping the viewer to adhere to a consumer ideology. For many respondents, the only way to do this was to stay in Labrador City. Their spouses often couldn't make such

'good' money at home. Television, too, was extremely important as an imaginary escape route from the trials of living in the north and respondents argued vehemently over their rights to 'good, American' viewing.

The section on housing noted the higher standards enjoyed here in comparison to what was available "back home" in the smaller outports of Newfoundland and respondents often still remembered what it was like. As in Lucas' study (1971), the company sold its houses fairly cheaply and with subsidizations but only certain of its employees could qualify as 'homeowners'. These were inevitably men with families since their responsibilities ensured their reliability as workers. Women, and particularly single women, were effectively (though not overtly) banned from property-ownership in the early years and this is still true in cases of those who need subsidizations today, after the real estate market of Labrador City had "opened up".

In addition to this, and again as in Lucas (1971), neither workers nor their wives were allowed to make a profit from the sale of a company home or from its use while they lived in it. This effectively prohibited home-based, income-generating activities that housewives might engage in such as babysitting, letting out rooms and the like. Of course, some did undertake such

activities since there was no specific ban, but many did not for fear of violating the company's homeownership stipulations. Through this, wives were kept in their place of economic dependency and this, inadvertently, may have served the company's interests by making male income earning all-important.

Lastly, respondents who were mothers justified their staying in Labrador City on the basis of its benefits for their children. IOCC had installed and subsidized one of the best educational systems in Newfoundland and all types of extra-curricular activities were offered to children as well. Moreover, parents could give their kids more material things than they could have 'back home' simply because they had more money now and this was very important to quite a few respondents.

Mothers were strong adherents to the adage that "good mothers will put up with anything for the sake of the kids", partly through their ideological beliefs but also partly because this was virtually the only viable role they had in Labrador City. Those who worked outside the home had to deal with the dilemma of whether their kids were suffering by their absence, a long-standing argument among parents here.

Some mothers, though, expressed fears for the future

of their children vis a vis their ability to get and keep a job here, or anywhere, and their isolation from the family "back home". These, of course, were remarkably similar to the fears they had for their own futures in 1982, the first year of massive lay-offs in what had once been a promising and prosperous mining town.

If the attractions of Labrador City for women were qualified by other circumstances, the problems that respondents found here certainly weren't. Chapter six enumerated both the physical and the intangible aspects of life in this northern town that were particularly difficult.

Physical complaints were common to everyone living in Labrador City; its long, cold winters and geographical isolation and inaccessibility kept many housebound for much of the year. They felt 'trapped' here with little access to the seats of federal and provincial power that affected their lives. Housewives, though, were particularly subject to these adverse effects, having no outside job to keep them 'busy' and even less financial power than men with which to ameliorate their situation.

The size of the town was also a problem for some respondents, though not all. What most notably came out of this was the extensive social control that local

hierarchies could exert when "everyone knows everyone else". This, in itself, was a problem for anyone who tended to deviate from the 'norms' established for married women i.e. as wives and mothers. Another problem was the high population turnover in this northern single-industry town, as it wreaked havoc on friendships and professional services, and still another were the inflated prices charged for goods. These were justified on the basis of high transport costs, but it was obvious that monopolies on trade held by some merchants were used to fullest advantage.

The difficulties that were specific to women in Labrador City were enumerated in the latter sections of this chapter and these pertained to marriage and divorce, being single, the local standards of femininity and the effects of a pornographic image of women and finally, the tangible effects of all of these.

The 'ideals of womanhood' in Labrador City, then, largely centered along 'traditional' lines where women are defined by their relations to men. Some younger women were delaying motherhood and trying to establish themselves in careers, but these were few. Most had little alternative but to comply with the 'norms' since negative sanctions through gossip against women who were 'different' in any way were strong and clear. Moreover,

the economic trials of single and divorced women were well-known and this, with the predominant underemployment of all women, was an inhibiting factor in 'choosing' any alternatives to the norm. This situation is discussed further in chapter seven. The section on pornography establishes the view of women that many men in Labrador City have and this exasperates the level of social controls on women not to be 'bad'.

