WOMEN, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN A RURAL NEWFOUNDLAND COMMUNITY

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Women, Health and Social Change in a Rural Newfoundland Community

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the social and cultural context of women, health and social change in one rural Newfoundland community. A holistic approach is taken to assist in the understanding of the social and cultural context, both past and present, of the community.

Since the fishery Moratorium in 1992 the physical and human environment of rural Newfoundland communities have been irrevocably altered. Specifically, the social and economic dynamics of women living in rural coastal communities has changed. I suggest that the traditional role of women held as the measure of what constitutes a good wife and mother within this community is in direct contradiction to the social reality facing women today.

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Acknowledgments

The writing of this thesis stands out as an important life experience. I have been quite fortunate in the support and friendships I have fostered throughout this endeavor. Several residents of Harbour Deep shall always hold a special place in my heart. They made my introduction and acceptance into the community and the research process itself a very rewarding experience.

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Although I had a great deal of support and assistance from many people in the writing of this thesis I take sole responsibility for any errors, discrepancies or omissions.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The research problem

This thesis examines what is happening with respect to life change management and coping issues from the perspective of women[1] living in one community --Harbour Deep, Newfoundland. In this thesis, I attempt to show that dramatic social change has altered the traditional role of women in this community. This is clearly illustrated through an examination of the changes in support systems, specifically health care, that have occurred in Harbour Deep. My intention is to provide a forum in which individuals' voices may be heard (see Behar and Gordon 1995, Saris 1995, Langess and Frank 1981, Shostak 1981). The lives of the individuals I deal with in this thesis are in a state of flux with regard to their socio-economic situation. They have had their livelihood and way of life irrevocably altered by the demise of the small scale commercial fishery off the coast of

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[1] I interviewed women from various age groups. However, seniors, both male and female in Harbour Deep have more in common with middle aged women. See Wadel 1973 and Davis 1993 for a discussion on the feminization of men due to the decline of physical abilities.

Newfoundland[2]. This, in turn, has changed the manner in which these people utilize the support systems available to them. The issues involved in this analysis include the traditional roles of women, the adaptative adjustment of a remote community to a changing social and economic situation; and women's perspectives on how these factors have altered the emphasis placed on support systems and health care resources.

My interest in how individuals view health, health care, and health services in the context of dramatic change has been the driving force behind this study. Throughout this document, I attempt to contextualize the issues facing residents of one community by use of what I refer to as a "community biographical approach" (see Behar 1993, Cohen 1982, Landes 1947). This means that I have combined stories of the community's history and the residents' life histories in an attempt to attain a holistic understanding of what is meant by health and well-being and how this has changed over time for residents of this community. Simply put, I have endeavored to examine the changing factors that have created tensions in the lives of women within the community thus altering the local use of health/health care services.

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[2] The moratoria will be discussed later in this chapter (see p.9).

Tension-laden factors that affect residents on both an individual and community level include: lack of mobility in and out of the community, the impact of the changing role of women within a traditional[3] community, the lack of employment opportunities (especially for women) in such a community and the lack of accessibility to appropriate health care resources. Such tensions create unease and discontentment among some residents and ultimately relate to health care usage as residents sort out ways to cope. With the term coping, I refer to the ways in which people deal with these tensions in their everyday lives. In order to examine such tensions it is necessary to examine the social and cultural context of the community, which leads to matters that at first do not seem to have anything to do with health. For example, for many outside the community, but within the region, Harbour Deep appears to be a community on the brink of 'dying out.' If that is how residents viewed the community in which they lived, what mechanisms of coping have been put in place to deal with an uncertain future and the various other issues

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3 See Pocius' (1991) use of the term tradition. He defines traditional cultures as being based on kinship ties, having free access to resources, with little social differentiation and specialization, and possessing a high degree of social equality (p 15).

that stem from it -such as relocation of household, or the separation of immediate/extended family?

Considering the aforementioned issues, certain structural contradictions of everyday life arise (see Smith 1987). Indeed, the process of inquiry used in my research helped illuminate the fundamental contradictions that exist between the way people believe things should be and the way things are. An example of this is how the intimacy of daily interactions between residents is countered by the use of gossip as a leveling technique to ensure equality and cooperation (see Paine 1967:278, Szwed 1966:96-100, Faris 1966:71-74,85-86, 144-145). While residents are polite to one another they also adhere to the local norms of acceptable social interactions as a leveling mechanism. The egalitarian ethic and the effect it has on the work and social interactions among residents is common in ethnography focusing on rural Newfoundland communities (Brox 1969, Chiaramonte 1970, Faris 1966, Firestone 1967, Matthews 1976, Nemec 1972, Philbrook 1966, Szwed 1966, Wadel 1973). The effect of the egalitarian ethic in light of recent social change is a discussion that I take up later in this thesis (see Chapter five).

The implications of coping with the conflicts and stresses that arise from the gradual loss of a traditional mode of living and self subsistence are both unique to this particular community and have the potential to be generalized on a broader scale. Although I focus on the interactions and events of residents within one remote northern community, the issues touched on in this thesis may not be atypical of other rural regions in Canada. Over the next few pages I shall discuss the difficulties of accessibility and life change issues. Both issues are important factors in any discussion of a community such as Harbour Deep.

1.1.1 *the economics of access*

As a community without a connecting road, situated in a remote area, geographic accessibly is at the crux of any discussion concerning Harbour Deep. Access to a variety of social programs (of which health care services is just one) is taken as a right by most residents of Canada's provinces and territories. But, where one lives in Canada determines what services are immediately available to the individual. In many respects, the available services are shaped not only by one's

socio-economic place in this society, but its physical location as well. The difficulties of availability are in part attributable to the issues of cost-effectiveness and efficiency which are currently at the fore-front of support service delivery management. Such emphasis has had "an increasingly negative impact on distribution of services for residents in rural areas" (Fitchen 1991:157).

The difficulties of providing adequate health care services throughout rural areas of Canada has been widely debated over the past few years (Barer & Stoddart 1999). The major issue for rural Newfoundland and Labrador has been a shortage of health care professionals. In an attempt to remedy the situation the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services signed an agreement with the federal Department of National Defence to have military medical personnel on a rotating six week basis to visit the rural areas within the province hardest hit by a shortage of health professionals. The provincial Minister of Health at that time, while denying that this signified a severe crisis within the provincial health care system, promoted this agreement as a beneficial move for all involved; not only would the shortage of health professionals in rural areas be

alleviated but the military personnel would get an opportunity to "expand their clinical experience in real life setting" (Health & Community Services, Press Release, 1998). Unfortunately, the continuity of care for residents of rural Newfoundland and Labrador communities was not given consideration.

Those who rely on resource based industries, such as farming, mining, logging and fishing, tend to live in areas that are unable to provide essential services. For example teams of specialists and sophisticated equipment are rarely located in rural places. By definition, these resource based industries take place in relatively remote, non-urban centres and the individuals employed in these fields take on their jobs as a way of life (Philbrook 1966:3). Part of that life is living without services people in urban areas take for granted. Furthermore, the loss of viable employment often means moving to find work elsewhere.

Acceptance of their living circumstances does not mean that people involved in resource based industries are content to live a backward or out-moded form of existence. With modernization come certain expectations, which include, government social programs, such as health care and primary

education, are easily accessible for less remote communities but not in Harbour Deep. If children from Harbour Deep want to continue in school after Grade Nine they have to leave the community. Although they are given a government stipend to cover the cost of room and board, families still incur large financial costs in order to ensure that their children finish high school.

Thus, geographic accessibility is particularly important to the provision of social programs. The residents of Harbour Deep are limited to government subsidized transportation for accessing the community. This includes a ferry service during the summer and a small float plane from late-fall to mid-spring. This is not an ideal situation for most of the residents in the community as they have to adhere to a transportation schedule that is unpredictable at best, as all travel plans are conditional upon the weather.

1.1.2 *life change issues*

Historically, people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have relied upon the fishery for employment. The Moratorium on Northern cod implemented in July 1992 and the earlier

Moratorium on commercial salmon affected the lives of people throughout Atlantic Canada. People whose livelihood once depended on a viable fishery see the collapse of the Northern Cod Stock as due to over-fishing practices of offshore trawlers both domestic and foreign (see Finlayson 1994). This situation has left many residents of rural Newfoundland and Labrador with an altered lifestyle --not just in terms of their personal financial situation, but also in their level of daily physical activity and sense of well-being. Such significant life change events --the lack of alternative economic activity within their communities and an alteration of interpersonal relationships-- have had a dramatic impact on this fishery dependent population (see Davis 1997, McGrath, Neis and Porter 1995, Williams 1996).

The Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP) was established in August 1992. NCARP was the first of several income support programs initiated by the federal government. It was designed to replace income lost by approximately 30,000 fishers and plant workers as a result of the closure of the fishery. In May of 1994 NCARP was replaced by The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS). At a cost of $1.9 billion and a 5 year mandate, TAGS was the largest program initiated to

provide adjustment, income support and re-training for displaced fishery workers (Harrigan 1998, Human Resources Development Canada- Newfoundland Region 1997). Unfortunately, the eligibility criteria for these programs only added to the distress being felt by the unemployed fishery workers. This was aggravated by the fact that the emphasis of the TAGS program was to get as many people as possible out of the fishery through retirement and retraining[4].

By 1997, a bleak outlook for the fishery of the future in Harbour Deep already meant that friends and family members that could once have been relied on for social or even economic support had left the region to seek work, thereby leaving individuals and families without support networks. As former fishers and plant workers struggled to come to terms with the changes in their way of life, they also had to come up with new coping strategies. The means by which residents were able to maintain physical and emotional well-being at such a time were also being recreated. It was with these things in mind that I embarked on my research.

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[4] These issues are dealt with in greater detail in the second chapter of this thesis.

1.2 Fieldwork and methodology

Information was gathered through a combination of research methods: participation observation, an informal survey of eighteen women in the community, informal loosely structured interviews and biographical interviews. Through participation in community life and observation/recording of actions and views of residents, I developed an understanding of local residents' own socio-economic situation. Initially, I had planned to use the survey as a indicator of community issues and planned to administer it to a wide sample of community residents. This initial plan was changed upon arriving in the community as the proposed survey was instead used to introduce myself via door to door visits. In so doing, I met and talked with people (women particularly) that I might not have met and interviewed otherwise, due to my short stay in the community. I resided in the community from May to August 1997 and for a four week period from October to November. Although, the survey gave me a legitimate and understandable reason for dropping in to chat with women who did not socialize frequently, it was rarely utilized. It was

used instead as a tool that enabled me to initiate a conversation about family and community life based on a legitimate excuse. This allowed me to avoid being viewed as an interloper intent on invading the privacy of the individual.

The biographical interviews I conducted pursued a block of open-ended questions that were developed while in the community. The interviews would begin with situating the individual in the community: how long they had lived there; what, if any, family relations they had in the community; and what their attitude was towards community life in light of current changes such as the Moratorium. From there, the discussion would move to a variety of topics, including family issues and life histories. My priority was to let individuals talk with as little interference from me as possible (see Gullestad 1996, Bertaux 1981). Every effort was made to establish rapport with participants prior to attempting such interviews and full biographies were recorded from five informants. Key themes of the biographical interviews included: concerns over the future of the community, the out-migration of residents, worries over the fishery, personal life histories and the history of the community.

In order to obtain a health professional's perspective on

health care and the impact their views had on the community. I spoke frequently and at great length with two local nurse practitioners --one on her way out of the community and the other coming back from an extended leave of absence. In every instance, their professional commitment to ensuring the confidentiality of the residents they treated prevailed. I also collected monthly statistics about clinic utilization by residents for the period 1993 - 1997.

1.2.1 *collaborators*[5] *in the field*

From the outset, my intention was to construct a comprehensive picture of life and social change in this particular community. Initially, I believed this would entail understanding the situation from the perspective of all residents, regardless of age and gender. I had naively intended not to limit the research to collaborators that fit selected criteria. Yet, even the most well thought out plans are reconsidered and subject to change once in the field and with the reality of what can be accomplished under the time constraints of a four month field stay. Thus most of my

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[5] A term I prefer over the widely used but dated term, 'informant.'

collaborators were middle aged and older women.

Many factors contributed to my choice of collaborators, and the subsequent results. Occasional incidences of people spending time in the community for work-related purposes and subsequently becoming involved with and/or marrying into the community was on the minds of residents. As a relatively young female without a visible male escort, I was expected by many residents to set my sights on one of the bachelors in the community. I made the decision not to attend the "drinking parties" that were held weekly. I believed (and still do) that my attendance at these social events would add legitimacy to some residents' view that my only true intention was to establish a personal relationship. As well, my attendance at such functions would have made difficult my attempts to establish a rapport with a number of women in the community. Hence, my actions made it clear that I was not seeking a mate. By not competing, with other women, for the attention of the men I was placed in the more comfortable roles of friend, confidant or "daughter" by many of the women in the community. This enabled me to achieve a better rapport with the women with whom I shared in-depth discussions. As a result, many of the older women openly discussed their lives, loves and

concerns to a much greater extent than may have been otherwise possible[6]. The fact that they were eager to bond with me led to a much more honest exchange between us.

Initially, I had intended to collect taped interviews from which narratives of peoples' lives might be developed, an expectation that did not come to fruition, as most of the people I spoke with were hesitant, or indeed flatly refused to have their words recorded. One comment, in particular, seemed to sum up the collective response to my request to audiotape our discussions, "My child, I has enough trouble getting the right words out just speaking to your face, let alone talking on tape!" This signified a self-conscious attitude about their manner of speech, an issue I was not prepared to analyze.

Furthermore, I have endeavoured to protect residents from unwanted notoriety from other residents of the community who might read this thesis. As such, references to particular individuals and some events are not given in detail. The only exception are the three elderly residents who gave me informed

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For further discussion on the situating the ethnographer and the development of rapport with female collaborators see Bell, Caplan & Karim (eds.) 1993, Wolf (ed.) 1996 and Bridgeman, Cole and Howard-Bobiwash 1999.

consent to use their real names. Even so, I have strived to protect them from any criticism. Due to the importance of the geographical location and other circumstances of the community, I decided early on in the study that it would be futile to use a pseudonym to disguise the identity of the community itself. With the sensitive nature of some of the subject material, the dilemma of ensuring the confidentiality of key collaborators became such a necessary though difficult priority. Conducting research in such a small community makes it difficult to ensure privacy and anonymity, but it is my sincere hope that my analysis is viewed as beneficial to the residents of Harbour Deep, many of whom I deeply respect and hold in fond regard.

A narrative approach to ethnography was one that I was most comfortable with during this research (see Abu-Lughod 1992, Behar 1993, Lewis 1966, 1961, Myerhoff 1978, Stacey 1990). For me, it was fundamental that this thesis (both my insights and interpretations) be based on information I received from direct sources: the life stories of individuals. Of course, as I suggested above, such an approach is not without its pitfalls. Most significantly, the quest for anonymity is difficult to achieve when dealing with the lives

of people living in a small community in a rural area. With the privilege of learning about the lives of others by their own accounts comes the responsibility of just and accurate representation. I was acutely aware of this during the writing of this document.

1.3 Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into six chapters. In this introductory chapter, I have laid the groundwork for my research project and stated the research problem, which involves an examination of life change management of women in Harbour Deep. I also provided readers with insight into that problem through a general discussion of geographic accessibility to adequate social supports and life change issues such as the Moratorium. And I presented a detailed discussion of the fieldwork experience and the methodology used during this research.

In the second chapter, I deal with the empirical issues pertaining to the present research. The chapter begins with a presentation of the issues, and is followed by a review of the pertinent anthropological literature on health care in

rural Newfoundland, Newfoundland society, and the role of women in the fishery and the household.

Chapter three introduces the setting: the community of Harbour Deep, Newfoundland. It begins with the history of the settlement of the community and the related issues of resettlement and the fjordal ecology. I then go on to discuss the changes that have occurred within the community over the past twenty-six years, which marks the time frame of the last anthropological study conducted in the community.

The issue of social change through an examination of the provision of health care, past and present, is dealt with in the fourth chapter of this thesis. As well, I discuss the implications of such change within the context of the current socio-economic situation facing residents of the community.

Chapter five deals with the issues facing women currently living in the community. Within this discussion, I touch on the issues of acceptable silences, friendship, egalitarianism and the result of recent social change.

In the final chapter, I reiterate the empirical issues that were discussed throughout the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LINKING HARBOUR DEEP TO EXISTING LITERATURE: AN EMPIRICAL DISCUSSION

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a comparative and empirical background for this present study. My intention is to give readers a better understanding of the various analytical issues underlying my field research and thesis. This also gives them a grounding in the materials that have influenced my thinking on the subjects of Newfoundland society and culture, health care issues and women's issues in rural areas, interaction between local versus outsider knowledge, and the dynamics of social interactions.

There have been few anthropological studies dealing with health and contemporary social change in rural Newfoundland. The issues addressed in my research add a new dimension to the previous work done in this area. This thesis adds to Newfoundland ethnographic information by focusing upon health care and women's lives, an area seldom given detailed

examination in the rural Newfoundland context[7].

Throughout this chapter, I discuss the works of others which frame the relevant ethnographic material on Newfoundland. In the first section, I deal with the relevance of health related issues as found in existing studies. Later, this information will be related back to the experiences of Harbour Deep residents. Relevant issues regarding Newfoundland society as outlined in earlier ethnographies are the focus of the second section. The final section of the chapter presents the socio-economic factors which influence the role of women in the fishery and within the household in rural Newfoundland communities.

2.2 Health care in rural Newfoundland

Among the most significant ethnographic work relating to women and health issues in a rural Newfoundland setting is Davis (1983a). Davis' study examines the issues surrounding women's place in the community as they grappled with the

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[7] This is not to say that there are no ethnographic studies/ narratives that deal with health and health care issues in rural Newfoundland. See Davis 1989, 1986, 1984 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, Andersen 1998, Benoit, 1991, Dinham 1977, and Ness 1977.

'change of life.' It holds the distinction of being the first published ethnography of a Newfoundland community written by a woman. Davis' work focuses on women's menopausal experiences in the coastal community that she calls Grey Rock Harbour. Although she begins her field study with symptom and attitude checklists, it is through her ethnographic data that she comes to the conclusion that women's lived experience of menopause is not sufficiently covered by the technical jargon used in the symptomology checklist. Davis points to the tendency of women to use loosely defined, culturally bound concepts in describing their symptomology. Talk of menopause is interwoven with what happens to blood and nerves during the change of life. The use of such terms is an issue that adds to the difficulties of receiving proper treatment from the medical community (see Davis 1984).

