

The Sharing of Family Tasks and Role Strain
in the
Commuter Marriage

by
Jane W. Spruill

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Name of Candidate: Jane Woodley Spruill
Master of Science, 1984

Thesis and Abstract Approved:

Elaine A. Anderson

Elaine A. Anderson
Assistant Professor
Family & Community Development

Date Approved: April 19, 1984

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: The Sharing of Family Tasks and Role Strain in the Commuter Marriage

Jane Woodley Spruill, Master of Science, 1984

Thesis directed by: Elaine A. Anderson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor,
Family & Community Development

The purpose of this study was to examine the husband - wife sharing of family tasks and the presence of role strain in a selected sample of commuter marriages. Thirty-nine commuter couples located geographically throughout the United States participated in the study.

The mean score of the sharing of family tasks was 2.99 which indicated that family tasks in commuter couples were shared equally. However in examining tasks individually, wives seemed to have more responsibility. The correlation between the length of marriage when the commute began and role strain was significant. The distance of the commute and role strain did not correlate. No significant difference was found among groups based upon how often a couple reunites and how they shared travel time. There was also no significant difference between those individuals with dependent children and those without dependent children, although there was some indication that role strain was higher for individuals with preschool children.

It was concluded that commuter couples may be nontraditional in choosing their lifestyle but they still seem somewhat traditional in the sharing of family tasks. An established relationship between spouses is important if a couple is contemplating commuting. The distance of the commute and how often a couple reunites did not seem

to affect the level of role strain. Although the sharing of travel time and the stage of the family life cycle indicated no significant effect on role strain, differences in means indicate that couples may want to consider these factors in making the decision to commute.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

From 1968 to 1978 a dramatic change took place in the labor force. The number of dual-earner families (i.e., married couples where both husband and wife were earners at sometime during the year) rose by about 4.5 million or nearly 25 percent (Haygne, 1981). Coinciding with the increase of dual-earner families has been the increase of dual-career families. Dual-career families as defined by Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) are those in which both heads of the household pursue careers and maintain a family life together. A career is a job that requires a high degree of commitment and has a continuous developmental character; whereas, work is defined as any gainful employment.

Although dual-earner families outnumber dual-career families, the number of dual-career families is likely to increase as educational and employment opportunities are made available to women (Hicks, Hansen, and Christie, 1983). Since the dual-career form seeks to integrate the demands of two full-time careers with family responsibilities, stress and conflict may be produced.

Farris (1978) points out that the problem of pursuing two careers in the same geographic area is one often encountered by dual-career couples. The conventional solution is usually one in

which one or both spouses take less desirable jobs or one spouse does not work at all. In most cases the wife is the one who compromises, thus her career suffers (Farris, 1978). To resolve this conflict some dual-career couples have taken an unconventional approach. They have adopted a commuting lifestyle in which the husband and wife maintain separate residences; are apart from each other for at least three or four days a week and then reunite (Gerstel and Gross, 1982).

Researchers (Kirschner and Walum, 1978; Gerstel and Gross, 1982) have acknowledged that living apart is not unique to dual-career couples. Certain occupations such as politicians, executives, or salesmen, as well as specific circumstances (eg. war, immigration, imprisonment, and seasonal work) require marital separation. However, Kirschner and Walum (1978) note that in most of these incidents it is the male who is leaving the family for some period of time. Also these couples do not maintain separate residences and/or do not separate by choice.

To date limited research has been conducted on the commuter lifestyle. Participants are difficult to identify and are highly mobile. Four studies (Farris, 1978; Gerstel, 1978; Gross, 1980; and Kirschner and Walum, 1978) have consisted of interviews and analysis of qualitative responses. These studies may "generate fruitful insights about the subjective side of a complex lifestyle, but insights they remain until adequately tested" (Gross, 1980). Two additional studies by Bunker and Vanderslice (1983) and Orton and Crossman (1983) have utilized quantitative data.

The present study will focus on the division of labor or sharing of family tasks and role strain present in a sample of commuter couples. It will provide a quantitative measure of these variables and will enable the researcher to test previous findings. In addition, it will attempt to understand further the commuter relationship and the strains it produces with the ultimate goal being to help commuter couples develop coping strategies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the husband-wife sharing of family tasks and the presence of role strain in a selected sample of commuter marriages. The impact of the length of marriage, the distance of the commute, how often the couple reunites, the share of traveling time, and the stage of the family life cycle on the presence of role strain in this relationship will be assessed. If one can understand the result of the interaction that takes place between these variables and role strain in commuter couples, coping strategies for this alternative lifestyle may be developed. This information would be particularly useful to marriage and family counselors.