Depression, drug dependency, gambling and suicide were all avenues of escape in Labrador City although only a handful of the respondents voiced any serious concerns over these problems for themselves. All considered these to be widespread social problems, though, and the greater majority hinted that they had had at least a few bouts of depression over the years. One or two found this particularly worrisome but most "got through it all" with the help of family, friends and special interest groups.

Considering their circumstances and all of the disincentives these respondents had for staying in Labrador City, their attempts at adjusting for their families' sakes, if not for their own, were admirable. A prevalent philosophy during the time of the fieldwork was to "make the best of it here, make the bucks, and leave". This philosophy was more appropriate for men than for women in Labrador City.

Finally chapter seven focused on women's work and began with a short history of housewifery, a common occupation among respondents. Sources included Oakley (1974); Shorter (1977); Morgan (1985); and Wilson (1982). This section looked at the family role of women as economic producers in full partnership with their spouses and its devolution to that of servitor and economic dependent with industrialization. A model of ideological change which accompanied this economic transformation, (or facilitated it in Shorter's 1977 and Lopata's 1971 perspectives) was also noted. Shorter maintained that housewifery as a woman's sole occupation within a nuclear family arose as a product of 'romanticism' and it served to 'better' the woman's lot in life. The author failed to stress the betterment in the lives of men that this also (or primarily, depending, again, on the point of view) engendered.

This historical brief serves to describe the devalued status that housewifery has in today's society. Women in Labrador City were quite defensive about being housewives, while at the same time, they supported the role as an ideal for women. Chesler and Goodman (1976), Myrdal and Klein (1970); Wilson (1982); Lopata (1981); Luxton (1980; 1983); Oakley (1974; 1974) all discuss the housewife's role and the alternatives open to women in



the work world which, taken together, can present quite a "confusing array of options".

About housewifery itself, Oakley (1974; 1974) and Myrdal and Klein (1970) were the most definitive. These found that housewives worked long hours, were dissatisfied with the actual tasks of housework and with its low social status, found the work monotonous and held themselves in low self-esteem vis a vis working women. This was all true to some extent in Labrador City, although not to such a disparaging degree. Housewifery was, after all, a traditional ideal here.

In addition to this, and as among Luxton's (1980) respondents, traditional 'norms' were flexible when economic needs dictated. Women often did work outside the home and justified this on various grounds. Their values were changing to include a new work ethic for women, at least while they were 'away from home' (ie. in most instances, 'home' being on the island of Newfoundland). However, there were few opportunities to work for women in Labrador City.

The section immediately following the description of housewifery dealt with those activities undertaken by housewives to earn some money while staying home. These were far from lucrative.

Jobs in the local market that are actually available to women were the topics of the next section and these were usually in the 'tertiary' sector. The "dual labour market model" described by Wilson (1982); Armstrong and Armstrong (1978); and Phillips and Phillips (1983) was of great value in the Labrador City case. Men here generally worked in the high-paying jobs at IOCC while women 'filled in' the lower-paid clerical and service work, defined as semi- or unskilled. This work was often routinized, dull, manual labour and had long hours if full-time. A few previously 'male' jobs were 'feminized' in Labrador City, such as taxiing and pumping gas, but these were always at the low end of the worker pay hierarchies.

In spite of all this, and as also noted by Demmler-Kane (1980) and Martin-Matthews (1980), Labrador City respondents preferred such jobs because they were easy to 'pick up' or leave should their other responsibilities dictate. These other duties were the demands of child-rearing, housework and moving for the sake of the husband's career if asked.