Furthermore, Davis argues that menopause is at once a collective, yet individualistic, experience for women in this community. The experience of middle aged women in Grey Rock Harbour with menopause is tempered by the traditional values governing what it means to be considered a good wife, mother and/or sister to a fisherperson. According to Davis, women's talk about menopause was "encoded in folk versions of history

and survival"(Davis 1997:9). Women play an important role in the fishery even if they never actually go out on the boats; they are ascribed the role of "worrier." Davis espouses the opinion that it is through the activity of worrying that women have retained an active part in the fishery (Davis 1983c:142). She contends that the men leave the worrying about the dangers of the fishing occupation to their wives and other female relations, and that it is this that symbolically keeps the boats afloat.

Thus, on the one hand, a woman with a 'bad case of nerves' has come by the condition legitimately. Due to years of concern and worry over the welfare of her loved ones (something that is expected of a good wife and mother) she shows the toll it has taken on her. Davis writes:

> A 'good woman' is one who has worked hard all her life and stoically endured or surmounted the hardships of 'the old days when we were all poor.' ... It is believed that the harder you have worked and the more you have suffered during your life, the more difficult "the change" will be for you.
>
> (1983a: 144)

On the other hand, it is important to note that it is only women of menopausal age who have legitimate cause to complain

of nerves. Young and premenopausal women who complain too often are considered "weak" or "complainers." Again, I refer to Davis:

> There is a fine line between being praised as a stoic and regarded with contempt as a complainer ... A complainer, like a weak woman, is one who presents herself as long-suffering and stoic without real cause.
> (1983a: 146)

Davis contends that worry and problems with nerves was not necessarily a sign of being overwhelmed for the wives of fishermen. Worry is worn as a 'badge of honour' by the middle aged women in the community of Grey Rock Harbour. It was proof of their commitment to their husbands --proof that they were good women. Worry and concern over their loved ones was a "status enhancing moral duty" for these women (Davis 1983c:142). Such analysis will be important to my later discussion of how women in Harbour Deep are handling this constant source of stress along with the social change they are now facing.

Of related interest, Paine (1971) discusses how residents in peripheral areas access external values (here, read "health") through patrons and brokers. This aided in my data

gathering and analysis, as it can be compared to the method in which residents of Harbour Deep access health care resources. In terms of health care currently being provided in rural Newfoundland, this perspective lead my attention to the relationship between local residents and the local health care professional who may be considered the intermediary between the community and the provincial health organization. From the perspective of health care provision in Harbour Deep, it is interesting to note that although the local health care provider has resided in the community for many years, she is still not considered by residents to be 'of' the community. As will be explained, local reliance upon her for health care support occurs with an attitude of subservience mixed with subtle resentment.

2.3 Newfoundland society

Although little has been written from an anthropological perspective about the issue of health care in rural Newfoundland there is a plethora of material (both published and unpublished) that specifically deals with small rural

Newfoundland communities[8]. For the reader familiar with the popular early Newfoundland ethnographies it may seem that I have overlooked several of them as they are not directly dealt with in this chapter. The reasons for this are twofold. First, I am only covering material relevant to the present study. Secondly, there is the concern that many early ethnographies done in rural Newfoundland contain a "middle class bias[9]" that lead to their focusing on cultural deficiencies (Davis 1983b:20). Davis goes on to point out that several of these early ethnographies neglected:

> the areas of family life that are relevant to the everyday activities of women and children and those aspects of family life that reflect attitudes, beliefs and values rather than social structure and function. (1983b: 20)

In furthering this line of thought, Pocius (1991) points out that:

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8 For example, Davis 1983a, Felt and Sinclair 1995, Omundro 1994, Cahill and Martland 1993, House, White and Ripley, 1989, Felt 1987, Chaulk Murray 1979, Szala 1978, Dinham 1977, Antler 1977, Gunness-Davis 1974, Brox 1969, Chiaramonte 1970, Faris 1966, Firestone 1967, Matthews 1976, Nemec 1972, Skolnik 1968, Philbrook 1966, Szwed 1966, Wadel 1973, Widdowson 1977.

9 For further discussion on the problems of bias and "otherness" see Said 1979.

> ... much research on Newfoundland has focused oddly on rituals that may be performed once or twice a year as somehow representing the quintessential realms of the culture.
>
> (1991: 8)

These descriptions of earlier Newfoundland ethnographies run counter to the focus of this study. The seemingly mundane activities of residents of Harbour Deep, and how they have changed over time are of particular interest. Yet, as I will demonstrate later, there are still a number of studies that deal with either communities on the Great Northern Peninsula and/or various specific issues that are of interest to this study (i.e. the moratorium, the use of illness, and subsistence activities).

Most early Newfoundland ethnographies focus on aspects of Newfoundland culture, specifically how people relate to one another in relation to the difficult physical and/or economic environment in which they live. One well known example of this type of ethnography is Firestone's (1967), which examines the influence of tightly integrated social norms of equality and egalitarianism on interpersonal relations within the community of Savage Cove, on the Great Northern Peninsula. Firestone's research places emphasis on sharing and co-

operation among community residents in opposition to competition and conflict. He notes the connection between good family relations and good working environment as fathers, sons, and brothers partnered with one another in the fishing industry. Firestone also discusses the use of tolerance and self-possession as social devices by individuals living in a small rural community to avoid overt conflict. Such devices allow the individual "to remain sufficiently uninvolved to pursue his own ends in an intimate society with a minimum of conflict" (p. 119). It is the explanation of social interaction and the manner in which conflicts are both avoided and diffused that is of particular interest in my research. An egalitarian ethic and individual 'detachment' are attributed to the relative ease with which possible tension between individuals is abated (p 119). In a later discussion, I shall deal with the implications of just such an egalitarian ethic in the contemporary social climate of Harbour Deep.

Wadel (1973) follows a similar vein as he probes the issues surrounding how the inability to secure employment lends itself to difficulties fulfilling other roles, as well as maintaining relations with others and maintaining one's identity and self respect (p. xii). An egalitarian work ethic

is central to his examination of the ways in which illness is defined and used by unemployed individuals in a rural Newfoundland setting. The inability to find suitable employment is "internalized" by the individual, to the point of becoming a health issue. Indeed, his main collaborator, George, who wants to work, is cited as using the excuse of spells to justify his unemployment. This is an important discovery in terms of my research project; as Wadel's study deals with unemployment on a smaller scale than what currently exists in rural Newfoundland, but what are the implications for a population where such a paradox exists? As I discuss in Chapter five, the internalization of life factors that are out of their control is a major health issue for women in Harbour Deep.

Sider (1986) presents a discussion that gives historical rootedness to the themes found in both Firestone and Wadel. Sider's analysis refers to the fact that among residents of isolated, coastal fishing communities social relations are characterized by an ambiguous mixture of social intimacy and social antagonism. He provides an historical examination of merchant capitalism in Newfoundland as an example of how culture is generated, and what effect it has on social

relations. Through an examination of the truck system[10] Sider suggests that fisher families were kept impoverished and alternative ways of making a living were suppressed. He contends that the truck system also created an 'us against them' attitude as residents of these small coastal communities defied the odds and managed to secure a living year after year. According to Sider, a collective identity and a sense of self importance, stemming from this accomplishment, is due to the geographic, political and social isolation of these coastal communities.

Sider posits that although the sense of isolation and shared occupational identity were unifying factors for residents, community harmony was more the ideal than the reality. According to Sider (1986: 71), there existed undercurrents of tension and antagonism in the social interactions of community residents. He bases this assertion on the contradictory notions of the "community of place" -- residents' collective sense of identity-- and the "community

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This term refers to the economic system that was used throughout the coastal communities of Newfoundland from the mid nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. It was a form of payment in goods, not cash, by merchants who bought fish from local fishers. Fishers and their families would be given credit towards supplies they needed based on the price the merchants set for the fish they brought in.

of account" which fosters individual antagonisms. This, again, relates back to Sider's analysis of the truck system and the use of tal qual[11]. The "community of account" groups people according to how much they produce and consume, and is adjusted by their honesty and industry. This sets people against one another through the practice of "squeezing" the good fisher families in order to cover the losses of the less productive ones. This pitted neighbour against neighbour and made people suspicious of the motives of others.

Sider argues that individual households achieved greater autonomy with Confederation[12], the intervention of the Canadian state, and the demise of the mercantile system. This came at a cost, though, as a greater dependency upon government transfer payments (e.g. pensions and family allowances) and programs was fostered. The result was a process of individualization which preempted political assertiveness and collective confrontation while maintaining an emphasis on tradition within rural Newfoundland communities. This series

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This term refers to the late nineteenth century tendency of merchants to occasional tale all the fish from one community at one average price, regardless of quality or grade of fish.

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Newfoundland and Labrador joined in confederation with Canada in April 1949, becoming the country's tenth province.

of contradictions is important to my analysis of Harbour Deep, where residents are facing a changing economic situation accompanied by government interventions that have altered their way of life. The antagonism that exist within small coastal communities also will be discussed in greater detail later.

The impact of economic conditions on social interactions has factored greatly into the work done in rural Newfoundland. Such studies point to the strong ties that keep Newfoundlanders connected to home, regardless of where their life choices take them. An example of this is found in the work of House, White, and Ripley (1989) which looked at the migration patterns of residents of rural Newfoundland. This study illuminates the tendency of area residents to return to their home communities after short work stays on the mainland. The main reason for this was that individuals found it easier to maintain an adequate standard of living --in terms of subsistence activities and home ownership-- in Newfoundland when compared to 'living away' (where their lack of formal education was a hindrance to finding adequate employment). The sense of kinship and comradery that is enjoyed by Newfoundlanders living in Newfoundland is difficult to

replicate while living and working elsewhere. This issue shall recur in reference to the residents of Harbour Deep.

The comfort most rural Newfoundlanders get from having intimate knowledge of their physical environment and the assurance of knowing their place in daily social interactions carries with it a strong bond that keeps the individual connected to 'home.' There exists a very real sense of complementariness (of give and take) not only within social interactions and human relationships but also between the individual and the physical locale. In Omohundro's (1994) analysis of communities on the Great Northern Peninsula he gives a detailed account of how and why Northern Newfoundlanders live off the land for a significant proportion of their livelihood (p xiv). This is accomplished through an examination of the subsistence activities used by residents of the region. The planting and cultivating of roadside gardens play a major role in the annual cycle of subsistence activities. The amazing ingenuity required for subsistence activities by residents of rural Newfoundland as reported by Omohundro highlights the determination and dedication of Newfoundlanders in the face of adversity. It also illuminates the intrinsic notions of self reliance and the benefits of

hard work. Again, this will be illustrated later in relation to my analysis of Harbour Deep.

2.4 Women in the fishery and household

Teamwork among family members was the key to survival prior to the contemporary reliance on plant wage-workers for the primary processing of fresh cod (secondary processing takes place elsewhere). Formerly, men risked life and limb braving the elements of the heartless North Atlantic, while the stoic women took on the responsibilities of "shore skippers"[13]. Women tended to the essential tasks of daily life and kept the 'home fires burning.' Women's work included (but was not limited to) the entire realm of household chores which involved doing the laundry, cleaning, chopping wood for heat, and caring for the children and elderly members of the household. Women also took on the responsibility of 'making' fish - a process that involved salting and putting it on the flakes to dry. The importance of this final responsibility cannot be over emphasized (see Chaulk Murray 1979 and Antler

[13] This phrase, popularized in the literature on Newfoundland fishing villages to denote the importance of women's work in the absence of the men, aptly describes the Harbour Deep situation. See McGrath, Neis and Porter 1995, Davis 1986 and Antler 1977.

1977). Familial team effort contributed to the survival of the fishery dependent residents of rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

In Antler's (1977) discussion of the important economic contributions of women's unpaid labour to the over-all income of the household in Northeast coast inshore fishing villages, she describes the activities involved in fish drying as "tedious and time consuming." She states, "it requires a committed, attentive eye and experience in predicting the weather"(p 2). The earnings received by the household from the merchant usually depended on the quality of the fish at the end of this process. Antler estimates that women's unpaid work in fish production provided thirty percent of the annual family income. It was a difficult job but there was purpose and meaning in their work that gave them a sense of self worth. How this changed for the women of Harbour Deep, in light of the fishery moratorium, is something I deal with in chapter five of this thesis.

Davis (1993) gives a sypnosis of the changing sexual geography of labour in one Newfoundland community. Citing the fishery crisis as the major factor for such change, she points out that prior to the decline in the fishery "women's work

domain was the house, the men's work domain was outside of the house and the sea" (p.461). In contrast, nowadays, men spend more time in the household than ever before. Davis points out that since the fishery crisis men have in fact, "invaded what was previously a female domain" (p. 466). This is certainly the case in Harbour Deep and is an issue that will be brought out in greater detail in chapter five.

Davis (1995) looks at the effect of the North Atlantic fishery crisis on women. She portrays a community radically changed from the one she visited previously (circa 1970s). Significantly, she points out that the fishery crisis had the effect of shifting the "base of moral consensus" (p. 280) within the community. The dynamics of collective identity were replaced with individual predicaments and strategies of coping. Her discussion identifies the coping skills of four main groups: (1) the 'ups-and-outs' - who leave the community to find work; (2) the 'trapped' - young married women, who feel that they have no say in their life decisions. They have young children and feel trapped by their own and/or their husband's lack of education -education needed to improve their situation. This group also includes women whose husbands refuse to move from the only community they have ever called

home; (3) the 'satisfied': middle aged women with grown children who have come to terms with what they have and do not want to live anywhere else; and finally, (4) the 'pensioners': older women who, though troubled by the fate of the younger generation, are content to remain in the community. This also encompasses those older people who have moved from the community in order to be closer to medical facilities. Each of these groupings, albeit on a smaller scale, exist among the population of women in Harbour Deep.

A recent study, furthering this line of inquiry, also dealt with women coping with the fall-out of the fishery closure. Susan Williams (1996) conducted research dealing with the women in the fishery since the moratorium. She worked in conjunction with Fishnet, a politically active women's group that represents the concerns of women fishers and fish plant workers in Atlantic Canada. Williams' report gives an overview of the contribution women have made to the fishery, "past, present and future" (p.3). She makes specific reference to the difficulties experienced by women in dealing with the income support and re-training programs since the Moratorium.

Williams' study finds that women's work and contributions

to the fishery have been devalued. Women tend to be overlooked for the more serious long-term re-training opportunities and their own proposals for re-training courses are refused. In Harbour Deep, the women I spoke with were not politically active as a group, nor were any of them individually active in political lobby groups. This has probably played a large role in their experiences since the closure of the fishery. The re-training options for women[14] in Harbour Deep were slightly worse than those offered to the women in the Williams study because of the community's geographical isolation and the fact that there is no high school there. This means that Graduate Equivalence Diploma (GED) upgrading had to take place outside the community. Several women did leave the community for a period of two weeks to attend classes, but only because receipt of their income supplement cheque was contingent on their cooperation with the program.

Instructors were brought into the community for "Improving Our Odds" and "Life Skills" courses. Each course

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Although a few men did attend the "Improving Our Odds" course, the government sponsored post-moratorium program most widely availed of by men in Harbour Deep was the early retirement package. This was an option that only applied to men in their late fifties and early sixties who were considered full-time fishers.

ran six weeks in duration and participants received certificates at the conclusion of each. In terms of actually re-training former fish plant workers, a nine week industrial sewing course did take place in the community. But the industrial machinery left the community when the instructors did! Only two of the nine women who took part in this course put their new skills to use by making clothes for themselves or family members. The general consensus was that the courses were a 'good bit of fun,' and provided a chance to get together and have a good 'laugh.'

2.5 Summary

My intention in reviewing the literature I found most helpful and relevant during the analysis of field data and in the writing of this thesis has been to give the reader a greater understanding of the underlying themes and issues related to women, health and social change in rural Newfoundland that shall be brought out in greater detail during discussions in the next three chapters. Concepts such as what constitutes a good woman and the cultural pressures that come to bear on women living in rural Newfoundland will

factor greatly into my discussion of the lives of women in Harbour Deep.

In the next chapter, I introduce the reader to the physical setting -the community of Harbour Deep. Chapter Three begins with a geographical overview and discussion of settlement history and concludes with a discussion of social changes that have occurred over the past 26 years.

CHAPTER 3: THE SETTING: HARBOUR DEEP

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the various socio-economic, geographic and historical conditions which have shaped the development of the community of Harbour Deep. Through an overview of the community's history, I trace the influence of both internal and external pressures that impact the lives of residents. Such pressures play an important role in my examination of the effects of social change on residents of Harbour Deep.

The first section of this chapter deals with the geographical setting. This is followed by a review of the community's settlement history, which includes a discussion of resettlement and the impact of fjordal ecology (see Paine 1965) on community development. The final section discusses the social and physical changes that have occurred in Harbour Deep over the past twenty-six years.

3.2 Geographical overview

Harbour Deep is located within White Bay in a fjordal inlet on the eastern coast of the Great Northern Peninsula (Figure 3:1, p 41). It is now the only community within a one hundred and twenty kilometre radius along the north-eastern coastline of White Bay. Almost ten kilometres west of the North Atlantic Ocean, it is surrounded by steep cliffs upwards of 1,260 feet in height, and accessible only by sea or air. The entire community is enclosed by mountains, with the harbour entrance hidden behind an out-crop of land, making one feel land-locked. The community is situated along a narrow stretch of land at the base of the Long Range Mountains, and the landscape of the area is defined by the Precambrian rock of the Long Range Mountains.