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do husbands and wives in commuter relationships share family tasks?
- 2) What factors affect the level of role strain?

The Definition of Terms

Commuter marriage - a marital relationship in which spouses choose to live and work apart from each other in order to pursue their respective careers for at least three consecutive days a week and at a distance of at least 50 miles.

Family tasks - those tasks which are associated with family management and include planning menus, shopping for food, food preparation, after-meal cleanup, shopping for clothing, laundry, vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms, picking up clutter, other cleaning, repair and maintenance, gardening, lawn mowing and care, washing car, minor repairs and maintenance of the car, chauffeuring children, attending functions with children, daily care of the children, arranging care of children by sitter or day care provider, paying bills, planning investments, coordinating family activities, planning family recreation, and organizing social activities.

Role strain - worries people may have about whether or not they adequately accomplish everything they feel obligated to do in both work and family areas.

Primary residence - residence in which the commuter couple most often reunites.

Overview of the Thesis

Theories applicable to the study will be reviewed in Chapter II. System theory and structural-functional theory are the two main theories utilized. A review of the literature will follow that will include the limited studies on commuter couples and studies relating to division of labor and role strain in dual-career couples. Then hypotheses will be proposed for investigation. The design and method which includes the sampling, the collection and analysis of the data, instrumentation and some of the methodological issues will be presented in Chapter III. Chapter IV deals with the analysis of the data and results. Conclusions and implications, suggestions for further research, and limitations of the study are presented in the final chapter.

Chapter II

THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

A basis for this research will be an ecological systems approach (Andrews, Bubolz, and Paolucci, 1980) that recognizes the family system is in a constant state of change and adaptation. As a result the structure and function of the family has changed over time. Since an interdependence exists between the family and the environment, the equilibrium of the system is continually disrupted. Stress created within the system is usually stimulated by environmental factors.

More specifically the structure-functional theoretical framework will be utilized. Three major areas of functions have been emphasized: "the functions of the family for society, the function of the subsystems within a family for the family or for each other, and the functions of the family for individual family members, including the development of personality" (McIntyre, 1981, p. 55). Bell and Vogel (1968) further identified the following subfunctions in each of those categories: task performance, family leadership, integration and solidarity, and the family value system. This study will focus on the internal relationships and the subfunction of task performance and the family value system. Task performance involves the processing of goods for consumption, the

care and maintenance of family possessions, and the caretaking of dependents. The family value system establishes expectations for organizing family activities and is related to the larger societal value system.

How tasks are performed in relation to the commuter family structure will be addressed in this research. The family value system is also an important subfunction to consider. Stress may be experienced in commuter couples due to the incongruity between the traditional and nontraditional lifestyles.

Historical Changes Within the Family

The commuter marriage results when spouses are unable to pursue their respective careers in the same geographical location. In order to understand how this family structure has evolved, it is necessary to study the family in the past. Increasing opportunities for women have affected the structure and function of the family.

In examining the pre-industrial family, most of the work took place at home. The integration of family and work allowed for more intensive task sharing between husbands and wives. Housework was inseparable from agricultural work as long as the family was a production unit. Motherhood was valued not only for nurturing but for its economic contribution since children were seen as economic assets. Although the economic activity of wives was recognized, they were not granted equal status or power. Tasks were different between the sexes and the female status was inferior (Hareven, 1977).

Industrialization brought a differentiation of family functions. The family became more of a consuming unit rather than the work unit it had been. The production of goods and services done in the home by women such as spinning, weaving, and baking bread were now done outside the home. Although men's work changed in nature from agricultural to more specialized industrial work, it did not change in importance. In middle class families housework lost its economic and productive value. Working class families, however, continued to recognize the economic value of motherhood since there was a demand for child labor. Sentiment was secondary to economic functioning in these families. Since blacks and immigrants were not part of the middle class, they were not expected to stay at home.

In summary, industrialization had more of an impact on middle class families. It produced segregated roles between husbands and wives, and a separation of children's roles from parental roles. Since middle class families lost functions that previously were concentrated in the household, the family developed into a "private, domestic and child-centered retreat" (Hareven, 1977, p. 103). Spockian child rearing reinforced the existing cultural pattern of "feminine domesticity" (Slater, 1970 p. 62).