The interviews of the nine respondents with well-paying career-oriented jobs were specifically used in the final section of this chapter on the availability of such work to women here. It had been previously noted that

women generally show a lack of preparation in specialized skills, preferring to 'take any kind of job' as it comes along. The unskilled work that is offered them is more convenient as it fits with their role as housewives, but this can lead to a dangerous self-fulfilling prophecy. The more complacent women are with their place in the dual labour market, the less likely this is to change.

There were external obstacles to their finding 'good' jobs in Labrador City, as well. Some respondents noted the nepotic hiring system at IOCC which effectively discriminated against women applying for traditionally male-defined jobs, though not overtly. There were additional pressures on women in these fields not to work, which came from family and friends after listening to the local gossip: these workers were thought to be 'bad examples' of womanhood here. Many of the problems that these women faced at work, whether it was in a traditionally male field or not, served to underscore the belief that a woman's place is still in the home, particularly when there are men out there (implicitly more deserving) who could not find work.

Though I had initially approached this study with an interest in the problems faced by women migrants to the north, I was not prepared for the fierceness of their dislike for their new home nor, given the unhappiness

which they articulated, would I have expected them to stay as long as they did. Thus, in the course of working on this thesis, I have come to appreciate, far more than I did before, the human costs which are levied on some people by our economy as well as the active efforts which people make to adapt to new situations, making the best of what life has afforded them.

My respondents were acutely conscious of the fact that they had but one life to lead and that, in the words of one of them, "You never get those years back". The chance to learn more of lives lived with such consciousness could not help but leave a deep impression upon me. As a student of sociology I believe I have also learned some lessons which can be generalized. Though expecting women to have employment difficulties after migration to a mining town, I was not prepared for the actual paucity of work opportunity available to them. Given the prevalent public definition of our period as one of increasing employment opportunity for women, I think I have a new sense of the wide range of experience afforded by the "same" society and culture. In this, as in other regards, I have a new respect for the importance of context in understanding social process. I was struck, for example, by the differences between the experiences of female migrants to Ontario as described in

other literature and those of my own respondents.

My conviction of the importance of looking at social processes from the different perspectives of all those affected by them was strengthened as well. I was familiar with feminist critiques of social science which stressed the importance of looking at social life from a woman-focused as well as from a male point of view. Reading male-focused descriptions of single-industry towns, however acute and perceptive, and simultaneously immersing myself in the experience of my women informants has left me with a vivid sense of the engendered aspects of social life. In the future in reading a description of any town, social setting, or social process I will not forget to ask "Whose experience is described here? His or hers?" In the case of migration literature, the significant question is "Whose migration is described or planned here? His or hers?"

FOOTNOTES

- 1) This has been a long-standing and vocal complaint on the part of the local unions over the years and reference to it was made by R. Aubot, the union official interviewed during this fieldwork. The issue was also a term of reference for the Industrial Commission of Inquiry into Employment Problems in the Labrador City/ Wabush area, appointed in 1977 under Section 54 of the Labour Relations Act. Its recommendations included a work-permit system to regulate hiring in Labrador City by Quebec contractors (ie. more Newfoundlanders would get jobs) and a stipulation that Newfoundland-made goods be used wherever possible in the iron-pelletizing process. These were instituted to some extent, although not to the union's full satisfaction.
  
- 2) In 1958, IOCC wage-labourers received from \$1.78 per hour for labourers to \$2.78 per hour for shovel operators. IOCC published a pamphlet entitled "Labrador's Red Gold" in that year and in it, stressed that overtime rates were available after 48 hours per week and that a full \$10,000,000.00 had been paid out in wages and salaries to "employees from Newfoundland from the start of the IOC project to the end of 1957". Room and plenty of board was available in the bunkhouses for \$90.00 a month.

The minimum wage for the same year and until 1963 in Newfoundland was fifty cents an hour for males 17 years of age and older, thirty-five cents an hour for females in the same category (Newfoundland and Labrador Non-Union Labour Standards Board).

The Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador (1974: 1046-1048) began its section on subsidies paid to northern workers with a warning that none are standardized but northern employers generally pay them as a matter of precedent. This seems to impute a generosity above and beyond the legal obligations of employers.

Actually, a cost of living differential (in recognition of the higher cost of living in Labrador and of its remoteness) and a northern allowance are part of the wage negotiations carried out by the

United Steelworkers of America for its Labrador City members.

Other components of the subsidization package that IOCC first offered its workers were reviewed in the Northern Miner (1962) and included: 700 houses built by the company to be sold to its workers with 70 more projected for the end of that year; "full water and sewage facilities" but no landscaping or sidewalks yet; and the company's freight and travel plans whereby workers could ship their cars in from Sept Iles free of charge on the Quebec-North Shore Railway and the company would also allow workers use of the company plane for free.

- 3) An article in the Northern Miner (1962) reviewed the official opening of the Carol Project (IOCC-Labrador City) and quoted the current premier of Newfoundland as he predicted that 15,000 workers would soon be working in Labrador City, supporting a local population of 100,000 people. In 1972, the whole of Labrador North, South and West did not have more than 15,000 people in total and this was at a peak population period.
- 4) In his study of the rapid industrialization of Port Hawkesbury, Foote (1979) noted that with it came new zoning regulations (company-initiated) and a sub-development of 'superior quality' housing reserved for management personnel. This served to maintain their elevated work status in the community, to set them apart from the local (translate: 'working') people and to keep them comfortable and unwilling to move on.
- 5) Specifically, these would be the values and mores of an industrial, achievement-oriented society which are inapplicable in an economically underdeveloped system like Newfoundland's. Newfoundlanders are often trained in jobs and skills that simply aren't needed in their local labour markets (eg: twenty welders living in a small outport fishing community). They have few skills to use in coping with the economic problems of their areas and with such inappropriate training as they have had, they will have to migrate to the 'mainland' to get work (Wadel 1969; Mann 1970; Herrick 1968).
- 6) That shortcoming only became apparent as this work neared completion. Martin-Matthews' (1980) thesis is widely applicable in the Labrador City case

though this fieldwork provided no material on 'multiple status passages'. Martin-Matthews used this concept to describe the other conditions in their lives that can affect the migrations of women.

- 7) In a great deal of literature on the history of the family, the forces of industrialization and modernity have reputedly 'destroyed' the extended family in various ways, replacing it in popularity with the nuclear family unit (Morgan 1986; Shorter 1977; Oakley 1974; Dally 1982). There is a wide-ranging dispute over the exact causes of such a change, whether economic or ideological, and this thesis is not equipped to argue such points. However, it can be used to show that the extended family is not 'dead' or even dysfunctional in modern life, at least for the Labrador City respondents in this fieldwork. Extended family ties were an important source of material and non-material aid in their mobility.

Morgan's (1986) 'household economics approach' can best describe the family that hasn't eliminated all of its extended kin to become as individualistic (and as mobile) as possible. Instead, norms have changed because of structural exigencies: While there is now more emphasis on the advancement of the individual worker and his immediate family than there was in times of community co-operative production, there are some vestiges of the old solidarity left among those who still need it. In Labrador City, networks of kin were used by respondents as a resource and most expected some form of assistance when they needed it. They also expected that they would provide in a like manner should anyone ask the same of them. Nevertheless, there were a few who preferred to adhere to the strictly individualist norms of privacy which excluded contact and help among kin and maintained the nuclear family in its ideal, atomic form.

- 8) Lopata (1971:364-5) cautions against such a "negative" stereotype where American homes are described as "... devoid of all grace.." and are "... identical units in mass-produced suburbs containing people stamped in the same mold." She maintains that such an attitude would predispose the reader to the belief that those who stay in such homes most often, housewives, are also unidimensional and uninteresting which is far from true.