Most of the homes and businesses in Harbour Deep are located along a two kilometre, rough, graded gravel road, which hugs the shoreline of this extremely sheltered, very deep, rocky-bottomed harbour. Most of the homes in Harbour Deep have a good view of the harbour. Binoculars are kept close to windows as any activity in the harbour quickly

Figure 3:1 - Map Newfoundland and Labrador

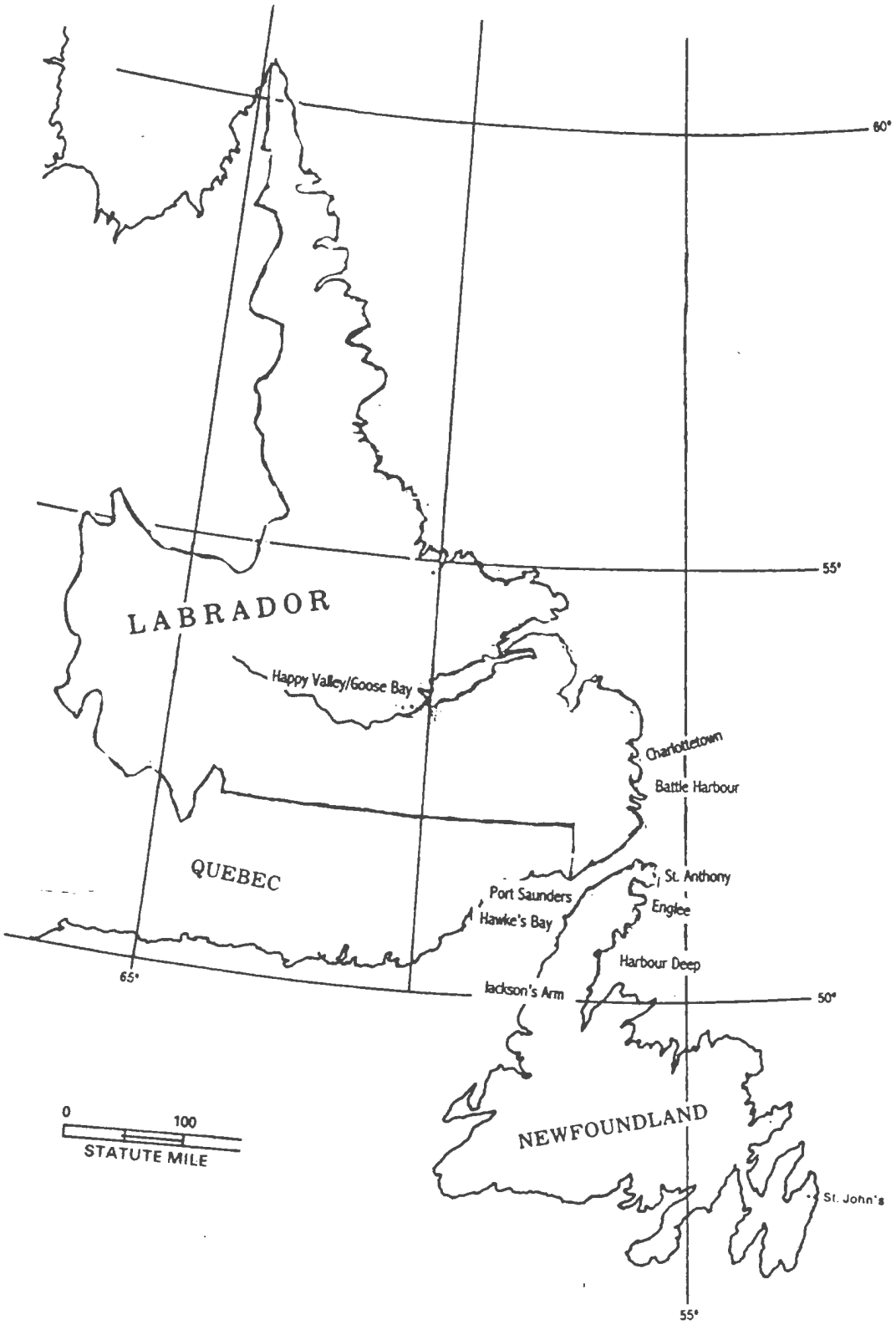


Figure 3:2 - Map of the Great Northern Peninsula

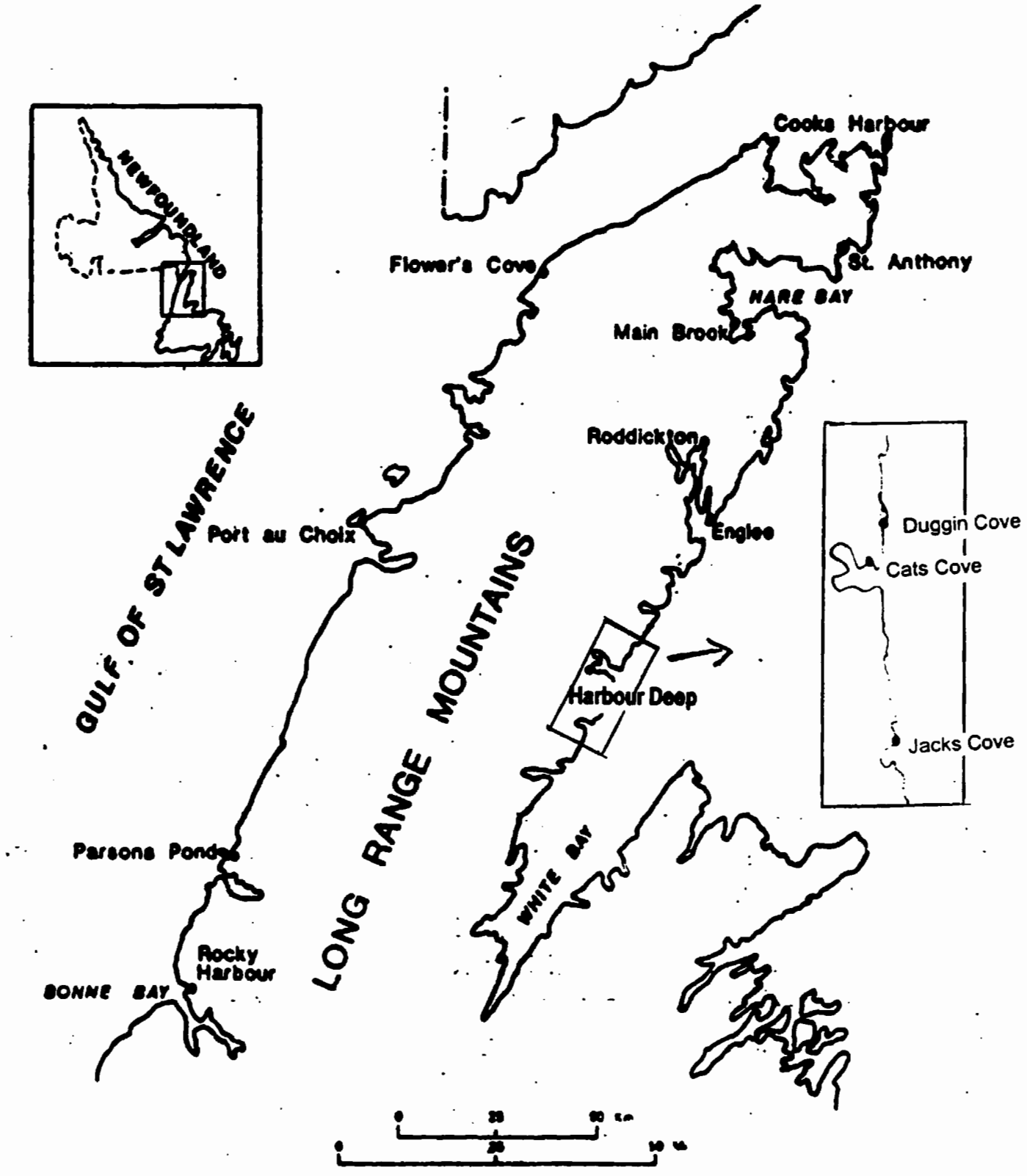
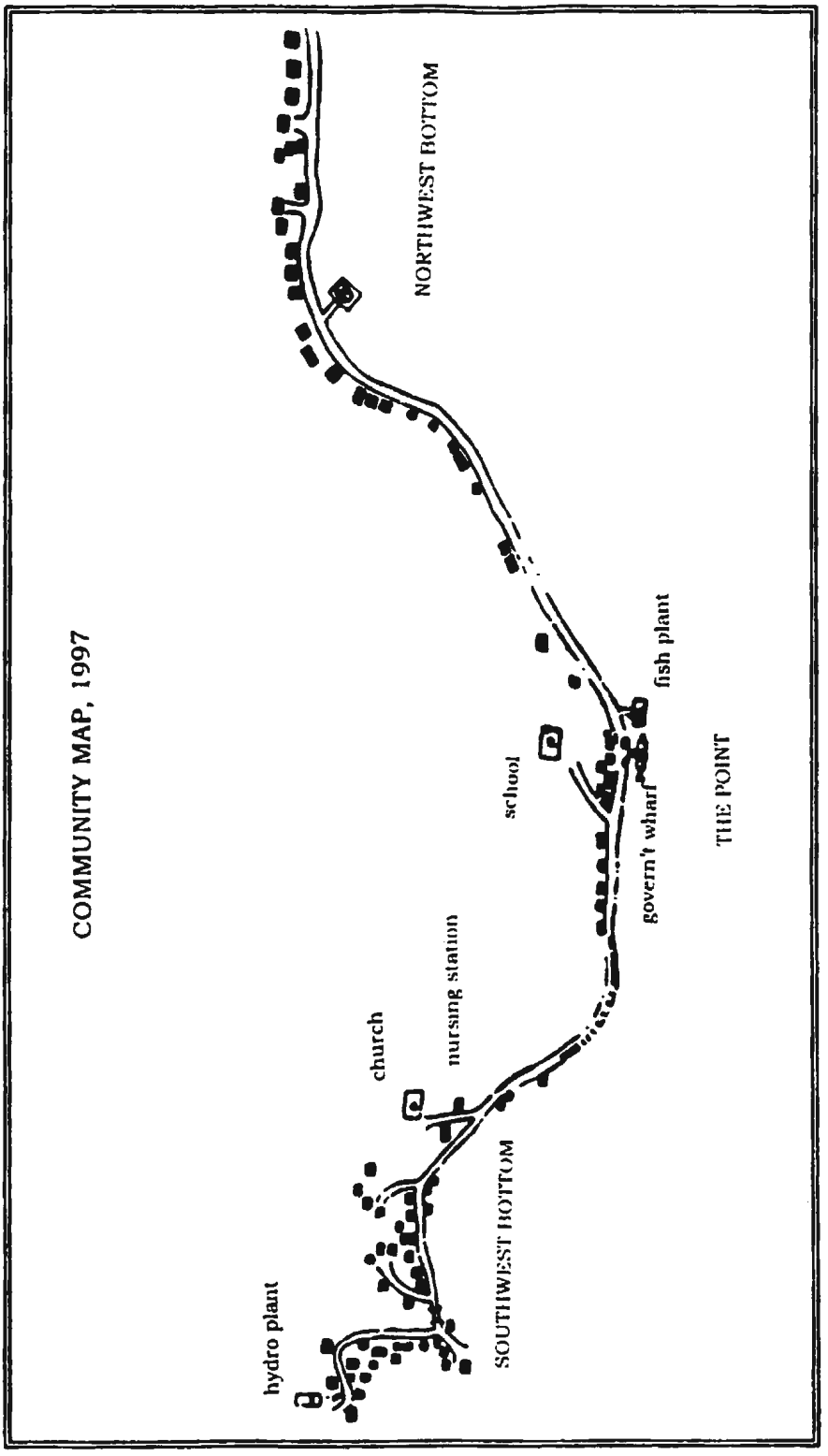


Figure 3:3 - Map of Great Harbour Deep



becomes the focus of everyone's attention. The physical environment of the community is described as:

> well-forested with evergreens, abounding in blueberries, squashberries, raspberries, mushrooms and ferns plus wildlife such as moose, rabbits, partridge, fox, beaver -to name a few.
>
> (Gunness-Davis 1973:20)

The community is geographically divided into three sections (see Figure 3:3, p 44) - the Northwest Bottom, the Point and the Southwest Bottom. The settlers of the original community built their homes in the Southwest Bottom - with most of the businesses and public services located on the Point. The majority of Northwest Bottom residents are people who moved into the community from the outer coves.

The Northwest Bottom contains twenty-five houses - of which five are empty --three of these families having left in the summer of 1997. The community dump site, the new cemetery, the Islandview Community Hall, one retail outlet (referred to as 'the shop'), and numerous small wharfs and stages also are located there. The Point has seventeen houses of which three are empty. One of these houses, however, was recently purchased as a summer cottage. The Point also

contains St. Peter's School (Kindergarten to Grade Nine), the Great Harbour Deep fish plant, the Government Wharf, the main retail/grocery outlet, St. Peter's Anglican Church, and the Harbour Deep Nursing Station. In the Southwest Bottom, there are thirty-four houses - of which six have been abandoned in recent years. The Hydro Plant, the post office, one small retail/grocery outlet, and a subsidiary 'shop' of the major shopkeeper (in the basement of a family home) are also located in this section of town. Residents generally alternate between the three main shops in the community when they buy their foodstuffs and other necessities, depending on the products they need. Yet, most families have long-standing accounts with the main 'merchant.'

The nearest neighbouring communities are: Jackson's Arm (located in the south-west corner of White Bay), a three-hour ferry ride (two hours by speedboat in good weather) away, and Englee (on the northern tip of White Bay), accessible by a four-hour longliner ride. Harbour Deep residents also rely on a float/ski plane during winter and late spring (when the break up of spring ice does not prevent landing in the harbour). Government chartered helicopter trips and snowmobile trips 'in the country' (across the Peninsula to

Hawke's Bay and Port Saunders) completes residents' seasonal cycle of transportation in and out of the community. Ferry and air services are heavily subsidized by the provincial government, with the ferry ride costing less than ten dollars and the plane about thirty dollars per passenger, one way (to Jackson's Arm).

I shall use the remainder of this chapter to place the people and their social lives within the context of the physical environment, I have just discussed.

3.3 Settlement history

The inlet originally known as Orange Bay (now Harbour Deep) has a long history of occupancy. According to the Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador (Smallwood, Horan, Pitt and Riggs (eds.)1986:708-710), Orange Bay was the site of a French fishing station. There were approximately forty men stationed there each summer in the 1660s. The English name of Great Harbour Deep appeared for the first time on a Cook and Lane map in 1775. The earliest English settlers during the late 1700s were seal hunters from the Twillingate and Spaniards Bay region, who travelled to the area every

winter and spring. The vast salmon and cod resources eventually led early settlers to build homes in the small outer coves, like Cats Cove, Jacks Cove and Duggans Cove, near the harbour's mouth (see Figure 3:2, p.43). An 1868 census reports a population of fifty-nine in Harbour Deep (1986:709). Several of the family names of these early settlers --Ropson, Randell, Pittman, and Elgar-- are still found in the community today.

Harbour Deep has been settlers' destination of choice at various times in this century. Resettlement from the outer coves into Harbour Deep occurred in two separate waves. In 1924, new residents were lured by the promise of employment at a newly-built barking mill, designed to strip bark from felled logs. Although there were several attempts --from the 1920s to the early 1970s-- to establish a lumber industry in the area, most did not last more than a few years. This was due mainly to the prohibitive cost of transporting the product out of the area. During the mid 1920s, a local school teacher was supposed to travel from settlement to settlement but found such travel impractical. He pushed to have all school-aged children brought into one centralized location, Harbour Deep. The second wave of new residents arrived in 1963 when the

remaining residents of Northeast Arm were resettled as part of a province-wide relocation project. This was also the beginning of a 'resettlement ethos' which became part of the residents' discourse about the community and its future; accordingly, I devote the next section to this issue.

3.3.1 *resettlement: the on-going debate*

There were three resettlement programs in Newfoundland from 1954 to 1972 which have received considerable study. These studies were directed at assessing the process, and the social and economic implications, of resettlement. Much of this research was accomplished by social scientists associated with the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland (see Iverson and Matthews 1968, Skolnik 1968, Robb and Robb 1969, Wadel 1969, Matthews 1976). Most of the findings concluded that the social cost of relocating entire communities was overlooked for the "greater good" -- namely, the cost-saving of government by not having to provide social and physical infrastructure to small, isolated communities. According to an early report, dissatisfaction with the relocation process was prominent

among the people affected, with many feeling that they had been coerced into resettling (Iverson and Matthews 1968: 142).

In his analysis of Iverson and Matthews' findings, Skolnik (1968) points out that they had expressed "concern over the danger of over-emphasizing fisheries development at the expense of the other aspects of Newfoundland's economic life" (1968:4). Much of the impetus behind the idea of resettlement seemed to center on the desire to trade the labour intensive small boat inshore fishery for the more capital intensive offshore trawler fishery. This meant that the residents of small coastal communities, who depended on the inshore fishery for their livelihood, had to be weaned from this existence and given the opportunity to become productive members of another type of workforce.

It has been surmised that the government initiative of the complete relocation of small communities (in the 1950s and 1960s) was based on cost efficiency (Copes 1972:102). As made evident by the above studies, insufficient thought was put into the resettlement of residents and the future development of the "growth centres." This view has gained more support during the thirty years since the programs' commencement. In his comments on resettlement, Skolnik points out that from a

purely economic perspective the resettled isolated communities were judged not only on the high costs of basic services, "but the magnitude of these costs relative to the economic base of the community" (1969:5). Centralization and urbanization were seen as the most economically feasible means for the provincial government to provide adequate services to the former residents of the small, isolated villages that dotted the vast Newfoundland coastline. In addition, the government saw it as especially prudent to increase the tax revenue base of those communities which had viable economies. This leads to the question of what criteria were used in the identification of potential "growth centres"? In the case of Harbour Deep, one large village was created in an isolated fjord in northern Newfoundland. It was a prosperous inshore fishing locale, and through the use of subsistence activities (such as wood-cutting and home gardens) residents were, for the most part, self-sufficient. Yet, it seems that little (if any) thought was given to the impact a sudden increase in population would have on the future self-sufficiency of residents who were barely subsisting themselves.

The issues surrounding government arranged resettlement are etched into the ethos of the community: a fact that was

made abundantly clear during my field stay in Harbour Deep. The possibility of resettling arises periodically arises as discontented residents contemplate how to better their living situation. For many residents, their fear of the imminent demise of the community is aggravated by the current state of the fishery, the exodus of young people for educational purposes, and a declining birth rate.

As recently as 1993[15], there was a major debate within the community that divided residents into two camps --those for and those against resettlement. A series of articles in the St. John's Evening Telegram (October 1, 1993, p.4) refer to the resettlement debate in light of the response it fostered from representatives of the provincial government in the late 1980s. The region's Member of the House of Assembly (M.H.A.) at the time, Paul Shelley, took the concerns of residents seriously and held a town meeting in order to allow them a forum in which to voice their concerns. The premier, Clyde Wells, was dismissive of the entire debate, emphatically

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[15] During the fall of 1999, as revisions to this thesis were being made, the community of Harbour Deep and the fact that 84 percent of residents had voted for government compensated resettlement made national news. The response from the provincial government was that the compensation issue would not be broached unless 100 percent of residents agreed with resettlement.

stating that resettlement was not a solution to the economic troubles plaguing rural Newfoundland communities and that the government did not support resettlement. Wells made specific reference to the provincial government's recently released Strategic Economic Plan --its goal being to foster new economic development throughout the province. Yet, despite this apparent reassurance, he did go on to say that it was impossible for government to take on the responsibility for all 700 existing rural communities:

> So the sensible thing to do is to try and make sure that you <u>have economic activity fairly distributed in certain areas</u> around the province.
>
> (Evening Telegram, Oct 1/93 -emphasis added)

One possible interpretation of Wells' remark is that resettlement is only fostered surreptitiously. If this is the case, the government is not required to provide direct support to residents who decide of their own accord to move. It remains to be seen if Harbour Deep residents will choose to move without government assistance.