Economic and political changes were not the only influence on women's labor force participation. The decline in family size and greater life expectancy are two major changes in family structure that had a great impact on the family life cycle. Reasons given by Bane (1976) for increased childlessness at the end of the nineteenth

century are economic difficulties and the unhealthy conditions facing women in factories. The economic depression of the 1930's is one explanation of the high rate of childlessness during that period. Effective birth control has also meant couples can choose when to have children and how many to have. These demographic changes have had an impact on the timing of the marriage and the birth of the first child. As a result of fewer children and a longer life expectancy, adults complete their parental duties earlier. This in turn means the "empty nest" stage of the family life cycle lasts longer. Even though family size has shrunk, the needs of the family in the reproductive phase are great. This is the phase of the family life cycle when income is normally at its minimum. The cost of having and rearing children is so high, few families can afford it on the basis of one salary, hence increasing numbers of families have both parents working out of the home.

The two structural changes, lower fertility and an increase in life expectancy, coinciding with the increased labor force participation of women have created internal changes in family functions. Families are having to learn to cope with working wives who are having to divide their energies between work and home. This new role has affected women's roles as homemakers and principle nurturers of young children. In addition, changes have occurred in the emotional relationships between husband and wife, and mother and child (Giraldo, 1980).

Childcare is a major concern of dual-career families. How are children to be cared for when both spouses work? Most childcare

arrangements have remained in the child's or caretaker's home. Many believe that the well-being of children suffer when the mother works. However Hoffman (1974) found the effect of the mother's employment related to the mother's attitude toward employment. If the mother felt guilty about working, children could be affected negatively. On the other hand, if the mother had a positive attitude toward work then there was no difference between working and nonworking mothers.

To understand further the impact of women working on marital roles, the theory of choice and exchange needs to be examined. The basic proposition of Blood and Wolfe's (cited in Scanzoni, 1981) resource theory is that spouses who bring the most resources (rewards) to the marital relationship exercise the most power. Heer's (cited in Scanzoni, 1981) exchange theory elaborates further. The first assumption is that a spouse's intramarital resources are measured by what they would bring in an external market. Second, power is influenced by alternative sources of rewards beyond the couple. A person's power over another depends on how dependent that person is on the resources the other person has, and whether or not the second person can find alternate sources. These concepts readily apply to the exchange process in families in regard to roles and marital control (Scanzoni, 1981).

Scanzoni (1981) advocates that women's increased access and control to economic resources may be the "most significant point about the 200 year upward trend in female employment" (p. 321). As women began to obtain access to and control of economic resources,

wives questioned the marital-role structure. They began to demand more rights. When the legal system removed the wife from the position of property and recognized her more as a person, women were permitted to inherit, earn, control, and dispose of their own property. As women gained increased rights this in turn affected their labor force participation.

When employment opportunities became available, women could opt to provide for themselves. Even for women who were married, the availability of employment meant they could choose another set of rewards; thus, the husband's power was weakened. Bringing economic resources into the marriage means part of the family's living standard depends on the wife's income. Since she makes part of the money, she has a say on how it is to be spent; thus, she has increased bargaining power.

Career options for women made possible by educational opportunities and changes within society have greatly expanded. If both spouses are equally committed to their careers and each one's occupation is considered to be equally important, what happens when two meaningful careers are not available in the same geographical area?

The basic assumption that the wife's career is subordinate to her husbands, and secondly that couples are expected to dwell in a single residence to keep the marriage intact usually determine career advancement and family residence. However, an unconventional approach may be taken in which spouses choose to commute. Gerstel (1977) suggests the commuter family structure is the "best fit for

dual-career couples who have a serious commitment to uninterrupted career development." As a result of this emerging family structure, family function will change. How are family tasks to be accomplished when two separate residences exist?

In conclusion, marital roles have been influenced by increasing societal changes. Without changes in economic policies and laws, careers for women would not have been possible. The commuter marriage is one type of alternative family form that has resulted from expanding career opportunities for women.

The Review of Previous Research

Characteristics of Commuter Marriages

The sample size of previous research on commuter marriages has consisted of 10 couples (Farris, 1978), 15 couples, 11 wives only, and two husbands only (Gross, 1980) and 31 couples and five spouses only (Gerstel, 1978). Sample size is unknown for the Kirschner and Walum (1978) study. Based on those studies Gross and Gerstel (1982) have suggested the following profile: 1) A large majority of these spouses are well-educated, over 90% have completed at least some graduate work, 2) Almost all are professionals or executives with a high proportion in academics, and 3) The median family income was between \$30,000 and \$40,000. The familial characteristics of these couples included: a mean age of mid-to-late thirties with a range of 25 - 65; 40 to 50% had children; and more than half had been married for nine years or longer. Sample size for Bunker and

Vanderslice's study (1983) consisted of 22 males and 32 females. Orton and Crossman (1983) had 114 respondents. The individuals in these studies, also adhere to the Gross and Gerstel profile (1983).