Undeniably there is a danger of such a misinterpretation, but living in "identical units" does preclude a certain lifestyle. For example, there is little room here for asserting one's individuality by arranging one's own living space. There is also the social expectation that suburban houses display the ideals of order and cleanliness that are promoted through the media (Ewen 1976). The options of 'multidimensionality' in their daily comings and goings and of solving daily problems through co-operative efforts with other housewives (Lopata 1971) are fairly well closed to those women who spend their lives in the suburban house that Hayden (1981) describes: a separate and self-contained unit designed to isolate each family from all the others.

- 9) Hayden (1981:283) notes that the sentiments of "the National Civic Federation of America, an association dedicated to amiable settlements of conflicts between capital and labour" supported home ownership among workers and a "strategy of offering white male skilled workers small suburban homes, to be purchased on home mortgages as a way of achieving industrial order". She goes on to speculate that this was meant to "foster a stable and conservative habit" since the worker/homeowner is obliged to continue working for a wage as long as he is in debt.

These views of the 1920's were still strong in the 1960's. One of IOCC's principals in labour relations was to "supply "good homes (to) make contented workers".

- 10) Hayden (1981:22ff.) looks at the historical development of this suburban ideal (footnote 9 above) from its inception in the 1920's and stimulated by "builders, bankers and manufacturers". From this the single-family home on its own landscaped lot (to ensure privacy) became an ideal for all working and middle-class people to strive towards. It was to be a spacious house for the wife to 'manage' and lots of space for the kids to grow up in, unhampered by the evils that might befall them in crowded urban centers. Most of Hayden's work looks at the ineptitudes, and feminist attempts at reform, in the design of such housing over the past century and a half.

- 11) Oakley (1974) used the number of homemaking aids possessed by respondents in her sample as an index of whether housework could become more satisfying or easier. She found that there was no relationship with the number of such aids and the level of satisfaction with housework.

Culturally stimulated wants, then, really are superficial. Still, as Ewen (1976) and Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1986) note, American suburban housewives (and undoubtedly Canadian as well) are trained through the media and the ethics of materialism to 'need' entirely superfluous items, even though these may actually contribute little to the housework.

- 12) Leiss et. al. (1986:29ff.) note that advertising encourages people to think of themselves as consumers having fun rather than as producers working hard. Their argument is that this "...transmit(s) the status quo and its exploitative social relations in favour of those already with economic power". In effect, by buying and going into debt, workers must keep working: they buy because they want to believe that there might be some truth to the fact that a certain product will be fun to have.

The authors also note that through conspicuous consumption people are not only fulfilling their immediate needs but they are also placed "at some known point in the set of social interactions whereby persons are judged to be more or less successful" (p.247-8). Television and its advertising provides information as to what the goods are and the degree of "success" that imputedly can be achieved by owning them.

- 13) This guilt is a double-edged sword. According to Chesler and Goodman (1976); Wilson (1982); Oakley (1974) society places almost no monetary value on mothering and housework and very little on women's work in tertiary jobs outside the home. On the one hand, women must work if they wish to raise their standard of living or even just meet living expenses while on the other hand, 'good' mothers stay home. Women are expected to feel guilty no matter what they do. They are inadequately supporting their children by staying at home and denying them a full-time mother by leaving for work every day.

- 14) However, in dedicating its publication, "Labrador's Red Gold" (1958) to "those sturdy Newfoundlanders who helped to build (and are working in) the iron ore empire of the north" IOCC also expressed gratitude "to their wives and families who have to share temporarily some measure of loneliness for the rewards of a good livelihood".

The trade-off of loneliness for livelihood is obviously recognized here, though not the fact that women bear the brunt of its burdens.