Harbour Deep's mayor during the 1993 resettlement debate happened to be the community's nurse practitioner, who had

married into the community some years previous. At the time, and up to the beginning of my field stay, the mayor was adamant that Harbour Deep had potential as a tourist locale. But she believed it was necessary for residents to adopt a more positive outlook and accentuate the positive aspects of the community (such as the pristine natural environment and quiet solitude in contrast to urban centres), if this was to come to fruition. Although she was highly respected as a health care professional in the community, many residents rejected her proposal as unrealistic. In particular, her ideas on tourism and home-based industries were not accepted.

In my discussions with several residents on this issue, it became evident that strong opinions on both sides were still in contention. The varying positions seemed to cut across age, education and gender lines: no single group of residents appeared to hold a particular view point. With the resignation of the aforementioned nurse practitioner, at the start of my field stay, talk of resettling resurfaced.

The grade Seven-through-Nine school teacher (himself born and raised in the community), decided that this was the appropriate time to focus the attention of graduating students on the future of their community. The class --consisting of

three Grade Seven students, four Grade Eight students, and eight Grade Nine students-- were given a community survey as their final assignment of the school year. Nine different sets of students (some paired up to do the survey, some did not) utilized a questionnaire to survey residents, including single adults and married men and women. The format and questions for the survey were discussed in class, with prompting from the teacher about which questions should be asked. I requested and received the students' permission to read through the reports on the day they were submitted to the teacher (see Table 3:1). Of the nine reports, eight predicted the 'death' of the community; the exception suggested that Harbour Deep would survive, although it may be reduced in population size.

Interestingly, the students' reaction to the survey results (as contained in the commentary of their reports) were split along gender lines. Although each report lamented the demise of the community, the female students were more willing to face up to the "cold hard truth" (as one put it). One young woman commented that Harbour Deep was a wonderful community, but compared it to "a body trying to fight off diseases and one of these days it will not be able to cope

Table 3:1

Results of Student Survey on the Future of the Community

Total # surveyed	104
# who agree w/ resettlement	69
# who disagree w/ resettlement	35
# who want improvements to education system in the community	104
# who want a road link for the community	85
# who do not want a road link	16
# who feel the community needs two Nurse Practitioners	93
# of people who feel the community can survive beyond the next ten years	20
# who feel it will not survive past the next ten years	84

and Harbour Deep will die." She concluded that Harbour Deep had a "slim chance of surviving," and that it "may survive for a while but not for very long." She drew this conclusion from the problems of unemployment and the community's unsatisfactory school system. Both of which point to forced migration and the present possibility that there would be no health care professional residing in the community. The reaction of the male students to the conclusion that the

community was dying was a defensive one. The young men of Harbour Deep have a deeper sense of connection to the community through their extra-curricular activities such as hunting, sport fishing, and fixing up old cars and boats. They have a sense of righteous justification --that they have a inherent right to the freedom of living where and how they want-- which has been passed on to them by their fathers (Davis 1983c). One young man suggested that out-migration was "due to people forgetting their cultures." He went on to say that "here in Harbour Deep people are becoming more modern and getting more like the people outside of here."

The notion of 'getting more like the people outside of here' surfaces in the resettlement debate that occasionally occurs among residents. The best indicator of people's reaction to the issue of resettlement seems to be life satisfaction: that is, how content they are with life in Harbour Deep. Which side of the resettlement debate a resident is on appeared to have less to do with length of residency or attachment to the community than it had to do with the individual's exposure to and enjoyment of other communities and what life would be like elsewhere. Access to amenities and services such as libraries, shopping malls and

recreational activities, are key indicators of the quality of life. Young adolescents and the elderly --those with less exposure to other communities (in terms of first-hand contact), and no dependents to care for-- are the most vocal in their belief that Harbour Deep remains a viable community. This is especially true of young men who wish to follow the customs of their fathers and grandfathers, especially as they apply to subsistence practices.

Furthermore, it is important to note that prior to the resettlement of residents from the outer coves, the community of Harbour Deep followed a pattern of "fjordal ecology" (see Paine 1965). A fjordal ecology system is characterized by the seasonal exploitation of different resources. Each of these seasonal resources usually makes an important subsistence contribution to the [local] economy. As well, there is a low limit to the population able to support itself in a fjord and a dispersal of small settlements around the fjord (Paine 1965:14). Prior to the relocation of the outer cove residents into the community of Harbour Deep (early 1940s and earlier) there was a delicate balance between the various subsistence activities used by residents and their dependency on outside markets. With the influx of residents from the outer coves,

sparse land resources in the community of Harbour Deep were used for building homes at the expense of household gardens.

Many of the newer homes were built on the site of former gardens, due to lack of space. The conscious decision to build on arable land is due to the fact that the community has been built on a lip of land cushioned between the ocean and the mountains. As a consequence, there were few vegetable gardens in the community by 1997. Discussions with older residents about where the gardens used to be located make it abuntantly clear that tending a garden is considered old-fashioned household work. As such, most residents have given up gardening. This more modern attitude has entailed an increased dependency on groceries brought in by the two local retailers.

Due to the community's remote location and transport difficulties, however, shipments of groceries can be delayed for weeks. My entrance into the community via helicopter during the spring ice break-up, was accompanied by a large shipment of groceries, specifically vegetables and staples such as flour and sugar. The main local retailer had misjudged the amount of supplies needed to carry residents over to spring break up. In response to residents' complaints

during a three-week period without vegetables, an order was placed with the wholesaler and a helicopter chartered. Subsequently, groceries carried additional freight charges. The issues of residents' discontent and their familiarity with resettlement factor greatly in my discussion of the options open to women in Harbour Deep (see chapter five).

3.4 A comparison over twenty-six years[16]

During my field stay in Harbour Deep there was no detectable difference in relations between members of the community living in the various sections, nor between those who have lived in the community longer than others. The only exception to this is that people seem to associate more with those who live nearby. These people are more readily accessible and usually closely related. One woman, a life-long resident of the community, commented to me that in my 'making the rounds' of the community I had been inside more

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16 The first anthropological study of Harbour Deep was a spatial analysis of the community. It was conducted by Marget Gunness Davis --MA candidate with the Department of Anthropology at Memorial University-- in 1971. As such, I felt that this would make a good comparison for my work in Harbour Deep. See Appendix A for a pictorial comparison of the community using photographs taken by Gunness-Davis and myself.

homes in the other Bottom than she had. Yet, it seems that this was much more a matter of convenience than due to any special attachment between kin versus other members of the community. The absence of segregation is partially explained by the fact that many of the early settlers of this region were members of extended families. Just about everyone in the community is a distant cousin, or married to a distant cousin, of someone else. In many cases, resettled people already had family relations living in Harbour Deep before moving in from the outer coves.

In her thesis on Harbour Deep, based on field work conducted in 1971, Gunness-Davis found a lack of social cohesion in the community. Social interaction was limited to those households immediately next to one another, with little to no interaction between households in the three different sections of town. This was especially the case for women tied to the responsibilities of keeping house and raising children. As Gunness-Davis suggests:

> ...the community's three sections are very distinctive localities with defined attributes...attitudes are based on gross sectional generalizations as to the type of people found elsewhere in the community. (1979: 103)

There are several reasons why social interaction is no longer limited to the section of the community residents reside in:

1) There were approximately twelve fewer houses in 1971 and they were more dispersed (many households had gardens nearby). At the time of Gunness-Davis' field stay, only a narrow trail, including several rickety bridges, wound through the community; distance and difficulties in travelling throughout the community would have been off-setting, especially for women with small children and a household to run. Since 1971, the road within the community has been widened and upgraded numerous times. There are fewer bridges, as a great deal of blasting through the granite mountain sides and cliffs has occurred. There also has been a significant increase in the number of motorized vehicles in the community- from one battered truck in 1971, to close to thirty vehicles in 1997.

2) Gunness-Davis' field work was conducted prior to the opening of the Harbour Deep fish plant in the mid-70s. This led local fishers to utilize a variety of species --herring, mackerel, flounder, lump roe, capelin and crab. The plant employed approximately fifty people, most of whom were women, which contributed to their getting out of the home more and

socializing with each other on a daily basis. This, in turn, led to an expansion of the women's social networks.

3) Gunness-Davis' fieldwork pre-dates the introduction of telephone service and cable television to the community, both of which have altered social relations in various ways. She was present, though, three years after Harbour Deep had been connected to the province's electrical grid and nine years after the first Nursing Station had been built. Simply put, Gunness-Davis' research occurred in a period of rapid change in the community.

Telephones were installed in the community in 1974. The reliance on telephones was cited by older residents as a major contributing factor to the decline of regular weekly visits between neighbours and family members. The telephone made it possible for residents (especially women, who spend most of the day indoors) to contact one another and keep in touch without having to take the time out of their daily activities to trek across the community.

Cable television service began in December, 1987. The nurse working in the community at the time described this as a major event. Initially, residents were totally engrossed and many television sets were left on twenty-four hours a day.

People even stopped going to greet the ferry --their main connection to the outside world-- as they had done previously. The arrival and departure of the ferry is an event that had once literally united members of the community in their interest and curiosity. Cable television gave women and children, many of whom did little travelling outside the community, a taste of what attitudes and norms were like elsewhere, without leaving the comfort of their homes.

4) There has been an increase in the frequency of travel by residents. During the twenty-six year period between the field studies the bi-monthly coastal steamer was replaced by a regular ferry service --every second day during the summer. Ferry service between Harbour Deep, Jackson's Arm, and Englee began in 1984. During the winter months, there is also twice weekly regular air service (two passengers with luggage at a time in a float/ski plane). Although most of the male residents have spent their lives at sea, many of the women of the community get violently sea-sick. Hence, women have travelled less than men. By 1997, travel outside of Harbour Deep was more frequent (particularly during the winter, when the community feels more cut off from the rest of the world especially for the women who live there), less time consuming,

and less risky than it once was. Residents, particularly the women through an increase in travel, have gained first-hand knowledge (beyond the television) of the lifestyles and ways of others.

Another significant finding of Gunness-Davis that differed from my own study was the use of the term 'neighbour' among residents of Harbour Deep. Gunness-Davis noted, with interest, that most residents referred to one another by kinship terms such as 'Aunt' and 'Uncle'. Rather than classifying them as friends or neighbours, residents of the community were 'family.' As Gunness-Davis describes the situation, "no one is referred to as 'neighbour' in Harbour Deep --everyone is called by name or by relationship reference" (1979:103). The relationship reference of 'Aunt' and 'Uncle' were used even if no real family connection existed.

In contrast to Gunness-Davis' findings, I was struck in 1997 by the frequency which 'neighbour' was used in daily conversation. The word was used informally to depict those who were 'easy-going' and worthy of respect. It was a common occurrence for someone, whether in reference to a family member or not, to make the comment that the person was or was

not a 'good neighbour.' The following are excerpts from a discussion in which a young girl describes her day to her mother and me. It includes two examples of the common use of the word neighbour:

> "She bawled at us and told us to get out of her yard. I tell you, she's no neighbour!"
>
> "Nan let me help make the bread this morning, she's some neighbour!

Only members of the immediate family were referred to by kin terms. (e.g. 'Mom', 'Dad', 'Nan' and 'Pop'). I surmised that this change may signify a widening world view specifically in terms of the individual's place within society -a shift from the local to a more global perspective.

In describing to me the situation thirty years ago when the last of the 'outsiders' moved into Harbour Deep, long-time residents commented that the newest members of the community were easy to pick out, even among a crowd of people, as they walked differently than people from Harbour Deep. Reference was also made to the fact that they spoke differently and that the women had very different ideas about 'keeping house.' Another commonly cited characteristic was that they were not

as friendly, and had a tendency to keep to themselves (that is, their own immediate family members). Among those I spoke with whom had relocated into Harbour Deep, the general consensus was that while their community of origin was probably a better location for fishing and having a garden, the move to Harbour Deep permitted access to schooling, shops and a telegraph office. As suggested by the young men reporting on their school survey, mentioned earlier, the community of Harbour Deep is no longer as insular as it had once been.

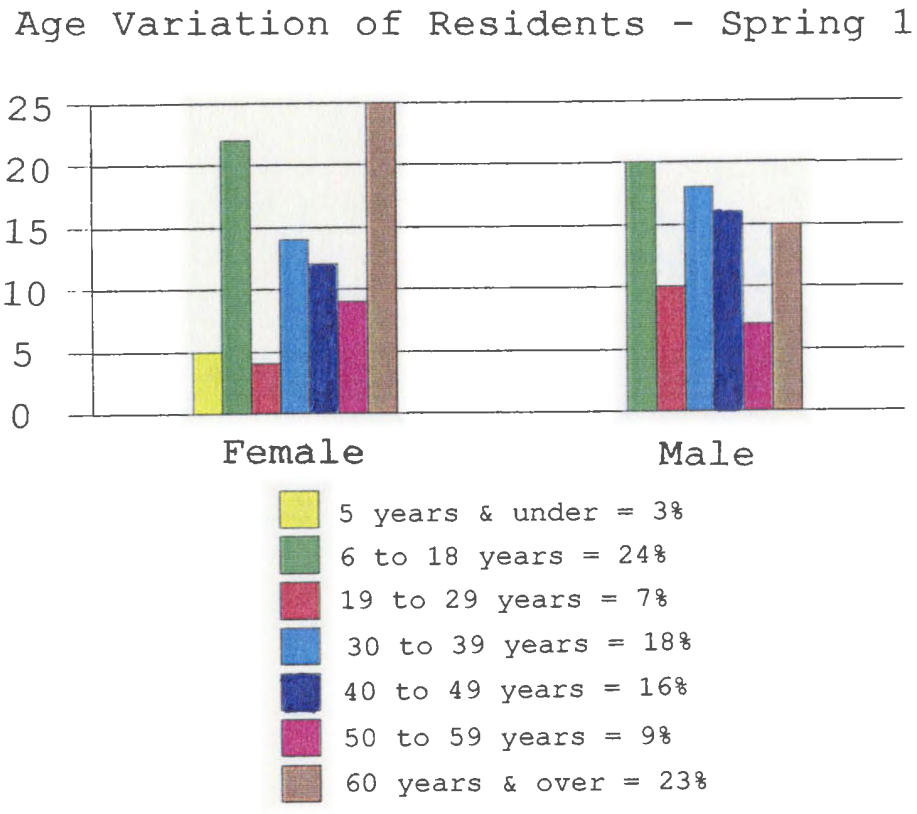
3.4.1 *demographics*

During my field stay in 1997 (May to August) the population of Harbour Deep was 177 (see Figure 3:4, p.68). However, Gunness- Davis reported the population in 1971 as being approximately three hundred and eight. In effect, there has been a fifty-seven percent decrease in population since 1971 (a loss of one hundred and thirty one residents).

As Figure 3:4 clearly shows the two biggest age categories are six to eighteen years old and sixty and over. Add to this the five years and under age category and they

represent just under fifty percent of the community's total population. This translates into a significant proportion of

Figure 3:4



the population being at an age that is either too old or too young to work and incapable of living independently of others. Single older women outnumber single older men, whereas single young men outnumber single young women. For older residents, the gender discrepancy may be explained by women having a longer life span; in the case of the younger adults, the

gender discrepancy appears to be directly linked to education and career choices[17]. The younger men in their twenties still living in Harbour Deep are among those who chose the fishery over any alternative career path. Several of these men quit school rather than leave the community to advance to high school.

3.4.2 *education*

St. Peter's is the only school in Harbour Deep; it instructs students from Kindergarten to Grade Nine. It is a three room structure without a cafeteria or gym. Three teachers are assigned to the school and the grades are equally divided between them -Kindergarten to Grade Two, alternating Grade Three- Grade Four to Grade Six, and Grade Seven to Grade Nine. There were forty two pupils for the school year 1996-97. In September 1997, eight students (five boys and three girls) left the community to board and attend Grade Ten in Deer Lake, NF. The trend over the past few years is that once

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[17] It is not uncommon in rural areas for young adult females to leave in greater numbers than young adult males. For more on this see Scheper-Hughes 1979. As well, Davis (1993:469) points out that young women are more likely to value education and less likely to have a deep attachment to place as compared with their male counterparts.

young people leave the community to attend school elsewhere, they do not return to live in Harbour Deep. This has not always been the case though.

Things began to change when the Newfoundland school system underwent a radical change in the early 1970s, with the addition of Grade Twelve to the senior high school program. Harbour Deep parents' assessment of the current system of schooling -with children having to leave to complete high school at a considerable distance- can be best described as a combination of outrage and dismay. Mothers rather than fathers were more open in expressing their pain to me. They were quick to lament that those parents directly involved, in the beginning, should never have allowed the out-migration of minors to start in the first place.

3.4.3 *economics*

Perhaps, the most dramatic change for women in rural Newfoundland involves their role in the fishery as a result of shifts in the mode of fish production within the province (see McGrath, Neis and Porter 1995, Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988, Antler 1977). Prior to the 1960s, fresh cod landings went

through a salt fish processing regime. With the advent of fish plants and refrigerated trawlers in the 1960s, wage-work for women in the factory processing regime began for the frozen fish markets.

Working in a fish plant meant a tremendous change for most women, as this was their first experience receiving their own pay-cheque for their work in the fishery. Many of these women relished working at the plant. They had a legitimate reason for getting out of the house and interacting with others. Of course, this did not mean being excused from their housekeeping and child rearing duties; but, it was something that women could do, and did do, for themselves. The money a woman made from working at the fish plant was her own money. It was usually kept separate from the household and personal extras (see Porter 1993). Her money was put to good use (as she decided), either by being invested in the family home or in the education of the children. Over their lifetimes, many women poured all extra money into 'renovations' such as indoor plumbing, new windows, insulation, and better quality siding. A common response heard during discussions about the possibility of moving or resettlement was, "And what about this house? There's no chance at getting anything for it, with

everyone else leaving!"

The Harbour Deep fish plant opened in the late sixties, and employed close to fifty women in the community. This accounts for the majority of middle-aged and younger women living there. The fish plant was their primary source of income. So, with the plant's closure in 1990, the women have no other wage labour options or job alternatives open to them. The personalization[18] of work roles outside the family unit created a greater sense of autonomy and the current generation of thirty to mid-forties women were given a taste of what it was like to work for oneself.

A substantial portion of women's economic contributions to their household economies was terminated with the closure of the fish plant. This has marked a change in the sources of income. Several women have resorted to knitting on a large scale as a way of earning cash --signifying a higher reliance on receiving cash for activities that were traditionally performed without pay. As such, this higher reliance on cash for performing certain tasks includes the fact that several of the older women in the community pay relatives/neighbours for

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[18] Through use of this term I am referring to the self-identification and sense of self worth these women derived from their jobs.

performing small household tasks for them.