In regard to the couples commuting characteristics there is much more variation. The period of time couples had maintained separate residences ranged from three months to fourteen years. Spouses traveled from a range of 40 to 2700 miles and reunited as often as every weekend to as little as a few days each month. The majority of respondents conceive their living arrangement to be temporary.

One home is usually considered the primary residence and the other a sort of satellite residence. The home the couple reunites in is considered the primary residence. However neither spouse's residence may be viewed as a primary one (Kirschner and Walum, 1978).

Stress in the Dual-Career Family

Skinner (1980) classifies the sources of stress in the dual-career couple into internal and external types of strains. The former, for example, deals with balancing career and family life and finding satisfactory child care arrangements. Whereas the latter includes the incongruity between the dual-career lifestyle and traditional norms and the occupational pressures for mobility. In order to integrate the internal and external types of strain, Bohen and Viveros-Long's (1981) definition of stress can be utilized. By combining Pearlin and Bronfenbrenner's dimension of stress, stress is defined as "the experience of discomfort, pressure, tension, or

frustration that may arise as people function in both their jobs and family worlds" (Bohen and Viveros-Long, 1981, p. 70). They further categorized stress into role strain and family management, defining role strain as consisting "of worries people may have about whether they adequately accomplish everything they feel obligated to do in both work and family arenas" (p. 71).

Skinner (1980) found that an "overwhelming proportion of the literature reports that the impact of dual-career stress is felt most by women." Combining a professional career and parenting is easier for a man than a woman because less is expected of the man (Bernard as cited in Skinner). Heckman, Bryson, and Bryson (1977) concluded that the woman's personal identity and career aspirations are sacrificed as a result of role conflict and overload strain. Strain for men does not appear to be as significant although Burke and Weir (1976) found that husbands of working women were less satisfied than husbands of nonworking women.

Mortimer and London (1984) found that the literature on the dual-career family emphasizes the stress experienced by this family structure. It is suggested that stress occurs from extreme role overload resulting from lack of time available to accomplish the work required by a career and a family. Furthermore additional stress occurs if spouses have to seek employment in separate locations.

To understand the stress that occurs in the dual-career commuter family, it is important to examine the socialization of the individuals involved and their role expectations. Gross (1980)

found that commuter couples use the traditional role relationship as a standard in which they compare their relationship. Orton and Crossman (1983) suggest that if couples use traditional role models, then it is likely that society will too. Society may perceive that the couple's motivation to commute stems from desiring marital freedom instead of pursuing career development. Kirschner and Walum (1978) found that stress was experienced by the commuting couple when their peers assumed the commuter arrangement was the initial step toward divorce. Another misconception reported by Gerstel (1977) was that these couples were sexually free. Bunker and Vanderslice (1983) also found that respondents cited the reaction of others to their new lifestyle as a significant stressor. In summary this disparity between traditional and nontraditional roles may result in stress.

In the couples that were interviewed by Gerstel (1978) and Gross (1980), the commuting arrangement was more stressful if they had children, if they had a longer distance to travel, and if they spent more time apart. Older couples, married longer, with at least one spouse's career well-established found the separation less stressful than younger couples who were contending with their new careers and marital relationship. Additional sources of stress indicated by Bunker and Vanderslice (1983) were planning social activities and the resentments which result from new patterns of division of labor.

Division of Labor

Dual-career couples confront the day to day challenge of managing family tasks. Ideally the division of labor between the spouses would be equal. However, the socialization process that each spouse has experienced may evoke guilt feelings in the female and feelings of insecurity in the male. For this reason, the ideal state of an equal division of labor is seldom achieved (Hester and Dickerson, 1981).

Using time budget studies in which dual-earner respondents describe their activities during a block of time gives one a perspective on the typical division of labor. Walker and Woods (1976) found that the husband's performance of family work (i.e., housework and childcare) is small in comparison to family work performed by wives. Secondly, husbands did not increase their family work when their wives were employed in comparison to when their wives were not employed. However the wives decrease their time in doing housework. Pleck (1979) in his review of the literature found that other studies supported this conclusion. In further analyses, Pleck found that the total work performed (family work and paid work), is greater for employed wives than for employed husbands. Total work was more nearly equal in couples where the wife was a full-time homemaker. Thus, Pleck concludes that employed wives experience "overload" when combining work and family roles.

It would appear that commuter couples would be similar to the dual-career couples studied in regard to the sharing of family tasks. They too, might experience high levels of role strain when

attempting to integrate family and work roles. However, Farris (1978) found that in commuter couples compartmentalization of work and home lives existed and was acknowledged by the spouses as a benefit of their lifestyle. While the commuter was away from home total concentration on work was present. The weekends were devoted to family oriented activities. Participants in Bunker and Vanderslice's (1983) study also stated that freedom from family pressure increased their ability to concentrate on work. This finding is in contrast to dual-career couples who integrate roles on a day to day basis.