- 15) Mulrooney was particularly unpopular by 1984 when it was evident that during his term as IOCC president and immediately before his election as prime-minister of Canada he had initiated a particularly good settlement package for Schefferville workers (neighbours to his own riding) after their mine had closed. The Report of the Task Force to Enquire into the Socio-Economic Problems in Labrador West (1983) detailed this package and showed that little had then been proffered to the Labrador City workers at the time. Full-time Schefferville workers received an average of \$16,400 each in separation pay as well as from vacation pay, vacation bonuses, company subsidies and service bonuses. IOCC also bought the houses of employees who were leaving the area and for those who wished to stay, it sold their remaining mortgages to them at \$1.00 each.

In Labrador City the separation subsidies weren't as abundant or plentiful to everyone who had to leave and housing was not considered at all. Many Labrador Cityites lost all of the equity they had in their homes through defaults in mortgage payments.

- 16) Foote's (1979) study is relevant to this thesis in that it describes some of the social differentiations inherent in a single-industry community. There are very close interactions and a narrow range of associations in these small towns that make the hierarchies even more visible than would otherwise be the case. Upper status members buy conspicuously and everyone else in town feels the need to have the same things in order to be 'happy' or 'successful'.

In Labrador City the status differential is felt among 'union' workers and 'management'. Union personnel are generally Maritimers (considered 'local' since the town is a part of Newfoundland and

Labrador) and management are very much like Foote's description of the "new residents" from Ontario and points further West. Labrador City doesn't exactly parallel Port Hawkesbury where the status incongruities seem even more unfair since there was an already-established social order based on egalitarianism. This was disrupted with the impact of industrialization. In Labrador City, all but a few of the youngest residents had to move in and they were the newcomers. The local hierarchies developed along occupational lines rather than traditional divisions since the latter did not exist in Labrador City, though they had at home on the island. Workers were here on the company's terms. The Labrador City management did deal with quite a bit of militancy like in Port Hawkesbury, probably because the 'union' personnel here came from largely the same egalitarian traditions that Cape Bretoners did.

- 17) The Royal Commission on Labrador (Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of 1974:1027) detailed some of the "Cost of Living Differentials for Labrador" and the following is how Labrador City prices compared with St. John's:

Group	St. John's	Labrador City
Food	100	106
Household Operation	100	102
Clothing	100	100
Transportation	100	132
Health and Personal Care	100	110
Recreation and Reading	100	107
Tobacco and Alcohol	100	108
All items	100	108

Local residents spoken to during this 1982 fieldwork in Labrador City would have insisted that these figures underexaggerate.

- 18) One aspect of female socialization in our culture is that women adopt an 'altruistic-other orientation' and react to failures and disappointments in life with self-blame rather than acting against an outward element (Chesler and Goodman 1976). Eichler (1980) similarly describes the 'expressive' function of women in Parsonian theory where their sole purpose is to regulate tensions between various

members of the family: they have no reasons to deal with events and processes in the world outside of the family whereas their husbands, as breadwinners, do. The author goes on to show that this is a social misrepresentation since housewives are every bit as dependent on and active in the outside world as any other worker. Their work involves an external orientation to the capitalist system of exchange as well as an internal one to the family. They are the family's major consumer, buying and preparing what has been bought for the use of all. In addition, they must produce children, raising and maintaining them as socially useful adults.

- 19) Chesler and Goodman (1976) describe marriage as a 'survival tactic' for women. When it dissolves they are left with relatively little financially, even under recent 'shared property' dispensations that have been written into divorce acts. The authors point out that in the United States several of these acts contain loopholes for depositing large amounts of what might have been called the 'common property of the marriage' in the name of one spouse only, usually the man's as he often controls the purse strings during the marriage. Women also have a hard time getting the credit that might ease their situation somewhat (in the vein that 'money begets money') unless they have a male backer or a very good job. Their years of budgeting for the family while married is not considered an indication of their ability to handle money after they've been divorced.

Similarly, Eichler (1988) describes the common situation where the husband sets the pattern of lifestyle for his dependent wife to live with during the marriage, holding the greater share in the family's financial decision-making so that when it comes time to split the assets the wife often doesn't know exactly what they are and what she is entitled to. Moreover, she is rarely recompensed for all of her labours as a housewife.