In the wake of the Moratorium, many rural Newfoundland women are now left with few options, in terms of self-identity and the maintenance of a sense of self-worth. They are dissatisfied with the effect the current, and seemingly ever-lasting, moratorium has had on their lives and their families. They talk of feeling 'trapped'; there is a definite sense of being 'stuck' in the situation in which they find themselves. For many women, picking up and moving on would entail leaving the only community they have ever called home for the uncertainty of starting over somewhere else. Such a move would also mean abandoning their houses, as they cannot be sold --even at cost.

3.5 Summary

Residents of Harbour Deep have had to deal with the difficulties of living in a remote location that have been exacerbated by the changing world around them. Far from improving their living situations, changes in communications technology and transportation have only accentuated what is lacking and left residents with much to grapple with.

Concerns for the future are in fluctuation now more than ever before. With the down-sizing of the fishery, and no prospects for the development of other resource-based industries, younger inhabitants have no choice but to move away. This has changed the dynamics of the community: just as large extended families were part of the community's past, now the elderly are no longer being cared for in their own homes by family members. The provision of health care services, as discussed in the next chapter, has also changed over time, and has had a significant impact on the expectations of rural residents.

CHAPTER 4: A DISCUSSION OF HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the general background of the community's experience with social change through a discussion of the changes in health care in the twentieth century. My purpose in doing so is to ground the present socio-economic situation in Harbour Deep within a historical context -- specifically focusing on the history of health care and social change in the Northern region of Newfoundland and Labrador. The history of health care in this region is linked to the history of social change in the region and colours the viewpoints and expectations of medical personnel and residents alike. The chapter begins with a synopsis of the community's social and health care history. I then introduce the account of one elderly resident to illustrate how health care has been experienced at the individual level. The chapter concludes with consideration of the origins of the current health care services in the region. This includes an examination of where the provision of health care stands today from the standpoint

of both the local health professionals and community residents. These community and professional viewpoints are important due to the distinctive history and structure of professional health care service in Northern Newfoundland.

4.2 Background information

The peopling of Newfoundland (see Hiller and Neary 1980, Britan 1979, Mannion (ed) 1977, Matthews 1973, Cell 1969) has been the subject of much discussion and debate in recent years. One of the controversial issues is whether or not settlement was prohibited year round during the initial period of Europeans involvement in the Newfoundland fishery. It is commonly held that it was not legal to settle in Newfoundland until the early 1800's (Davis 1983a:39, Handcock 1977:16, Faris 1966:8). However, the existence of several colonies and fishing stations illustrate that there were people living here prior to that time (Matthews 1976:13). Thus, the aforementioned prohibition has been advanced as one of the main factors in the selection of such isolated spots like Harbour Deep for settlement.

Geography has played a large role in the lives of

residents of communities such as Harbour Deep. The location of a community was initially selected based on a number of very important criteria, such as, accessibility to good fishing grounds, and a protected/sheltered harbour (see Head 1976: 182). Whatever the historical circumstances it is clear that the first European immigrants who settled in the bays and headlands around the coast of Newfoundland adjusted quickly -- out of necessity-- and developed the demanding, subsistence and primary production lifestyle that came with the locale. This is suggested in the following statement by Mannion:

> in virtually all parts of Newfoundland, sedentary settlement would have been extremely precarious, indeed probably impossible, without large-scale dependence on other locally exploitable resources. (1977:.2)

The precarious nature of the situation facing early residents of coastal Newfoundland dictated an attitude of self sufficiency at the household and community level. It instilled a survivalist orientation (of doing for one's self) which entailed depending as little as possible on anyone else outside the immediate family (see Davis 1989: 65). People lived their lives by doing whatever had to be done in order to

ensure continued existence of the individual or family unit. And I suggest that this is a mentality which is tightly interwoven with the ideal of egalitarianism that rural Newfoundland has become known for (see Davis 1983a, Wadel 1973, Firestone 1967, Faris 1966, Szwed 1966).

Swzed (1966) points out that the egalitarian ethic is an enforced standard and that:

> it is not so much an ideology that elevates the lowest to the level of the highest, as it is a mechanism that attempts to reduce the highest to the level of the lowest.
>
> (1966:84)

It is seen as essential within traditional Newfoundland communities for individuals, families, neighbours to be secure in the knowledge that one person is no better, no more special, no more well off than anyone else. Szwed sums this up succinctly when he makes reference to the fact that:

> Those who attempt or succeed at increasing their own holdings are seen as disrupting the balance of local resources. One person's gain must be accomplished only at a loss of others.
>
> (1966:84)

Hence, it is essential for the dual purpose of group

solidarity and the well-being of the community as a whole, that individuals avoid boastful displays of good fortune and well being. In Harbour Deep, such a mentality leads to the resentment and distain of residents toward the advancement of any one individual into a leadership role be it the position of town mayor, or social group leader.

The difficult circumstances at the time of early settlement in Harbour Deep lead to an egalitarian ethic similar to that discussed by Firestone (1967: 41). Their common class affiliations created bonds of solidarity that contributed to community survival in times of hardship. With everyone facing similar hardships and difficulties there was little advantage to being perceived as being in a better financial situation when compared to anyone else in the community. This served to maintain the idealized version of community, comradeship and cooperation held by residents. The idealized notion of group solidarity held equality as its basic premise. Even so, the reality of the situation was "to each her/his own." This contradiction lead to certain obligations that had to be met among residents of the community. The type and extent of the obligations varied according to family circumstances as well as individual

dispositions and skills. The idealized sense of community and the reality of social interactions among residents are often contradictory. However, mutual survival with the related dependency on others in times of hardship only went so far before it was overridden by the need of residents to 'keep up appearances.' The egalitarian ethic mandate holds not only that no one resident be any better than the rest, but, also that no one resident lag significantly behind the rest: either scenario being to the detriment of the community.

According to residents of Harbour Deep, in the past it was common, when the individual or family unit did encounter some economic or personal difficulty (not including illness, accidents, or death) it was dealt with by notifying as few people as possible. Outsiders, including community members without family ties-- did not hear the details of what the exact hardship was or whether or not they could help. This usually meant that instead of bringing financial or social difficulties to the attention of friends and neighbours, residents dealt directly with the local merchant, the only individual in the community with the financial resources available to assist them. This course of action served to keep up the facade of coping successfully, for very few would

want others to think that they were unable to cope as well as anyone else.

In carrying this a step further, the ideal of equality has had a significant impact on how residents deal with various government agencies. Most residents take great pride in the customary self-sufficiency --part of the reason Harbour Deep residents do not open up to each other about the difficulties they face. Hence, they are hesitant to admit when outside help is needed. Residents tend to band together as a "united front" when dealing with outside agencies. Unfortunately, this mode of action may have served residents better in the past, prior to their means of self sufficiency being altered. Prior to Confederation there was little government intervention with regard to their subsistence practices, such as wood cutting and hunting (McGrath 1992). Now residents have to obtain licenses and obey laws with regard to such activities. As well, government programs such as employment insurance, old age pensions, and family allowances have lessened residents' reliance on self sufficient activities. It is in large part due to this line of thinking that they rationalize their reliance on government support as being 'their right' when no other options are

available to them (Davis 1997:9). Furthermore, a shared interdependency on government support placed a heightened importance on the development and prevalence of an egalitarian ethic, on the community level. Although many do rely on government support throughout the year, financial need and how such needs are met are still not topics of discussion among community residents.

Residents of Newfoundland's northern regions were largely left to fend for themselves until recently --a circumstance due in part to their distance from St. John's, the province's capital. This circumstance fostered community egalitarianism, as well as a lack of regional political voice. It is a situation that did not change with Confederation. Nevertheless, Confederation did signify the beginning of federal income supplements in the form of family allowance ('baby bonuses'), old age pensions, and unemployment insurance. In April, 1949, residents in rural fishing villages throughout Newfoundland went from sole reliance on their own abilities to provide for their families to having the same rights as other Canadians to federal funds to supplement household income. While this access to state coffers helped considerably, it had a downside.

As discussed by Brody (1973: 141), the influx of cash from outside sources in rural Ireland tended to wreak havoc with traditional patterns of subsistence. This is similar to what I suggest has occurred in Harbour Deep. Brody sees money from outside sources (e.g., remittances home from emigrant children) as an alternative to subsistence. And with a down-turn in the traditional way of life on Ireland's west coast, there was more security to be found in reliance on these outside sources. For rural Newfoundland, it is the social and economic programs funded by both provincial and federal governments that contribute to a decline in the traditional pattern of subsistence. As Brody succinctly puts it, the money "represents a functional alternative within a changed situation"(p 141). However, in the case of Newfoundland communities like Harbour Deep, when the outside sources of cash disappeared (as is now happening with social and economic programs in the 1990s), there is little to fall back on.

4.2.1 *Contemporary health care services*

During the early part of this century, people of Northern Newfoundland and Labrador who made their living

participating in the lucrative fish trade relied on a coastal steamer from St. John's. Depending on the urban schedule of the particular doctor, as well as weather conditions the ship would make one or two visits a year carrying supplies and occasional passengers. Sometimes, though, weather conditions were such that the steamer would not dock at all, bypassing the community altogether until the next trip.

The beginning of the end of this float-by system of medical care occurred in 1892 with the visit of a steamer (to the island and Labrador coast) owned by the Mission of Deep Sea Fishers (MDSF) from Great Britain. The mandate of this organization was to provide for the social and spiritual well-being of fisherpersons within the North Atlantic. Up to the 1892 visit by Grenfell to Newfoundland and Labrador, the MDSF had mainly concerned itself with the region of the North Atlantic surrounding the British Isles. The desperate state of affairs in the communities of northern Newfoundland and Labrador was brought to the attention of the Mission's Board by a member who had just returned from a visit to Canada (see Rompkey 1992, Thomas 1997). On his urging, it was decided that a ship would be sent across the Atlantic to investigate the situation. A young British doctor, Wilfred Grenfell, was

the ship's doctor, and that first trip to the coast of northern Newfoundland and Labrador sparked the beginning of a health care legacy that continues in his name to the present day.

Grenfell was heart-sick at the poverty and deprivation he witnessed among the residents of these small Newfoundland and Labrador villages. During this first visit he pledged to make a difference and to improve the lives of these poor fishers and their families. He returned to the region in 1893 with two doctors and two nurses. The first cottage hospital was established in Battle Harbour, along the southern Labrador coast, that same year (Rompkey 1992). This marked the beginning of the provision of health care services in the form of a traveling clinic that went from village to village, via steamer, during late spring to early fall. Up to this time, residents had to deal with medical emergencies and various routine medical problems without professional medical help. Grenfell's interest went beyond tending to the health care needs of residents. He believed that the maintenance of a good mind, body and soul was the key to leading a good Christian life.

Grenfell quickly took on the role of 'champion of

underdog.' He initiated fund-raising tours throughout Britain, Canada and the United States. The scope of his work went beyond treating the physical ailments of his patients. He took on the challenge of altering their economic reliance on fish merchants,[19] which he saw as the root cause of the poverty and sickness that plagued the fisher families. His unconventional tactics included the organization of cooperatives and the encouragement of local crafts to help free residents from their indentureship to fish merchants. However, his activities on behalf of the fisherfolk of Newfoundland and Labrador conflicted with the mandate of the Royal National Mission for Deep Sea Fishers (Rompkey 1992: 102). This led to the formation of the International Grenfell Association (IGA) in 1912. The IGA (referred to by many as the "Grenfell Mission") took control of the activities. Wilfred Grenfell was the Superintendent of this new organization, and as such his commitment to the health and welfare of the residents of Northern Newfoundland and coastal Labrador gained new momentum. By 1914 the organization had expanded to include four hospitals and six nursing stations along the Labrador coast, northern Newfoundland coast, and the

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[19] Refer to the definition of the truck system, p 29.

Quebec "north shore." In 1927, a modern hospital opened in St. Anthony, which became the base for IGA activities.

Prior to the Harbour Deep Nursing Station being opened in the 1960s, residents relied on visits by the nurse or doctor from the Englee nursing station (three hours north by boat in good weather). Between these visits the tendency was to depend heavily on home remedies and the knowledge of local individuals, such as midwives and 'healers.' Aside from midwives and one woman in particular, Aunt 'Marta' (mentioned in greater detail in the next chapter, see p. 119), there were local individuals that specialized in the healing of certain afflictions - everything from 'charming' toothaches, curing a 'raw' throat, to fixing back aches. When questioned about such activities today, residents joked with me about how silly and backward it must seem. The general consensus from several people was that, with so few options open to them, back then, they made the best of the situation. And when suffering extreme pain, they would believe in anything.

Annie, at the age of eighty-six, has spent her entire life in Harbour Deep. She shared with me her memories of the past and how things were in the community. She told me about many of the remedies people used prior to the introduction of

a more conventional health care system into the community. As an example of a folk cure, she cited cleaning the scales off a salted herring, rolling it in a cloth and wrapping it across one's sore throat. When I asked if this had really worked in curing a raw, tender throat, Annie responded, "Sure, now, I suppose we wouldn't have done it if it didn't work! Stinky old herring!" She then laughed and said, "I suppose if a person was desperate enough to get rid of the pain, they'd do anything, eh?!" Annie went on to explain that boiled juniper was used for infants with colic and to restore energy to new mothers. Another remedy, referred to as 'puffs' (small potato shaped plants that grew close to the ground), were used to stop bleeding, particularly nose-bleed. Annie commented that "back then, we did the likes of which no one knows cause there was nothing else to do. People these days don't think they can manage without a nurse. I can't cause of me age, but we managed."[20]

In 1962, residents of the community took it upon themselves to build their own nursing station and requested that a nurse practitioner be placed in the community. The first nurse practitioner assigned to the community was an

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[20] Crellin 1994 discusses similar remedies in different contexts.

older British nurse who had previously worked in Englee (north of Harbour Deep). The nurse's residence was in the nursing station and she provided a wide range of medical services for residents from midwifery to dentistry. At that time, health care services in the area were still being managed by the International Grenfell Association (IGA).

In 1981, the provincial government took over the administration of health care services in northern Newfoundland from the IGA. This meant that the northern region of this province finally came under the direction of provincial health agencies without the intervention of an outside organization. At that time, the provincial health care board was responsible for the northern half of the Great Northern Peninsula and the entire region of Labrador. Since then, the region has been divided into the Health Labrador Corporation (responsible for health care services in the greater Labrador area) and Grenfell Regional Health Services (responsible for the greater portion of the Great Northern Peninsula and southeast Labrador).

4.2.2 *Blending of past with present*

Several Harbour Deep inhabitants suggested seventy-eight

year old Julien as the resident I should talk to if I was interested in the history of the community. Discussions with Julien, a skilled wood worker, gave me a great deal of insight into the community's history from the perspective of someone who has lived it. He waxed quite philosophical during our conversations about the changes that have occurred within the community since his youth. He compared the passage of time and the changes in life as "a drop in the bucket while you were living it but then, the next time you look, the bucket is over-flowing, just as quick as that things change. Before you even get a chance to realize [it]." Although he was willing to talk about the community in general, he made little reference to his own life. When I suggested that I would be interested in recording his life history, he smiled and said, "I've traveled many a crooked road in my time, and ain't none of them I want to return to." Despite this reluctance to discuss his own life history, he was quite willing to discuss his experiences in relation to the history of the community, the fishery and health care in Harbour Deep.

A short, small built man with a slight stoop, Julien was born in one of the outer coves and moved into Harbour Deep with his family at the age of four. He explained that prior

to the introduction of motors in the community, it was common for people of his parents' generation to row out to the fishing grounds from Harbour Deep. It was also common for families who had moved in from the outer coves, to maintain their gardens in the settlements which they had recently abandoned, since most of the best areas for gardening in the vicinity of Harbour Deep were already in use.

Julien noted that, unlike today, back when he was young people were not concerned with the amount of work they had to do, as they were solely focused on survival - getting through the day - at any cost. The big difference these days, he says, is that any type of real (hard, physical) work seems to be too much trouble for people to do. If it takes too much effort they are not interested. A retired fisherman, Julien spends a great deal of time in his workshop (a converted fishing stage) across the road from his house. He has devoted the past several years to creating an extensive collection of wooden carvings --each one is in some way representative of the way things used to be. The collection is displayed in the yard alongside his house every summer to the chagrin of some residents who voice the opinion that he is making a 'show' of himself. However, the collection is displayed to the delight

of visitors who will usually find the artisan close by and quite willing to discuss the story of each item.[21] Turning to wood carving as an expression of the past, he also satisfies his need to keep busy.

Strategically placed in the center of 'Julien's Outdoor Museum' is a miniature church with toy cars in the parking lot. The interior is lit by a single light bulb. Looking through the windows and open doorway, I was struck by the meticulous attention paid to detail. There are dolls seated in the pews, the organ has a realistically painted keyboard, and the main pulpit is complete with an open Bible. The interior of the church is a replica of St. Peter's Anglican Church in the community. He is quite frank about not attending church services -- he believes in the Bible but does not attend church. He told me that he used to attend when it was on the Point, but not now as it is over on the other end of the community from where he lives.

As an interesting aside to this, Harbour Deep residents appear to feel quite strongly about their financial obligation to the church. The 1997 parish budget for Harbour Deep lists

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Refer to Pocius (1991:268) for a detailed discussion of the cultural importance of yard artwork in rural Newfoundland.

seventy households with an income assessment of church dues of $10,500 or an average annual contribution of $150 per household. As of September 1997, $9000 had been donated to the parish by residents. Compared with the other communities in the parish Harbour Deep exceeds all others in per capita contributions to date.

Table 4:1

1997 PARISH BUDGET[22]

Community (#households):	Income Assessment:	Paid as of September30:
Hampden (60)	$9,000	$4,933.25
Harbour Deep (70)	$10,500	$9,000
Jackson's Arm (165)	$24,750	$16,007.60
Pollard's Point (100)	$15,000	$6,832.67
Sop's Arm (35)	$5,250	$2,868
TOTAL	$64,500	$39,641.52

Returning to Julien's museum, the *piece de resistance* of the collection is located behind and just to the left of the church; it is a workable spinning wheel. He has crafted a life size woman to operate it (positioned next to the spinning wheel), holding a thread of spinning wool. When asked, Julien explains that she was carved out of a single log. He has

[22] Taken from the Parish Newsletter, Fall 1997

painstakingly split rope threads to give her the appearance of lush blond hair. According to Julien, she is appropriately dressed in a skirt and blouse, including a set of fake pearls. Speaking of her attire, he will sigh and comment that it was as close as he was able to come to the right clothing, as "women did not wear pants back then." The look of this old-fashioned working woman is completed with white, high-top sneakers --the closest he could come to sensible shoes. Other items on display include hoop and barrel-making items which he has used to make barrels and buckets; a fish weigh scale; a miniature lighthouse; a wash board and tub; a 'water-boy' (hoop mechanism with shoulder straps that had buckets attached); a wood-sled; a variety of items used in trapskiff fishing; a miniature dog sled team with a driver pulling up to a cabin and a wooden excavator. Each item represents a tale in the history and technological adaptation of the community, and the changes that fishing and homework have undergone in the last forty years.