Farris (1978) and Gerstel (1978) suggest that commuter couples become less traditional in their division of labor. Farris (1978) indicates however that even though couples shared a lot of household responsibilities, the wife's weekend was often spent in doing household work. She also found that both spouses recognized the wife/mother did not have exclusive responsibility for domestic and childcare tasks, therefore the spouses of the commuting wives readily assumed these tasks. Gerstel and Gross (1982) consider commuting as an equalizing force in the domestic division of labor. They found that husbands and wives gained competence in those tasks traditionally sex-linked. As a result, a new sense of effectiveness is achieved in the commuter marriage.

The present study attempts to examine the sharing of family tasks by commuter couples. The impact of the length of the marriage, the distance of the commute, the sharing of travel time, how often the couple reunites, and the stage of the family life

cycle on the level of role strain will also be explored. Having reviewed previous research on dual-career couples and commuter couples it is now possible to state the hypotheses to be tested in the present study.

Hypotheses

It has been established that an equal division of labor is rarely achieved between dual-career couples. Structure-function theory suggests that the family value system in relation to the societal value system establishes expectations for the family. Hence society's value system impacts on the sharing of family tasks. It has been learned from the examination of the history of family functions that family roles became segregated. Therefore, even though the number of women who are sharing work roles with men has increased, society does not yet expect men and women to share family roles. However commuter couples seem to have nontraditional values since they choose to commute so that each spouse can pursue his and her career. Therefore, one might expect that they would be less traditional and share family tasks equally.

Hypothesis 1: Spouses in a commuter marriage will more likely share family tasks equally than not share family tasks equally.

The following hypotheses relate to the level of role strain spouses feel in a commuter marriage. The literature suggests stress

may result from role overload when individuals try to combine a career and a family. Research on commuter couples indicates that certain factors i.e., the length of marriage, the length of commute, the sharing of travel time, how often the couples reunite, and the stage of the family life cycle, may affect the stress experienced in the marriage. Hypotheses 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 seek to test these relationships. One might expect it would be easier to adapt to the commute if the couple was not trying to adjust simultaneously to being newly married and to being involved in a commuting arrangement. As their marital relationship stabilized, increasing amounts of effort could be given to their career goals.

Hypothesis 2: Those couples married for more years when the commute began will have lower role strain than those couples who have been married for only a few years when the commute began.

Gerstel and Gross (1982) noted couples who had a long distance to commute found the arrangement more stressful than those who lived closer together. The cost and additional time required to commute might account for this finding.

Hypothesis 3: Those couples with the longest distance to commute will express higher role strain than those couples who only commute a short distance.

Another variable that may be associated with the distance of the commute is how often the couple reunites. Bunker and Vanderslice (1983) found that respondents reported putting less energy into their relationship the more time they were apart.

Hypothesis 4: A lower level of role strain will be present for couples who reunite more frequently than for those couples who reunite quite infrequently.

Bunker and Vanderslice (1983) examined differences between the traveler and the nontraveler on factors such as personal outcomes, social life, and attitudes toward their partner. Role strain too may be affected by which partner travels. It would seem that if traveling time was equally shared less strain would be experienced by the spouses.

Hypothesis 5: Lower role strain will be present for spouses who share traveling time equally than for spouses who do not share traveling time equally.

Although Gerstel and Gross (1982) suggested commuting is more stressful for couples with dependent children than those without dependent children, analyses by Bunker and Vanderslice (1983) indicated no differences in satisfaction between those two groups. However, given that the care of the children involves considerable time, it would seem that couples with children would experience a higher level of role strain than those couples without children.

Hypothesis 6: A higher level of role strain will be present for couples with dependent children than for couples without dependent children.

These six hypotheses will serve as the basis for data analysis in this study. The initial analysis will provide descriptive information about commuter couples in this sample. An analysis of the relationship between role strain and the length of marriage, the distance of commute, the sharing of travel time, how often the couple reunites, and the stage of the family life cycle will be studied in order that coping strategies for commuter couples may be developed.

Summary

Few studies have been conducted with commuter couples and these have mostly been descriptive in nature. Although there is some indication from previous research that commuter couples become less traditional in their household division of labor, it is not evident that equal sharing of tasks exists. Stress experienced by commuter couples and factors contributing to that stress have been discussed by the researchers, but it appears that no quantitative measure of stress has been taken. The six hypotheses stated for testing will be analyzed in Chapter IV. Before they can be tested it is necessary to describe the methodology and design of this research.