- 20) Whether there were actually more suicides in Labrador City is a matter to be found in Statistics Canada catalogue 84-538 "Canadian suicide rates by local areas and urban centers". The figures here do not include attempted suicides, and they are only available for the period of 1970-1972. Statistics for later years are not available.

The actual and expected suicides in 1970-72 (based on Canadian rates) are given for Labrador North, South and West where the bulk of the population is concentrated in the Labrador City-Wabush area and the rates for two other areas comparable in population numbers are also given. Labrador North, South and West had considerably fewer suicides than expected by national statistical projections according to its size. The prevalence of suicide so that it is an issue in Labrador City might then be attributed to the very personal impact that each one has on everyone in the community. Labrador City is a small town so that a suicide is often personally known to everyone. The dead are more visible then, and their tragedy is felt by all.

	Actual suicides 1970-72	Expected suicides 1970-72 (Canadian rates)	Estimated population 1970-72
Labrador North, South & West	3	7	14,700
Bonavista North & South	2	7	13,750
Trinity North & South	5	7	13,100

- 21) Eichler (1980) discusses those theories in women's studies that categorize women as a separate class from men with differential access to the economic 'goods' of society. The author argues that, instead, the family is based on a different set of economic premises than the capitalist concept of a class-based production. The woman cannot be seen as a member of an exploited class because her work as a housewife is hardly valued at all. While it is essential in maintaining her husband and children as units of labour, it is seen as producing a use-value for the private sphere of her family but as having no exchange value in the public world. She is not paid for it, though it would be paid labour if someone external to the family performed it. In effect, she is non-productive by virtue of the fact that she is married (hence, unpaid and doing this as a part of her role) and not a part of the capitalist division of labour. Her work has a more privatized definition.

Eichler (1980) views the family as a "quasi-feudal" institution where married housewives have no legal right to even a minimum wage for their work nor are they regarded as having produced a surplus value through their work. As a class, housewives have no economic basis to argue a case and they are a fragmented group since the social status of each varies, based as it is on the occupations of husbands. The concepts of class analysis, then, are virtually inapplicable.

While I do agree in principle with this view, I have used the class analysis argument in this thesis because housewives are still living in a capitalist economy and are subject to its forces as economic 'dependents'.

- 22) (Phillips and Phillips 1983; Wilson 1982) Wilson (1982) describes the 'feminization' of clerical and primary school teaching jobs in the America of the late 1800's and early 1900's. As it became popular for unmarried women to earn a living while married women stayed at home, it also became fashionable for 'young ladies' to seek non-physical work in clean surroundings. The office and school were socially much more 'appropriate' for women to work in than the factory. More importantly, men were leaving these trades to go into management and sales, or to go to war, or to teach older students who were staying in school longer. The typewriter was beginning to appear in the office, and this trivialized the work of the clerk. Similarly, as younger children were entering school in the lower levels school teachers were being divided by rank according to whether they taught at the primary or secondary level. Those dealing with the very young (inevitably women) were considered more as babysitters than educators. The status of both of these occupations were also lowered because labour supply was high as it was becoming fashionable for unmarried women to work (Oakley 1974) and wages would simultaneously drop since it was generally believed that women should not receive as much pay as men.
- 23) Chesler and Goodman (1976:52-66) provides a full discussion on the social consequences of being 'feminine' in a money culture: 'ladies' do not involve themselves with money; they are not encouraged to learn anything about it, much less to pursue it as a source of power; and if they are

interested in augmenting their own finances, they exhibit an unattractive element of masculinity in their personalities.

The authors continue by noting that a woman with money is socially acceptable if she has a male backer and/or did not amass the wealth through her own efforts: entrepreneurship is a sign of an unacceptably high level of aggressiveness in a woman. By accepting these socially defined ideals and disregarding their money, as well as its sources, women lose a great deal of control over their lives.