Examined separately, each item acts as a commentary on a particular series of events. For example, a now defunct construction site excavator sits up at the new town dump. The windows are smashed and it is only used these days to push

loads of garbage into the open pit for burning. As the only modern piece of machinery the town council had ever purchased to repair the poor grade gravel road, it is a monument that symbolizes, for many, how ill-conceived (maintenance of such equipment being a difficult task in Harbour Deep) such a purchase was. Likewise, the barrel-making items and fish scale are indicative of a time when people were responsible for 'making' fish and packing them in barrels to be shipped to major ports. Julien explained that the fish weigh scale was used on the wharf to weigh fish as they were unloaded from boats. The merchant had a set rate that would be paid out depending on the total weight of the catch. The fish were weighed against rocks placed on the other side of the scale. Portions of a day's catch would have to be added to the fisher's side of the scale until the mechanism balanced itself. Julien said that it was 'common place' for the merchant to add an additional weight without the knowledge of the fishermen, in order to procure more fish at less cost. He rationalized this by explaining that the merchant just had a job to do and was looking out for his best interests and if any of the fishermen had any idea about numbers and figures they would have tried to do the same thing to their side

(refer to my discussion of Sider 1986, p 28). Furthermore, items such as the wash board and tub, the spinning wheel, and the water-boy, recall the dramatic changes that have occurred with regard to household chores - away from manual labour.

While the miniature light house with its exterior staircase pays homage to an era when such lights were manually tended to, the miniature dog team and sled next to the cabin make reference to a time before professional health services were available locally. Julien explained that before the 'station' opened in Harbour Deep the nurse or doctor would have to travel overland from Englee or St. Anthony and that during the winter months the only mode of transportation was by dog sled. Julien's commentary made it quite clear that a great deal of thought had gone into the creation of these works of folk art. He went on to say that the scenario he had in mind when carving the dog sled team and cabin had been of someone being very ill, or perhaps a woman in labour, and the doctor having been sent for. Julien added lamentably, " Of course, it always took so long for them to get there. People died."

This is not to say that Julien himself relies on modern health care. In many ways, he believes residents of Harbour

Deep were better off when they were left on their own. He believes that people were tougher back then. They could not go to the nurse for every minor ailment, so they learned to cope by relying on natural remedies surrounding them[23]. To further illustrate his point about the 'new' dependence on health professionals, he held up a bandaged thumb and with a deep sigh explained that if he split open a finger years ago he would never have bothered getting a nurse or someone else to look at it, but now-a-days no one would let him alone about it until he went to see the Nurse. His daughters had kept at him until he relented and saw the nurse. He went only to stop them from badgering him. Waving the injured appendage in front of his own face, he said that it was now two weeks since the Nurse started bandaging it and he had to keep going back to get new bandages every time it got wet or dirty. He explained that 'in the old days' he would have thought nothing of plastering the wound with myrrh (a thick gummy substance found on the bark of local trees) from a tree and it would have healed in a few days. Chuckling to himself he said, 'But

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Trees, for example, were a great healing source; the myrrh was used as a salve on cuts and open wounds (see Crellin 1994 for a more detailed discussion of Newfoundland folk remedies).

that's not good enough anymore'[24].

4.3 Health care now: things change

In the heyday of the Grenfell 'Mission' it was customary for nurses and doctors to be recruited from overseas. Most of the first Nurse Practitioners to work in Northern Newfoundland and coastal Labrador were from Britain. Although many residents had fond memories of these nurses, there seemed to be a constant undercurrent of animosity between the health care professional and her clients. Several times, residents told me stories about how the Nurse had been "up in arms" over one thing or another.

The proper care and treatment of animals seemed to have been a big sticking point with many. Most parents in the community encouraged their children, especially boys, to learn hunting and fishing skills. Unfortunately, more often than not this resulted in the casual use of shotguns and using birds for target practice. There is more to this than just differences in opinion about the responsibilities of people

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24 See Andersen 1997:153 for a discussion about elders' worries about the "soft" life of the younger generation.

living in harmony with nature. Individuals with a middle class background, have, like nurses, learned to appreciate the *'wonders'* of nature in a way different from many of the residents of Harbour Deep. For the fishery dependent people of Harbour Deep, making a living has had a lot to do with working with, and/or working against, their natural environment. This has fostered an attitude of having to dominate nature before one becomes dominated by it, as a matter of survival.

Most everyone I spoke to agreed that the earlier nurses, mostly older women from the United Kingdom, were nice but could be difficult to deal with. The most common comment being that "they [mainly British nurse practitioners] were very set in their ways." One incident that illustrates this difference in mentality occurred about twenty years ago. A young boy had been out playing down by the brook with friends; they had been stoning eels, he tripped and gashed his head. His mother immediately brought him up to the clinic. As the nurse stitched his cut she commented that it served him right for tormenting the poor eels. The mother who relayed this story to me was outraged that her injured son should be talked to in such a way. He was just a boy having some fun.

The gap in life experience, which I see as leading to a gap in values, between people living in rural Newfoundland and those in positions of authority who are supposed to assist them has been a hurdle that is difficult to overcome. It takes a special appreciation of the place and the people before one can begin to gain an understanding of just how things are. It is not that these people are ill-mannered and harm wild animals for the enjoyment of it. Firestone (1967: 134) espouses the view that in intimate societies (as found in rural Newfoundland) good social relationships are maintained through a balance of tolerance coupled with reserve and cooperation. He goes on to say that the aggression and hostility that are manifested when showing tolerance to one another must be displaced. Therefore, the young residents residents engage in such acts as throwing rocks at animals (p 134).

Yet, for the health care professionals working in the rural parts of this province at the start of the twentieth century, the 'culture shock' must have been enormous. Even into the late seventies the International Grenfell Association used words like "experience the wild" and "come for the adventure" in their recruitment advertisements printed in

London newspapers (Grenfell Regional Health Services 1996). Samfya-Perry (1997) takes this gap of life experience a step further in her analysis of the role of nurses in the Grenfell Mission. She states:

> nurses reform agendas were often directed by a strong belief in their own cultural superiority. The corresponding lack of respect for local culture was often rooted in class difference, and dissatisfaction with the local people frequently stemmed from their failure to comply with middle class codes of decency.
>
> (1997:127)

Furthermore, working in rural Newfoundland was in many ways like stepping back in time (see Merrick 1942). Even today, many communities lack technology that the rest of the world takes for granted. For instance, internet access has only been available to residents of Harbour Deep for the last four years. Long distance telephone charges apply to any calls made to anywhere outside the community - an operator makes the long distance connection and records the number you are calling from. Evidently, some things are slow to change in remote communities such as Harbour Deep.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has dealt with some of the more prominent social changes that have occurred in the community of Harbour Deep. The level of self sufficiency which lead to a strong egalitarian ethic among residents has hampered social interaction within the community as well as how the community as a whole deals with outside social agencies. Furthermore, through an examination of the changes in the provision of health care in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we have seen the move from reliance on folk remedies to the current reliance on the provincial health care system which marks a significant transition for the community's residents.

The place and the people that make up the community of Harbour Deep also act as a hindrance to its future survival. The expectations of the people with regard to support services such as health care seem to have risen in direct proportion to their sole reliance on such support services and the outside agencies' difficulties in meeting them. The difficulties of providing health care to such a small population in such a remote area are such that it is not much of an exaggeration to

say that it was almost easier to accomplish 'back when.' Nowadays, health care professionals are not as willing to live/work in such remote areas (see Barer & Stoddart 1999), nor are many of them prepared to take on a 'personal commitment' to service the health care needs of an entire community single-handed. This is happening at a time when certain residents seem to need the services of a health care professional more than ever before --a dilemma dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE LIVES OF WOMEN

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I use vignettes from the lives of various women to illuminate the major social and life change issues facing residents of Harbour Deep. Special attention is given to excerpts from the life story of one woman, Del, as an illustration of general themes and common experiences of women in Harbour Deep. The central focus of the chapter is on women's 'place' in the community, how this has changed over time, and how this affects their experience with and use of support services such as health care. The life synopsis used in this chapter brings out several intriguing issues: how pregnancy is dealt with by residents in the community; the social sanctions used by community members; the restrictions placed on individuals' behaviour according to their gender; how the individual deals with the paradoxical dilemma of the ideal verses the reality of life as a woman in this community; and how methods of coping impact on the use of the local

health care facility.

5.2 Del: a life story[25]

Del was the second oldest resident of Harbour Deep at the time of my stay. She was referred to me by several residents as the only woman still in the community that had the most hands-on experience with health care issues before the clinic opened in Harbour Deep (see p. 123). During our conversations, Del spoke of her life as a young child, a young woman (through to marriage), raising a family, and old age. I believe her story is representative of the lives of women as they once were in Harbour Deep; it also highlights the changes that have occurred for residents. Her story and commentary on why the world is such a different place (as compared to the one in which she was born and raised) carries a message of change echoed in the life stories of many of the women with whom I spoke in Harbour Deep: that the work may have been hard, but life was easier, back then. Although their individual stories and circumstances vary, Harbour Deep women have a shared

[25] The information used in this section comes from notes taken during 9 1/2 hours of discussion over a 3 week period with an eighty-four year old woman. She passed away less than a month after my last visit to the community.

experience that includes a mixture of happiness and frustration that they face almost daily due to female role expectations. As well, due to the common circumstances of locality, female residents rely upon similar coping methods when faced with difficulty.

At 84, Del was a fiery woman with a strong, independent streak undiminished by her frail health. At first, her demeanour appeared quite caustic. But, after spending time in her company, it became clear that she was a loving woman with an incredible memory, who was able to remember events from her childhood down to the smallest detail, and who had a passion for living. She could be quite jovial, and would often cradle her head in her arms when overtaken by a fit of laughter. The oldest child and only girl in a family with four brothers, Del was six years old when her family moved to Harbour Deep from one of several outer coves. An important theme that kept recurring in my talks with Del was the seemingly covert communication prohibition placed on certain topics.

5.2.1 *acceptable silences*

Many women in Harbour Deep remember searching the

surrounding woods for babies; it was something common to several generations of Harbour Deep children. Even adults in their early forties remember being told that babies were found under tree stumps. Del explained that pregnancy was not something adults talked about with children, nor among themselves. It was a common occurrence for people to be surprised when a particular household increased in number. Children and men were not allowed in the home during a woman's labour, and sometimes were even driven away from the outside of the house so they would not hear any sounds from inside.

A memorable occasion for Del occurred soon after the family moved to Harbour Deep. She remembered quite clearly the time when a neighbour was giving birth. Several of the women in the community went to the house, and later in the day word got out that this woman now had a new baby girl. Del and a friend were about six years old at the time; they had been told that the midwife had picked the new baby from under a stump, and so they decided today was the day to find their own child! Taking her father's axe, they set out to get a baby. It was a nice day for walking in the woods, they didn't get very far before they came across a rotted tree stump with a hole in the centre. This must have been where the new baby

came from; others should be close by. Soon, they came across another stump where both girls believed there must be another baby. Del handed the axe to her friend, who promptly swung back and let fly with it hitting Del's leg instead of the tree! She said there was blood everywhere! Both girls took off screaming for their respective homes; the axe and new babies forgotten about for the day. The injury was tended to by an old woman "from down the road that knew about healing." She showed me the scar on the front flank of her right leg, and I asked her if she ever went hunting for babies again. No, she responded with a smile, babies weren't thought about again until she started having her own. I asked how old she was when she found out where babies really came from, and with a chuckle she said that it was something you learned quickly after marriage.

Other women from Harbour Deep recited stories with similar themes, namely the reluctance of parents to speak of sexual matters with children and, in particular, of mothers to discuss the 'facts of life' or reproduction with their daughters. Yet, many of the women, fifty and older, still living in Harbour Deep had at least one child out of wedlock. This life circumstance was best summed up by the comment, "if

only I had known the difference." Had they known that the activities in which they engaged could cause pregnancy, they would have at least attempted to avoid getting pregnant. When I questioned them about this lack of knowledge, many women responded that information about intercourse was not discussed. It was not polite conversation, especially for women.

One sixty year old woman told me that when she first experienced menarche, she thought she was dying. She would hide her stained clothes, and clean them herself. Finally, after coping by herself for a few months, her mother informed her that it was something all women went through. This same girl became pregnant at the age of seventeen; and, at an advanced stage of her pregnancy, confessed to her older best friend that she was terrified of being "ripped open" to have the baby. When her friend asked what she meant, the woman explained that the only way she could figure that they got the baby out would be to cut her chest and abdomen wide open. Her friend laughed and told her she was being foolish; the baby would come out the same way it went in! Shocked, yet relieved, the young women commented that she was glad someone had told her the difference before she went into the hospital.

With a chuckle, she then admitted that up until that point she hadn't been sure how the baby got there!

It is interesting to note the extent to which this prohibition on the discussion of sexuality persists to this day among older residents. When Del was describing the events of her own pregnancies, she would stop talking altogether when one of her forty year old sons entered the room. She would wait until he had left the house before resuming the conversation. There are still things that are not to be said in certain company- particularly in the company of one's children. Furthermore, I should point out the possibility that this same conversational prohibition may also account for the questionable naivete expressed by the woman I questioned on the subjects of sexual intercourse and reproduction. The women were not willing to openly discuss such intimate details and may have slightly misrepresented the details of a given situation in order to change the topic of our conversations.

Years ago, pregnancy was not openly discussed even among the married women in the community. Apparently, women did not announce that they were pregnant, and even if others noticed, no one came right out and asked. This may have been due to superstitious beliefs about things taking their natural course

--just letting events happen. The emphasis on letting things run their natural course is evident in a thirty year old story that was relayed to me involving two married women from the community. One was known to be pregnant, and was expecting soon. When the other left for the hospital in St. Anthony at the same time, it was assumed that she was just getting a medical check-up. Residents were surprised when both women returned the next month each with a new-born baby. It was mentioned that just prior to their trip to the hospital both had accompanied a group berry picking. The one who was known to be pregnant was situated at the better bushes and the others, including the woman unknown to be pregnant, took turns carrying her berries for her. Today, when asked why she did not make others aware of her pregnancy she comments that it did not seem like something she should mention.

Such silence about reproduction[26], especially between mothers and daughters, appears to have been the norm for generations. It continues in the 1990s, as mothers seem to be training their daughters to be "good wives[27]." Yet, on a

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[26] For further discussion on woman's social isolation through child birth and motherhood see Martin 1987.

[27] The list of activities ranges from the proper way to clean house, bake bread, and prepare meals; daughters are expected to help their mothers in

number of occasions, one fifty year old woman mentioned that when she was growing up, parents rarely talked directly to their children. She felt that back then parents did not spend the time teaching their children; they were just expected to learn by themselves. When I suggested the possibility that children had learnt by watching and copying the actions and behaviours of adults, she conceded that this may have been so, but it very much seemed that they were left on their own.

In a very real sense, silence, here, also seeks to control the unpredictable. Although certain outcomes are counted as virtually inevitable - such as getting married and having children - having a happy relationship with one's spouse or having a pleasant, uneventful pregnancy are not things everyone can look forward to. Individuals should not indulge in flaunting their good fortune to others; the superstitious notion of not tempting fate along with the egalitarian ethic (see chapter 4, p 78) is at work here. One never knows when one will be struck with some misfortune. Combining such superstitious views with the individuals need

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such tasks. This carries over to the girls of the family taking on the responsibility of serving and cleaning up after their brothers, fathers, and any other male relatives. The issue of the "good woman" is dealt with by Ching 1997, Davis 1995, Luxton 1980. It is discussed in greater detail on p. 129.

for some sense of privacy in an intimate community setting lead to certain topics becoming impolite for discussion. For earlier generations, strict adherence to this rationale meant marital sexual relations and pregnancy were topics better left unspoken, even if this was to the disadvantage of the younger generation of women. Many women, now middle-aged, realize that their lives could have been quite different with the aid of such information. Davis (1983a: 86) states that pregnancy was seen as the fate of women and any tampering with that fate would mean loss in some other aspects of life. She relates this back to the egalitarian ethic as attempts at family planning were seen as "an unfair way to get ahead"(p 86). Today, parents are a bit more open with their children: the greatest emphasis is on "protecting yourself" and "not getting knocked up." Parental responsibility in this area is also assisted by what children learn from television and a more liberal school system.

5.2.2 *silence in the everyday*

The presence of conversational taboos among the older generation of residents in Harbour Deep can best, I believe,

be explained through placing emphasis on the concepts of intimacy, privacy and politeness. Present ideas about intimacy, privacy and politeness have changed only slightly from those of the past for people of this community. This is due, in large part, to Harbour Deep's geographical isolation and the interdependence of residents for a range of needs. Specifically, such taboos relate to that which is considered private among community inhabitants. Put into context, the taboo concerning the discussion of intimate details surrounding pregnancy, is not as unusual as it may first seem.

Paine (1972) suggests that prohibitions in discussions are potent instruments for the symbolic achievement of role separation. Such taboos also ensure the maintenance of social order - no one is given the opportunity to forget her/his place in the grand scheme of things. Paine states that privacy:

> seems not to be directed primarily towards the support of intimacy (which in the tribal world is, I have argued, predicated on social involvement rather than withdrawal) but towards social order and especially the removal of role ambiguities or contradictions.
>
> (1972: 31)

In light of conversational taboos, politeness as a form of social restraint can also been seen as essential to the maintenance of social order. Josephides (1999) views politeness as a communication practice concerned with the reproduction of social norms (p. 141). She defines politeness as a system of interactional face-saving devices in accordance with local conventions and impoliteness as a refusal to engage in a mode of interaction that recreates the relations of social order (p 139). Again, in relation to social order, we are faced with contemplating the egalitarian ethic that pervades more traditional Newfoundland communities such as Harbour Deep. The maintenance of an 'equal-footing' among villagers is of the utmost importance. In fact, this seems to be a key means of maintaining the equity and equality once so important to the interdependence and stability among community residents (see chapter 4, p. 78-82).