Chapter III

DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter describes the design and methodology used in this study. The population, sampling procedures, method of data collection, instrumentation, characteristics of the sample, data analysis procedures, and methodological issues are discussed.

The Population

The population for this study consists of approximately 88 commuter couples. These couples are located geographically throughout the United States. To qualify as a commuter couple for the study, couples had to have been living in separate residences for at least three days at a time per week. They also had to be presently commuting for at least a period of three months or had been commuting within the last two years.

Sampling

Through advertisement in several regional and national professional newsletters, and by using a nonrandomized snowball sampling technique, couples were solicited for participation in the study. Of the 88 couples who received the survey, 39 couples completed the survey and met the criteria to qualify as a commuter couple. Six couples were disqualified because they did not meet the

criteria. An additional nine individual spouses responded to the survey but have not been included in the presentation of the couple results. Therefore, the study has a couples response rate of 53%.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire used for the present study was partially developed by the author. The family task scale and the role strain scale have been used with previous studies but they have been somewhat altered for the present study. Since the majority of studies dealing with commuter couples utilized the interview to collect the data, there was limited experience on which to base the construction of the questionnaire and collection of the data. In order to pre-test the instrument, questionnaires were administered to five people who had participated in a commuter marriage in November 1982. Upon completion the researcher and respondents discussed the content of each of the questions. The instrument was then improved and modified.

From the initial list of couples who had agreed to participate in the study, names and questionnaires were coded. Questionnaires were mailed to the couples along with self-addressed return envelopes. A formal cover letter stressed the importance of the study and asked each spouse to fill out the questionnaire independently and return it in his or her respective envelopes within three weeks (see Appendix A). If participants no longer commuted they were told to answer the questions based upon their commuting experience. A section of the questionnaire asked for

names of other commuters who might be interested in participating in the study. Each coded return was documented on a list of participants. A follow-up contact was made after two weeks for those who had not responded. A second follow-up letter was sent one week later (see Appendix A). Names that were provided of other commuter couples on the returned questionnaire were then mailed the questionnaire. The same procedure was then used for their follow-up.

Instrumentation

Since this thesis is a part of a larger study only the set of questions pertaining to the relevant hypotheses will be described.

The first 19 questions contain demographic information about the participants such as age, race, sex, socioeconomic level, educational level, number of children, years married, and occupation. The next section of the instrument asks specific questions about the arrangement of their commute. The third major area of the questionnaire deals with the sharing of family tasks. Twenty-six tasks are identified. Finally a series of 16 statements relate to the level of role strain participants feel. In addition, respondents were asked if they had any comments about their commuter arrangement.

To test the hypotheses it is necessary to operationalize the concepts. Following will be a discussion of how the relevant variables were operationalized and how they were used.

The sharing of family tasks was operationalized with a family task index that identified 26 tasks families perform. The sum score

reflects a point on a continuum from tasks not shared to tasks equally shared. This scale is an adaptation of a 22 item scale used by Gloria Bird (Note 1) that was based on the Regional Time Studies. The original 22 item scale was tested for reliability using a factor analysis to construct the 22 factors.

Husbands and wives were asked to circle the description which best describes how they perceived their family to divide household tasks. If a third party did the task they were asked to circle the description for who arranged for that task to be done and to indicate that the task was performed by a third party. Respondents could also indicate if the task was not applicable.

The following scores were assigned to each description 1) Wife only, 2) Wife more, 3) Wife and husband about the same, 4) Husband more than wife, and 5) Husband only. To create an index of the family tasks, scores were added and then divided by 26 to obtain a mean. A count was made of scores that were missing and of scores coded not applicable. If more than 13 items were counted an index was not created. It was then considered to be a missing score (see Appendix B).

To operationalize role strain the Job-Family Role Strain Scale developed by the Family Impact Seminar (Bohen and Viveros-Long, 1981) was used. This scale follows five of Myra Komarovsky's six modes of role strain. However, to increase the reliability coefficient of the instrument to 0.72, the Family Impact Seminar eliminated Mode 4 when they analyzed the data. Therefore, these items were eliminated in this study. Stress was related to

internalized values and emotions as well as feelings of contentment, fulfillment, self-respect, and the balancing of job and family obligations. The lower the sum score the greater the amount of job-family role strain. On a scale of one to five, respondents were asked to indicate how often they felt the emotion expressed in each statement. On a scale of one to five, answers were 1) Always, 2) Most of the time, 3) Some of the time, 4) Rarely, and 5) Never. Respondents could also indicate if the statement was not applicable. Following are the four modes and statements used in this study.