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APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE, MIGRATION AND WORK FOR  
WOMEN IN LABRADOR CITY

2)

a) place of birth

b) residence immediately before Labrador City

c) length of residence in Labrador City

3) marital history:

a) single

b) married

c) separated

d) divorced

e) widowed

: for c, d, or e, ask when and where?

4) for 3) c-d-e,

a) who has custody for how many children?

b) with what means of support (eg. separation allowance, child support, own work, etc.)

5) all other members in the household:

- a) relationship to respondent
- b) age
- c) occupation and type of company worked for
- d) pay rate and whether the job is  
(P)ermanent,  
(T)emporary,  
(F)ull-time,  
(P)art-time
- e) last level of education completed

6) for the respondent herself:

- a) highest level completed in school and where
- b) subsequent post-secondary education and when completed

7) migration history: beginning with the most recent move and going back in time:

- a) places
- b) dates living there
- c) why leave



8) if 'home' is elsewhere, how often does respondent get in touch by:

- a) visiting
- b) mail
- c) phone
- d) family living here
- e) other (specify)

9) work history for present job, first job in Labrador City, last job before moving to Labrador City:

- a) occupation
- b) type of company
- c) pay rate
- d) dates working
- e) reasons for leaving last job

10) what company benefits were offered on the job (eg. Northern Allowance) and how often did respondent take advantage of them?

11) if laid off recently, what compensations were offered? subsequent means of support?

12) (note type of house) cost of housing and upkeep and is it

a) owned

b) mortgaged

c) rented

d) boarding and specify with whom (whether related or not)

e) how long have you lived in this house/apt/room

13) any religious affiliation?

14) active and past memberships in:

-name of org'n. -dates involved

a) church-sponsored associations

b) union

c) sports and recreation

d) civic/charitable

e) night or part-time courses (specify)

-end-

APPENDIX TWO: GUIDELINES FOR THE 'QUALITATIVE'  
INTERVIEWING

The move:

-why choose Labrador City over other destinations?

-what was the respondent's general idea of Labrador City before arriving and from whom? eg. friends or family who had already been there; company advertising; 'general knowledge'; etc.

-had there been any previous visits or temporary work there before moving in permanently

-first impressions of what living and working there would be like

Social networks/ activities:

-any other family members or friends from home in the area? relationship; occupation; who came first and who followed?

-how often do you all meet and for what types of activities?

-any financial, occupational or emotional support garnered from these networks and would you have moved

without them?

-any new friendships/activities formed apart from this group since moving up?

-notice any changes in the types of entertainment/relaxation you prefer since moving here?

-any changes in domestic and child care arrangements? how are these duties divided up now?

-are the children getting any special benefits or 'losing out' by living here?

Work:

-how has income, job satisfaction or status changed since moving to Labrador City?

-did you have the job before arriving and if not, how long did it take to get it? any help from friends/relatives or did you apply through newspaper, Canada Employment, schools or any other source?

-how much have you heard of Canada Employment training programs, Canada Works, job relocation grants, etc.?

-how do you get the benefits offered by employers? any problems?

-describe the daily routine of your job: any special benefits or problems you associate with the work? how are relations with fellow employees and bosses?

-would you rather not be working? drawing UIC? self-employed?

-what were the initial expectations of the job and have these been realized?

-any future plans for work or career? do they include moving out? or involve changes in your domestic life?

-what kind of future do you see in the job itself?

General migrant adjustments:

-how have you gained, personally, by moving up?

-have any new interests or habits developed/ and what was the transition period like?

-how 'tied' do you feel to Labrador City and in what respects?

-any changes in your relationships with spouse, children, members of your extended family?

-if problems come up at home, how are they dealt

with? what types of problems have you noticed in this area that might not have developed at home on the island ( or elsewhere)?

-any health problems?

-what kind of future can you foresee for your children?

-given a preference where would you ideally live?  
what reasons prevent you from going there now?

-end-