Furthermore, in many respects, the people of Harbour Deep still exhibit the more traditional (also referred to as pre-Confederation) Newfoundland modes of personal interaction (as noted by Firestone 1967, Szwed 1966, Faris 1966, Felt 1987). Dinham (1977) insightfully described outport culture along such lines:

> Social interaction is characterized by almost ritual cordiality, hospitality and reciprocity. Strangers are treated with respect, courtesy, and underlying suspicion.
>
> (1977:14)

This description still holds true for the community of Harbour Deep in 1997. Interaction among community residents or with community residents and "outsiders" follows what appears to be a set code of conduct. For example, depending on the people she/he encountered, the same individual will be subjected to actions ranging from broad smiles, nods of the head, and joyous shouts of 'Hello, what a day, eh?' to ignoring the presence of the person altogether. The differences in reception depend on the age, generation, and status of the people and relations involved. Married men and women, most of whom are secure in their family relationships and their position within the community, are more outgoing and friendly in their behaviour towards others. Such behaviour is due to curiosity, and the middle-aged person's desire to be the first with the 'news' of what is going on. Keeping up the appearance of friendly concern and helpfulness is also a factor, as it seems that middle aged residents are have a greater sense of attachment concerning their status in the community. By

contrast, young, single adults have less of a personal investment in the perceived characteristics of the community as a whole. They seem painfully aware of their more tenuous position within the community; the demise of the fishery took with it some of the opportunities for today's youth to make a living in their home communities.

In the eyes of the community, the ultimate and most endearing move young adults can make is to settle down, marry, set up house and have children. This would be seen as their personal commitment to the continuation of the community. The man should 'provide' the necessities for his family; whereas, the woman should make the most out of any situation, and devote herself to the well-being of the family and "making the house a home." This perspective came to light during a conversation with a forty year old woman. We were discussing the limitations of living in such a remote community, especially for the younger generation who do not have the same access to events and activities that their age group has elsewhere. Referring to a young mother who had a turbulent relationship with her slightly older husband, the comment was made that the young woman had gotten married in order to "improve her reputation" and legitimize herself within the

community. The decline in population has left many more young single men than young single women (an interesting fact in and of its self that points to the realization of teenagers - the girls more so than boys -that the community has little to offer them[28]) in the community: which means that the goal of setting out house with a partner is no longer as easily attainable for young men. This problem is compounded by the young men's loss of income and future security, circumstances which only add to the difficulties of finding someone else in the community to marry.

Although opportunities and life options have changed dramatically, it is evident that the ideology of the community remains firmly rooted in the traditional concepts of a strong Christian work ethic and egalitarian relationships.[29] As a member of the community, an individual must conform to certain expectations of ideal behaviour. This includes being friendly, hospitable, hard working and, more generally, a 'good' person who does not express dissenting opinions or attitudes, but exhibits normal behaviour. Hence, the use of

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28 See discussion on this issue in chapter 3, p. 55.

29 Davis (1986) also discusses the levelling forces of the traditional egalitarian ideals within Newfoundland outports - "All men and all women are expected to be essentially the same." (p.137)

both public and private sanctions are placed on non-conforming attitudes and behaviour. Harbour Deep is not unique in this. Felt (1987) refers to such social sanctioning in his work on verbal aggression in Newfoundland outports (also see Widdowson 1977). He points out that:

> communities, particularly where physically isolated, are typically intolerant of wide departures from community standards.
> (1987:17)

Felt bases his supposition of "intolerance" on the importance residents place on "collective survival":

> Where the physical environment is dangerous and uncontrollable, a strong premium is likely to be placed upon predictability, self-control.
> (1987:17)

Moreover, there exists an inherent contradiction in the fact that, in small rural communities like Harbour Deep, tension and conflict coincide with such intolerance of "departures from community standards."

5.2.3 *the issue of friendship*

So, what does the aforementioned contradiction say about personal interactions or friendship within the community? Can such relationships exist under such circumstances? The answer, in my opinion, is that the types of friendship that exist among inhabitants of Harbour Deep are more traditional as opposed to modern forms of exclusive relationships.

The traditional mode of friendship is customarily used for purposes of self legitimization (see Unl 1992 and Paine 1972). Within Harbour Deep, the expectations placed on friendship are quite well defined. Specifically, they are based on reciprocity; friendships are formed and broken based on what individuals are able to receive from and contribute to the relationship. Within a small, isolated community like Harbour Deep, the concept of friends differs from the commonly held ideal of a voluntary-preferential relationship (Du Bois 1974: 20). With such a small population base from which to select, an individual is quite limited in choosing the persons she/he would like to become acquainted with. In many cases, friendships are forged based on the grounds of common

interests, and the willingness to exchange/provide services, information, and goods. This lends an impermanence to the friend-relationship. Although people may contend that they remain friends, they may no longer socialize with one another. In most cases, this is a subtle shift based on changes in life circumstances. There may be a change in the ability of the individual to participate fully in the above cited expectations of what it means to be a friend, and this often leads to the development of new friendships between individuals.

This is not to insinuate that the people of Harbour Deep are completely absorbed in their own self interests to the point that they are somehow incapable of mutual companionship. On the contrary, Harbour Deep residents do conduct and need such relationships. Yet, the effect of social change for inhabitants (particularly women) of Harbour Deep, has been that their social reality has changed (this topic is discussed in greater detail later, see p. 136). In the Harbour Deep of 1997, in my opinion, there is a competitive spirit that has lead to a subduing of personal interaction. This competitive spirit has arisen from the uneasy combination of recent social change factors, such as the loss of viable employment by the

majority of the community's residents and the maintenance of traditional social norms.

5.3 Egalitarianism unmasked

The remnants of the traditional concept of egalitarianism as it exists in Harbour Deep today conflicts with the reality of daily life for residents. The value-laden ideal of being a good wife or mother means that women's behaviour and even their topics of conversation are limited. The widening gap between the ideal and the reality of life in Harbour Deep differs depending on one's gender. As I shall discuss in this section, women in the community are more restricted in their activities than their male counterparts.

Women of Del's generation (age 70-89 years) seemed to possess a bit more autonomy than their children. It was common -in this community and throughout the province - during the 1940s (and earlier), for 'young maids' to be sent out of the community to seek employment. According to Del, "Families had a difficult enough time as it was keeping food on the table and a roof over our heads so when we were old enough to work ourselves then you were expected to keep your

own board." The work options beyond their own homes for young, single women ranged from being a 'house-girl' (taking responsibility of all household chores and tending to the younger children), to working as 'clerks' (taking care of the books and filling out forms for fish merchants). Although their education was quite limited, girls were usually able to stay in school longer than boys, so their writing and arithmetic skills were more advanced. The level of schooling in Harbour Deep only went to Form II, after which the only option for continuing education was attending summer school in St. John's --something very few, if any could afford.

Del was quite blunt about her own circumstances. She was sent 'around the Arm' to the tiny enclave of Northeast Arm. There she worked with the local merchant, Ned Pittman, as a shop clerk; she also worked on the 'flakes' with 'Aunt Marta,'[30] Ned's wife. Among her various duties, she was responsible for the accounting and bookkeeping aspects of the business. These written documents were sent at the end of each quarter to the company's Head Office in Lewisporte. Her

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Marta was Ned' s second wife. She was known as the local healer. Del explained to me that people with different kinds of ailments would come in from the surrounding communities to be cured by Aunt Marta. The commonly held reason for her wealth of knowledge and healing capabilities was that she was the seventh daughter of the seventh son.

writing skills were such that she was offered a position for better pay at the Lewisporte office, but turned the offer down. Del told me that turning down this offer was one of her biggest regrets. If she knew then what she knew now, she would have jumped at the chance without a second thought.

This was one of the more blatant examples of the phenomenon I call the "loss of opportunity factor" among women in Harbour Deep. During conversations about their early marriage and child-rearing years, several women mentioned what they had really wanted to do with their lives (such as becoming a nurse, a schoolteacher, or even travelling the world). Instead, these goals had been sacrificed for the 'privilege' of caring for their husbands and children. Separately, and in her own way, each of these women simply shrugged the idea off with the comment that such plans had not been very realistic anyway.

In Del's case, she left work after seven years to get married. She met her husband at her place of employment; their families knew each other. He was polite and seemed like a hard-worker. She joked that she had been in her early twenties when she got married, and her family was relieved that she was not going to end up an "old-maid." Del was given

the option of returning to Northeast Arm if she was ever unhappy with her circumstances in Harbour Deep. Such an option was a rare opportunity for any young woman of the time; yet, she never availed herself of it. When questioned further about it, she explained that the offer had been for her to return with her husband. Once she married, there would be no justification for leaving her husband. On a number of occasions, she reiterated that marriage was a lifetime commitment, and women had to take the bad with the good in their married life. Another comment that spoke volumes about her attitude towards marriage and the life of women in her experience, was about the issue of divorce in today's society: "I'll never understand why any woman would get rid of one man just to pick up with another! There would have to be something wrong with them to think that they would have it any better with someone else!" She left little doubt as to her feelings about the interchangeability of the male sex: one is just like the other. Del's is an attitude that could be construed as another sign of stoic ability of women to 'make do.'

5.3.1 *the dilemma facing women*

My initial encounter with Del occurred over the telephone. It was a Saturday night during the first few weeks of the field stay. I was awakened at 3:30 a.m. by the telephone. Having been jarred from a deep sleep, I picked up the phone and groggily said, "hello." A gravelly female voice reflecting some of the panic I was feeling asked if 'Gerl' was there. I was stumped, it was the first time I had heard that name and was not sure if I was hearing it correctly. I said "pardon me?" She said "what? where's Gerl?" I asked, "who are you looking for?" The woman at the other end was obviously upset - speaking in a quick, raspy voice, as she seemed to be gasping for breathe - and my confusion was only complicating the situation. She explained, "Herb was here earlier and Gerl left with him. He doesn't usually leave the house for this long without letting me know where he is... is Herb home?" I explained that he was home and asleep. She interrupted, the panic rising, "If Herb's in bed, where is Gerl?" I suggested that maybe he was on his way home; then I

mentioned that there had been a party[31] next door. Maybe she should call over there; Gerl is probably still there. She sounded calmer then and commented that she did not think that he would be over there. I said that I did not know what else to tell her. She hung up. I was unsure of what to make of the telephone conversation. Who was that? Better yet, who was 'Gerl': someone's husband or a young boy? Was it usual for the women of this community to have to track down their men in the early hours of the morning?

The next morning I asked at the breakfast table who 'Gerl' was. I was asked who I had spoken with. I said, "a very upset older woman who kept asking where Gerl was, and I was of no help." The response that I received was "Oh, that was just Aunt Del looking for Gerald." I was told that Aunt Del was in her mid-eighties and lived 'in over the hill' with her two bachelor sons (she also had a third son, also a

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Although, at this point, my stay in the community was just beginning, it had already become quite clear to me that many of the men spent Saturday evening at parties where drinking occurred. In several cases, this meant that the drinking started early Saturday afternoon and went into the early hours of Sunday morning. It caused a great deal of tension within some households, especially where the husband was a heavy binge drinker and the wife not only abstained but couldn't stand the smell of liquor. His coming home drunk would result in either his being kicked out of the bedroom or sleeping on the sofa of his own accord, in an attempt to avoid an argument. In either case he would receive the 'silent treatment' the next day.

bachelor, and two married daughters living in Harbour Deep). I commented that she had been so upset that my initial thought was that a young child was missing. No, I was informed, Gerald is in his forties and hardly ever left the house. It was pointed out that you never know what could happen to someone once they had been drinking for a few hours. Del was probably home alone at this point, and feeling a bit nervous. The response of the male listening to this exchange was that it was 'foolishness.' There were only so many places that Gerald could go. I was a bit shocked by the idea of an elderly mother having to track down her middle-aged son, and was leaning towards the absurdity of the situation when the point was made (by the 'woman of the house') that it didn't make sense that the men would drink, for hours at a time and not let anyone know where they were. From her point of view, anything could happen to them. Another retort was made by the 26 year old son of the family that Gerl could have fallen into a puddle in the road and drowned! My initial reaction to this scenario was that it seemed needless to worry an elderly mother in such a way but, without knowing more about the situation, I attributed it to a familial miscommunication. However, I soon came to realize that this was a dilemma

centred around gender miscommunication.

5.3.2 *contextualizing the dilemma*

This event and the varied reactions to it marked the beginning of my insight into the widening gap between the ideal and the reality of life in Harbour Deep and how it differed depending on one's gender. From most of the men's point of view, the women overreacted at home and let their imaginations run wild. Meanwhile, it would be next to impossible for anyone to spend time in the community and be oblivious to the danger inherent in the binge drinking sessions in which several of the men in the community participated.

Legitimate concern and worry[32] can become all encompassing in a community nestled against the mountains on one side and hedged in by a sheltered arm of the Atlantic ocean on the other, where the possibility of an alcohol-induced accident resulting in injury or fatality is all too real. That the community is geographically cut off from other places limits

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Refer to Davis' discussion of women's worry dealt with in Chapter two. p 22.

their mobility. This enhances the likelihood that when men go unheard from for lengthy periods of time women worry.

Mothers of young children in the community have similar concerns. No child is out of sight for very long before her/his mother either calls or comes looking for the individual. Depending on whose perspective you get, the community may or may not have become a more 'dangerous' place to live. Clearly, what has changed is an increased expectation of accidents. This is in direct correlation with the increased reliance on machinery for transportation, and the unrestricted manner in which vehicles are used in the community. Over the years, there have been several alcohol-induced fatalities related to snowmobile machines driven onto harbour ice. The most recent fatality occurred two winters ago when a man visiting the community drove a snowmobile at high speed and struck a boat. He was killed instantly.

Many of the vehicles used in the community (including all terrain vehicles (ATV), of which every household has at least one) are unlicensed, in poor operating condition, and difficult[33] to manoeuvre around the community, let alone by

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The rough road conditions around the community do not lend themselves to the use of wheel and transport equipment that is in top condition. Hence, the usual practice is to purchase a vehicle and use it until it

impaired drivers. As it is, adults are quite aware that activities and even places to go to are limited and thus the concern and confusion when a man, suspected of consuming alcohol, fails to return home in a timely fashion.

Worry is a necessary aspect of dealing with the uncertainty and physical danger facing those (men) who make a living from the sea and the family members (women and children) who await their return to shore. The worry of women is not unfounded and is something that is faced on a daily basis (see Davis 1983c). The one certainty in such a precarious lifestyle is the residents' need to rely upon each other to pull through the difficulties they must face. Even in today's limited fishery, the possibility of tragedy at sea is a constant threat. Most of the middle aged and older women are constantly watching for incoming boats, which is why binoculars are always on hand for looking out of windows facing the mouth of the harbour. Delays of just a few hours by expected boats are the topic of discussion and the source of worry until they appear. There are many mishaps at sea that remain part of the local lore about fishing that remind everyone of the risks that are connected with this type of

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wears out.

work.

One of the more recent of these tragedies occurred in 1991. A semi-retired fisherman in his early sixties, whose usual routine was to go out alone and stay out til dusk, left the community at dawn to check his nets. His being gone the entire day was of little worry to his family and friends, as he was only gone 'out around the Arm' and could have involved himself in any number of activities. However, when he had not returned by 9:00 p.m. people began to worry. In the ensuing days, weeks, and months that followed, family, friends, and the coast guard searched in vain. The man and his boat were never located. A patrol of the waters at the mouth of the harbour did turn up the boat's gas can, but that was all. His family was devastated. He had been a capable fisherman and a seasoned outdoorsman. His wife held out hope for several months that he had somehow been stranded and just needed time to find his way home. The oft-cited explanation is that one of the nets may have entangled a whale, and the boat was dragged out of the Arm and sank at sea. The only difficulty with this conclusion is that the boat would had to have been dragged passed the mouth of the harbour and few in the community are comfortable with the thought that something so

tragic could have occurred unnoticed. The lesson taken to heart by the residents was that if something so tragic could happen to such a capable person, it could happen to anyone.

Such worry, mainly on the part of the women in the community, carries over to many regular activities in which most men participate, including hunting and wood cutting trips and recreational and commercial fishing trips by boat. Such activities are a part of the everyday life of residents of Harbour Deep. This lends itself to a steady, high level of anxiety and tension for many women and contributes, I believe, to their over-emphasizing and near compulsive attitudes towards housework and cleaning. When the anxieties in their lives can not be controlled the women focus on one of the few things they can exert control over. Housework is among the main criteria of the 'good wife or mother' status (see Luxton 1980, Davis 1983a). The current state of housework chores are a constant topic of discussion: what has been done and how much is left to do(see Davis 1983a:102). This is particularly the case during what I have come to refer to as the "cleaning-frenzy." For example, when I first arrived in Harbour Deep, the second week of May, women in every household were much too busy to stop and chat with me for any length of time. Beds

were dismantled, their frames painted and put back together, and make-shift scaffolding was devised over stairwells, so that the ceiling could be reached with a scrub brush and later painted. The archetype of the good wife or mother and the effect this ideal has on the lives women lead in Harbour Deep today shall now be examined now.

5.3.3 *the ideal woman*

The concept of the ideal woman as the selfless care-giver who does not exist independent of her family is still very much alive in small rural communities like Harbour Deep (see Ching 1997, Davis 1995, Cole 1991, Luxton 1980). Women are under a great deal of social pressure to follow set code of attitudes and behaviours. This code translates to a total commitment to family. For Harbour Deep women of earlier generations, the expression of her self-worth through the work she did for the sake of the family was integral to what it meant to be a 'good woman'. The socially accepted extension of this is that being a good mother, a good wife, a good daughter, a good member of the congregation and a good neighbour are all integral to being a good woman.

Most of the women in Harbour Deep who claim to be content with their lives publicly are of the older generation (60+). They have very traditional views of a woman's place and feel that sacrifice of the self is part of what is expected of women, particularly 'good' wives and mothers. Many of these women did not complete high school and have a sense of guilt and inadequacy about their lack of formal education. In some cases their self-criticism is matched by the lack of respect and appreciation they receive from their spouses and children. Although there have been cases of domestic violence in the past, the biggest show of aggression between husbands and wives is verbal abuse (cursing or demeaning comments). For these women, their families are their lives; they have given themselves over to the well-being of their loved ones. It is their firm belief that this is the way it should be for any wife or mother[34]. It is not so much that they begrudge their own daughters and nieces the range of possibilities[35] now open to them, but in order to justify their

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I persist in using the terms, 'wife' and 'mother' simultaneously because although common-law relationships are common in Harbour Deep, the idea of having a husband (or partner) without producing children is an aberration for most residents.

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There were a number of occasions when I was gently chided about my deficiency in all things culinary: " You should start learning now. You'll

own situation they must stand firm in their resolve to disagree with these new alternatives (single-parenthood, divorce, gay couples, even to a certain extent, working mothers) and label such women as selfish and uncaring. Hence, older women are the most severe critics of their younger counterparts (see Davis 1995). They give little or no acknowledgment to the possibility that women today find the routine tasks of 'keeping house' much more arduous because of changes in local worldview, norms and societal attitudes about women and women's work[36]. Among the younger generation of Harbour Deep's wives and mothers, there is a definite sense that there is much more to living a fulfilling life than running a highly efficient household. In this day and age personal contentment and the individual's development as a whole person outside their personal relationships is a priority for many women. Unfortunately, focusing on one's own needs, instead of the needs of others, has meant that contemporary women have their self-worth continually questioned and re-evaluated by themselves and their peers

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have a man to tend to one of these days! "

[36] See Davis 1993 for her discussion regarding the effort Newfoundland women put into keeping immaculately clean households even though their work is no longer valued as it used to be (p. 467).