Mode 1. Ambiguity about norms:

1. I worry that other people at work think my family interferes with my job.
2. I worry whether I should work less and spend more time with my children.
3. I worry that other people feel I should spend more time with my children.

Mode 3. Socially structured insufficiency of resources for role fulfillment:

4. I worry about how my kids are while I'm working.
5. I am comfortable with the arrangements for my children while I am working.
6. Making arrangements for my children while I work involves a lot of effort.

Mode 5. Conflict between normative phenomena:

7. My job keeps me away from my family too much.
8. I have a good balance between my job and my family time.
9. My time off from work does not match other family members's schedules well.
10. I always find enough time for the children.

Mode 6. Overload of role obligations:

11. I feel I have more to do than I can handle comfortably.
12. I wish I had more time to do things for the family.
13. I feel physically drained when I get home from work.
14. I feel I have to rush to get everything done each day.
15. I feel I don't have enough time for myself.
16. I feel emotionally drained when I get home from work.

Scores for the statements "I have a good balance between my job and family time." and "I find enough time for the children." were recoded (1 to 5, 2 to 4, 4 to 2, and 5 to 1), to reflect the same continuum as the other statements. An index was created by adding the scores together and dividing by 16. If more than eight of the items were missing and/or not applicable no index was obtained.

The question which was used to operationalize the independent variable of the length of marriage was: "How long were you married when you began your commuting relationship?" The number of years was recoded into number of months since the response was in number of years and months.

The distance of commute was operationalized with the question:

"How far apart are your residences? Please indicate both miles and travel time."

The question used to operationalize how often the couple reunites was: "How often do you see each other?" Responses were 1) Weekly, 2) Bi-weekly, 3) Monthly, and 4) Other. Because there were numerous answers in the 4) Other category, answers were further divided into 5) 3 weeks, 6) 6 weeks, and 7) 3 months.

To determine the sharing of travel time the question: "Who travels to whom?" was asked. Responses were 1) Husband only to wife's residence, 2) Wife only to husband's residence, 3) Husband more to wife's residence, 4) Wife more to husband's residence, 5) Equal share of traveling time, 6) Both spouses commute from their own residences and meet in third location, and 7) Other.

To operationalize the stage of the family life cycle the question: "What were the ages and sex of your children when you began your commute?" was used. Initially two categories, respondents with dependent children and respondents without dependent children were established. To further examine the stage of the family life cycle four classifications were created: 1) No children, 2) Preschool children, 3) School age children, and 4) Children over 18.

Characteristics of the Sample

This sample largely reflects the same demographic characteristics of the previous research samples on commuter marriages. The following profile was determined: 1) The familial

characteristics of these couples included: a median age of 30 to late thirties, with 15% younger than 30 and 13% 50 or older: 95% of the sample was currently married and the average number of years they had been married was 10 years and eight months, however 21% had been married three years or less whereas another 21% had been married 18 years or more; 44% of the sample did cohabit with their spouse anywhere from three months up to four years prior to their marriage; 49% did have children and of those couples with children, 58% of the mothers lived with the children, 21% of the fathers had the children living with them, and 21% stated their children were living on their own, 2) The average amount of education was some post master's training suggesting a highly educated professional group; the average stage in their career development was not quite well-established, but at the end of the beginning career stage, 3) 84% of the sample was Caucasian, 8% Black and 8% of another race, 4) The average individual income was about \$25,000 with the range including 12% below \$10,000 and 12% about \$50,000.

In regard to commuting characteristics there is some variation. The average time the couple had been commuting was two years and six months, however 28% had maintained separate residences for a year or less in contrast to 15% who had been commuting for three or more years. Spouses traveled anywhere from 70 miles to as far as 5,000 miles, with the median distance being 390 miles or approximately seven hours driving time.

The couples were asked who does most of the traveling. Forty-seven percent of the couples said either the husband did all

the traveling or traveled more frequently than his wife, whereas 29% of the couples said the woman was the predominant traveler.

One-quarter did say they split the traveling equally.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for age, race, sex, socioeconomic level, educational level, number of children, years married, years cohabited prior to marriage, the distance of the commute, the sharing of travel time, how often the couple reunited, each of the 26 family tasks, and each of the 16 role strain statements. A family task index score and role strain index score was completed for each individual.

A Pearson - zero order correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between role strain and the length of marriage; and between role strain and the distance of the commute. To determine if a significant difference existed between role strain means among groups for the variables of the sharing of travel time, and how often the couple reunited, an analysis of variance was computed. A t-test examined the difference of the role strain index means between couples who had dependent children and those who did not.