-processes which their predecessors endured to a much lesser degree.

Ideals are difficult things to live up to especially as one tries to balance changing societal emphasis on individual contentment and peace of mind in contrast to the older view of "giving one's all for the sake of ones' family." In the last ten years, there has also been a change in the community's social climate, so to speak. Women, middle aged and younger, have come to realize that there are more options for them elsewhere -should they desire them. There is the possibility that there can be more to life than 'keeping house' for a family. For many women, this has contributed to malaise and depression[37] about the future, as well as life in general. They are further aggravated by the paradoxical situation that they now find themselves in. Many people (both men and women) commented that the autumn season was the most depressing time of year. It is when things start to slow down and thoughts turn to preparation for winter. In Harbour Deep this means

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The most interesting of such cases are the women who are quite blunt about the fact that they are stuck in the situation in which they find themselves. Their ties to Harbour Deep extend beyond the emotional ones of close family and friends. There is also the remaining economic concern - their homes are their pride and joy, but worthless as real estate. If they were to move, they could not afford similar accommodations elsewhere.

less mobility to destinations outside the community and stocking up on household staples. In terms of activity, and in comparison to the hectic pace in the summer, the autumn signifies a down-turn and long hours of darkness. One forty year old woman told me, in a very off-handed manner, that the doctor puts her on Prozac every fall "cause [she] just can't deal with this place when it gets gloomy and there's no way out."

This dilemma suggests that the 'good wife and mother' is frequently unhappy. She is expected to tend to the needs of the family without regard to her own personal well-being or happiness. The day-time hours of those older middle aged women in the community who still have offspring and spouses living with them, are spent planning and preparing meals. Ironically, the one thing that they are able to exert control over (housework) ends up controlling them by placing limitations on leisure activities. Far from being an anomaly of women in Harbour Deep, the behaviour of always accommodating others is often cited as being at the root cause of psychological and emotional distress among women. In their examination of the socialization of women Capps and Ochs (1995) suggest:

> Women are socialized to be pleasers, often to their emotional disadvantage. The historical legacy of the 'good woman' that lives in the inherited collective image of the feminine became firmly formulated in the 19th century. Women's social worth resided in their contribution to men and children and hence to society, through unselfish goodness. For women it was not enough to be good in oneself...
> (1995:82)

Gilad (1989) deals with a situation similar to that facing women of the younger generation in Harbour Deep. In her discussion about the relationship between older Jewish Yemeni-born women and their Israeli-born daughters, she states:

> it does seem certain that women were more emotionally secure in the only statuses available to them as Jewish women in Yemen: daughter, wife and mother. Conflicts do not seem to have been related to an essential questioning of a woman's duty to herself or other family - unlike the situation which exists for their Israeli-born daughters.
> (1989:113)

Gilad goes on to point out that not only have circumstances

changed for the younger generation but they also have completely different role models and standards by which to judge their own lives (and to be judged). For Harbour Deep residents, changes in the possibilities and identities for women have occurred through the impact of the outside world and since the 1992 crisis in the fishery.

5.4 Things are just not the same

Women of previous generations in Newfoundland outports had few options within the community (see Antler 1977). The expectation that they would marry and start a family was in part due to the financial situation of their families; there was no opportunity for extras, such as being sent elsewhere to finish their education. The secondary school was in St. John's, hence women sixty and older had rarely completed school. Aside from the difficulties posed by the education system of the time, a strong religious faith also influenced what was expected of young adults; it was their duty to raise a family: an opinion that stills exists among some members of the community to this day. The comment that "women having babies [is the way the world works]" was proffered to me by a

26 year old male. This was his reply to my making light of the question when he asked when I was going to "give up school, find a man, settle down and have kids."

This attitude can be seen as a carry over from past generations when the key was survival --making sure that food was on the table and the children were clothed. In fact, it can be seen as a carry over from the "making do with what you have" mentality (see p. 124). In this, I follow Geertz's (cited in Capps and Ochs) interpretation of common sense:

> common sense is a form of cultural logic, embedded in local concepts of what is sensible and judicious. Common
>
> sense is a kind of vernacular wisdom, grounded in local authoritative construals of things as they are
>
> (1995: 23)

You do whatever needs to be done. In light of that, women in Harbour Deep are leading their lives in a rational manner. Only someone irrational or unable to cope would dare to differ from what is considered acceptable behaviour for a good wife and mother.

Along with changes in social influences, the shift from labour-intensive salt-fish processing to wage work in fish

plants (in the 1960s), to the current situation of unemployment due to the moratoria, have had a tremendous impact on womens' roles within the home and community (see Robinson 1997, Williams 1996, Andy Rowe Consulting 1991, McGrath, Neis and Porter 1995). The closure of the fish plant has altered both the public and private realms for men and women in rural Newfoundland. Wives lost one of the only potential sources of personal income and have had to deal with the related impact of having unemployed husbands at home. There is no longer a woman's "domain" in the sense that the contemporary household has to be shared daily with husbands, sons and brothers suffering from boredom, loss of self esteem and anxiety about the future (See Davis 1993). So, just as they are limited in their ability to move forward, these women are unable to make the shift back to the previous role of "happy-homemaker." Many wives now feel discontented with the quality of their lives.

The dynamics of small town Newfoundland, with greater exposure (via travel and television) to outside influences are such that most people today are much more tolerant of the behaviour of 'strangers or outsiders.' Long time residents of Harbour Deep, on the other hand, are more constrained in their

behaviour by traditional attitudes. As I mentioned previously (see p.108), this even carries over into what is or is not accepted as a proper topic of conversation. This distinction prevents older women from being open and honest with each other about some of the issues and concerns they face. This also entails a certain amount of personal guilt about wanting something different for themselves --something outside the scope of caring for their family. Most individuals, especially married women within the community, seem to find it next to impossible to have frank discussions with friends and family members about personal issues and difficulties they are facing. Du Boulay (1974) refers to a similar situation in a Greek mountain village that is suffering a drastic loss of population due to the loss of traditional life:

> As the community fragments and as the ambitions of each family become more separated from that of the common good and more related to the separatist values of the outside world, so mutual co-operation weakens, the impetus given to gossip from hostility begins to gain ground, the values to which gossip appeals become weaker and more diverse, and the balance imperceptibly alters from one in which it tends towards cohesion to one in which it tends towards disintegration.
>
> (1974:212)

Such sanctions are not limited to conversation topics in Harbour Deep. Community members make it their business to scrutinize the actions, comments and behavior of others. Hence, even the most mundane activities take on special significance for individuals. An example of this was brought to my attention by an elderly widow. She had married into the community some 35 years previous, but still did not consider herself as 'of' the community. She is quite candid about the pressures inflicted on women by residents of Harbour Deep:

> Everyone has something to say about
> everyone and everything that goes on.
> Sure a woman can't even walk down the
> road before someone's lips are flapping,
> 'I knows now she got nothing better to
> do than walk about!'

When I questioned whether my walks around the community would be seen in such a light, she smiled and shook her head, " No, see, you're a new person, not from here, and you're going around talking with everyone. Now, if you'd stay any time here then they would start to talk about you."

Yet, talk about me they did. Everyone I spoke to would mention that they had seen me talking to someone else or going into or out of someone's house or walking down the road with someone. The implication of these observations was not always

clear to me but it seemed in part to be accountable to a natural curiousity as to why I would bother spending time with a particular person. As well, from many of the women there would be comments like, "Gee, I wish I had the time to go about like you" and "you've probably been in more of the homes here than anyone else!" The activities of women were not completely restricted to tending to their house and family. But the activities they engaged in outside the home were rarely for pure recreation. There was always a purpose behind them. It was as if the reason for getting out and about had to be a good one, or there was no sense in bothering. Women needed to legitimize their time away from home with activities that either indirectly benefitted the family or involved some sort of volunteer work. Otherwise, they suffer the condemnation of not having anything better to do.

The long-standing attitude among women in the community regarding self identity and evaluating self worth (viz. the 'ideal woman') have fostered a sense of competition which prevents women from discussing problems with each other. To tell one person is to tell the whole community. Instead, they turn to the relatively new option of discussing matters with the nurse practitioner. For here there is a surety of

confidences being kept.

5.4.1 *the benevolent listener*

Since 1963, the community has had a local clinic run by a nurse practitioner. The position has been held for the past ten years by a woman from a larger community in the same region who married into the community shortly after she began work there. She enjoys a wide social network of extended family relations as her husband's family is one of the largest in the community. Nonetheless, while she married in she is not 'of' the community. This factors greatly into residents' attitudes towards her. Consequently, she has few close friends in the community. For the most part, she is considered 'other.' And being from 'outside' means she, more than anyone else, can relate to the conflict many of the women are facing. It seems to serve the community to keep her distant, a relationship also underwritten by the confidentiality required and expected in her professional role.

Working as a nurse practitioner in a community that is geographically remote from referral centers is challenging.

As the only health professional in the community, the nurse practitioner does much more than fill the role of a nurse with advanced training. The extra responsibilities include performing the duties of an undertaker in preparing bodies for burial, being the source of advice that people can turn to in times of crisis; and unwittingly taking on the duties of confidante and social worker for women who feel that they have no one else to turn to.

Although the clinic was not open on weekends, the nurse was expected to be at the disposal of residents twenty-four hours, seven days a week. She was not given the same liberties as the rest of the community. Everything she did, from taking an afternoon trip on a speedboat Sunday afternoon to the curtains hanging in the windows of her house were noted and discussed by other residents. Many residents thought it was irresponsible of her to go out of the community for just a few hours because there would be no way of reaching her if a medical emergency occurred. This put a great deal of pressure on the nurse practitioner, who was married and had an eight year old child.

Within the first few weeks of my field stay it quickly became clear that despite the small size of the community

(population of 172) the health centre was a busy spot. During discussions with the nurse practitioner, she estimated that about 70 percent of her work over the last several years was counselling and social work-related, as several women in the community felt they had no one else with whom to discuss their problems. Several times a week, women made appointments discuss non-medical concerns. Speaking with the Nurse Practitioner within the private and formal setting of the clinic's examination room, they would discuss their financial, familial and marital woes, safe in the knowledge that what they said would be kept in confidence. Having the same discussion with a close relative or friend meant the possibility of the information becoming a matter of gossip. No one is willing to take this chance as admitting discontent or problems would be viewed negatively; after all, an "ideal woman" can handle most anything. Although the nurse practitioner is not trained as a social worker or counsellor, she is the only health care professional available to them on a regular basis. To lessen their burdens, local woman require someone who is not going to judge or criticize them, someone outside regular social networks, and someone in whom they can confide.

I had contact with the aforementioned nurse practitioner prior to going to Harbour Deep. In our discussions prior to my arrival, she had always presented the community as the ideal place for the type of research I was proposing. What did not come out during those telephone conversations was the strain and difficulties she was working under. The half-time nursing position at the clinic had been made redundant in December of 1996, and she was suppose to be relieved by an in-coming nurse from Roddickton for one week out of every seven. This arrangement was not working because there was a great deal of difficulty finding a qualified person willing to work, if only for a week, in the community. During our conversations, after my arrival in Harbour Deep, she spoke quite candidly about the fact that she had been grappling with dissatisfaction and a sense of "burn-out" for the last 8 months. She was adamant that although she loved the place and the people, she had "had enough" and needed to leave. She believed that this was not only the right move for her and her family, but for the people of Harbour Deep as well. She felt that they deserved to have someone committed to their needs and fresh to the job working at the station.

Leaving the position would mean leaving the community,

otherwise, she would not escape her own sense of obligation to residents (let alone their demands on her time). Having grappled with the decision and the effect it would have on her family, she had submitted her resignation a few weeks before my arrival and finished work at the end of May. She was in a position to make this move in large part due to the mobility her nursing training gave her --she could easily find work elsewhere. Her husband was supportive of leaving the community, but even if he had not been she could have financed the household move herself.

5.4.2 *inconsistencies abound*

I had initially thought that clinic utilization records would indicate increased usage of the clinic's health care facilities, but as the figures show this is not necessarily the case. The chart indicates a significant amount of clinic visits for the population size (177) of the community. The month of January with an overall average of 178 has the highest number of visits. The month of August has the second highest average at 175. Unfortunately, due to regulations protecting privacy the regional health care board was not

willing to assist in the analysis of these monthly statistics by giving any further information. Although, through my

Table 5:1

Clinic Utilization Statistics

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
January	197	254	135	151	189	161	156
Febraury	175	145	119	136	154	137	170
March	182	166	155	214	192	133	145
April	173	113	106	160	183	136	175
May	174	155	115	159	184	157	178
June	141	149	155	147	162	135	
July	183	148	171	155	160	135	
August	177	187	187	185	173	138	
September	157	136	226	168	183	158	
October	222	124	166	157	177	135	
November	208	157	173	169	143	146	
December	216	140	166	173	129	110	

discussions with female residents and the nurse practitioner, I suspect that the nature of the visits have changed over time I have no official figures for how many times a given individual visited the clinic in any particular month. As well, there was no gender breakdown to collaborate the information gathered from local residents and local nurse practitioners during my field stay. Based on my discussions

with several women in the community, I know that the dead of winter (January) is a depressing time for some and the month (August) before their children leave the community to attend school is distressing for many. Whether these circumstances actually have an impact on clinic utilization I cannot say for certain.

5.5 Summary

Adapting to change is nothing new for women living in rural coastal communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. However, a combination of the current moratoria and rapid social change has made it difficult for women to fulfil their role as the good wife and mother. This has brought a level of uncertainty to their lives that is unprecedented in their experience. Women are forced to grapple with the questions of where they fit within their family and community and how to regain their sense of self worth. It is in this context that appointments with the Nurse Practitioner have become so important to them.

Traditional notions of ideal behaviour for women persist in Harbour Deep. Yet, they are bearing the strain of new

societal values and attitudes --in changing circumstances. The ideal of the good wife and mother conflicts with the reality facing women; their ability to live up to this ideal has been seriously compromised. It has resulted in the women of Harbour Deep internalizing this conflict. Over the last 30 years women in this community have adjusted their lives to the changes brought on by the introduction of plant work as compared to less formal family work; and now they face a loss of wage labour. Yet, they still find themselves being judged by friends and family according to how much clean laundry is on the line and how shiny the floor is. There is a sense of competition over who can handle themselves better among women that inhibits open discussion about the circumstances they face. For those who find it difficult to cope, confidentiality and understanding is of the utmost importance. Consequently, the nurse practitioner is the preferred confidant.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Adaptability and the willingness to diversify have always been key factors to the success of people reliant on the fishing industry. Although there is a definite routine to the lives of fishers and their families, innovation and the ability to change are also a necessity of their livelihood (see Kottak 1992). However, as I have suggested, the current social economic situation facing residents (particularly women) of Harbour Deep is unprecedented in their lived experience. Through the use of ethnographic data on the lives women in Harbour Deep, Newfoundland I have shown that, since the downsizing of the fishery, the pressure women find placed on them has escalated.

This pressure has been caused by the impact of rapid social change combined with an uncertain economic future and the continuation of the traditional expectations of the role of the good wife and mother, along with the social sanctioning that occurs within this rural community. This means that the contemporary generation of women in Harbour Deep have a

different and difficult set of challenges facing them as compared to that of previous generations of Harbour Deep women.

Even though many residents will be the first to say they live in a 'paradise,' contentment and satisfaction eludes them. Moreover, the lives of women in a community like Harbour Deep are fraught with contradiction[38]. For past generations of women in Harbour Deep becoming a wife and a mother was the sum total of what a woman could be expected to achieve. The most acknowledged and accepted way for women to gain respect from friends and family (although even this was not guaranteed) was to be a good home-maker, who was ready for most anything and rarely complained about the added work. The sense of satisfaction and self worth that women gleaned from such a life is more difficult to come by these days as changing societal values mean women are keenly aware of other possibilities. As well, the opportunity to use working at the fish plant as a means of gaining more economic and social freedom was lost with the closure of the plant in 1992.

Furthermore, the contradictions and the divisions that

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[38] Martin 1987 suggests that women (more so than men) possess the ability to realize and voice the contradictions of their lived experience versus societal norms due to their objectification in western society.

exist for residents of this rural community reaches beyond the physical boundaries of people in different communities and works between individuals in the community. As such, the dilemma facing the women of Harbour Deep goes beyond the geographic remoteness and unemployment that is facing the community. At first glance, the community appears to participate in an all inclusive friendship that involves each member of the community to the extent that everyone knows everyone else's business, and secrets are an illusion. However, within this relationship certain matters are off limits as topics of discussion. The traditional egalitarian ethic (which inhibits the success of one resident over the others) along with social sanctioning of undesirable behaviour and topics of conversations effectively inhibits the ability of women to admit to others that they need help in coping with life change issues. Women in Harbour Deep have few support services and resources available to them. Hence, their options for finding release from such pressure is extremely limited.

Due, in part, to the social and economic history of the community, the reliance on outsider health care professionals is not a new phenomenon for residents of Harbour Deep. Yet

in light of the change in social and economic circumstances for women (precipitated by the down turn in the fishery) the extent to which they have come to rely on the female health care professional has certainly increased --exponentially so. The community's nurse practitioner falls outside the traditional sanctions which inhibit women from discussing life issues with others in the community. As someone not from the community and holding a professional position, the nurse practitioner has become the only outlet most women have to discuss their personal problems. This, in turn, has added to the stressful job facing the sole health care professional working in the community.

In this thesis I have provided a holistic picture of the situation in which women in Harbour Deep currently find themselves struggling. Although I have illuminated the difficulties in their lives it has not been my intention to suggest to the reader that the situation is completely without hope. The characteristic resiliency and independent spirit of these women will see them through as they search out alternative ways of coping with the social and economic changes in their lives.

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Appendix

THE PASSING OF TIME: A Pictorial Essay

Harbour Deep: circa 1973

Photos by Marget Gunness-Davis

Northwest Bottom

Southwest Bottom

Wooden Bridge Around the Point
(connects Southwest and Northwest Bottoms)

On the Point
(before the road)

Working on the Road
through the community

Narrow foot-bridge
(in the Southwest Bottom)

Gardens & Laundry

Fishing Stage

Harbour Deep: circa 1997

Photos by Jodi Durdle

Northwest Bottom

Southwest Bottom

The Crib
(located on the Point
- connects Southwest
and Northwest Bottoms)

On the Point
(with a road)

Fishing Stages

Wide Bridge
(in the Southwest Bottom)