Summary

Thirty-nine commuter couples located geographically throughout the United States participated in the study. Couples were solicited for participation by using a nonrandomized snowball sampling

technique. The questionnaire determined sociological characteristics, commuting arrangements, the sharing of family tasks, and role strain of the respondents.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that spouses in a commuter marriage will more likely share family tasks equally than not share family tasks. To test this hypothesis a mean index score was computed for the sharing of the 26 family tasks. The mean index score was 2.99. Since a score of 3 indicates equal sharing of tasks, Therefore, this hypothesis is supported. However, individual examination of specific tasks indicates a traditional division of household labor. For most of the tasks typically thought of as female tasks, the women had more responsibility. These tasks included planning menus, preparing meals, clothes shopping, doing laundry, vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms, picking up clutter, chauffeuring children, attending functions with the children, and the daily care of the children and the pets. The males had more responsibility for after-meal cleanup, repair and maintenance of the house, gardening, lawn mowing, washing cars, minor repairs and repair and maintenance of cars, payment of bills, and planning investments than did the females.

In addition, there were several tasks which were reported to be divided equally between the husband and wife by many of the respondents. These tasks were shopping for food, general cleaning,

coordinating the family daily activity, planning family recreation and organizing their entertainment activities. However, for every one of these tasks that were reported to be shared by many couples, if they did not report equity of labor, the wife had the major responsibility (See Table 1).

Role Strain

The role strain experienced by commuting couples and factors influencing the level of role strain were examined. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate role strain. A higher level of role strain was shown by a lower score on a scale of 1 to 5.

On many of the individual items there seemed to be fairly equal numbers who did not feel stress and who did indicate they were stressed. Several examples of the strain included 26% who felt most of the time that their job was keeping them away from their family too much, 31% who felt they had more to do than they could comfortably handle most of the time, 44% who rarely if ever felt they had a good balance between their job and family time, and 31% who most of the time wished they had more time to do things for their family. However, for each of the above issues an equal number did not or rarely felt any role strain.

Several role strain items produced a very positive response from many of the couples. Over half of the respondents said that usually their time off from work matches the schedules of their family quite well, they feel they do have enough time for themselves, they rarely worry about others at work thinking their family

Table 1
Mean Score of Family Task Sharing
and
Adjusted Percentage of Performance

	Mean Score	Wife Only	Wife More	Wife and Husband	Husband More	Husband Only
Planning menus	2.3	21	34	38	7	0
Shopping for food	2.7	18	14	53	12	4
Food preparation	2.4	17	34	38	11	0
After-meal cleanup	3.1	6	17	44	28	8
Clothes Shopping	2.4	10	41	47	1	0
Laundry	2.5	16	33	38	10	3
Vacuuming	2.8	14	25	31	22	8
Cleaning bathrooms	2.6	21	25	30	19	5
Picking up clutter	2.6	11	35	41	7	6
Other cleaning	2.5	11	29	53	3	3
Repair and maintenance	4.0	2	2	19	47	31
Gardening	3.2	16	16	18	28	22
Lawn mowing and care	4.1	4	10	6	33	48
Washing car(s)	4.1	5	10	19	27	39
Minor car repairs	4.1	4	1	13	39	42
Car repair and maintenance	4.0	5	2	15	37	42
Chauffering kids	2.3	16	48	24	12	0
Attending functions with child(ren)	2.3	13	54	21	13	0
Daily care of child(ren)	2.1	27	41	23	9	0
Arranging daycare of child(ren)	2.3	20	47	20	13	0
Care of pets	2.8	14	22	35	24	5
Paying bills	3.1	14	12	37	16	21
Planning investments	3.4	0	9	54	21	16
Coordinating family activities	2.7	7	21	66	3	3
Planning family recreation	2.9	3	17	71	8	1
Planning entertainment	2.6	6	34	54	6	0

Note. Individual tasks may total more than 100% because percentages were rounded. Adjusted percentage is the percentage of those who responded to the question and does not include missing or answers not applicable.

interferes with their job or worry whether or not they should work less and spend more time with their children, and rarely do they worry about how their kids are while they are working.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that those couples married for more years when the commute began will have lower role strain than those couples who have been married for only a few years when the commute began. The Pearson correlation coefficient between length of marriage and role strain was 0.22, significant at the 0.03 level. As the role strain increased in score indicating lower role strain, the length of marriage increased. Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis stated that those couples with the longest distance to commute will express higher role strain than those who only commute a short distance. Hypothesis 3 was not supported by the data. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the distance of the commute and role strain was 0.10 and was not significant. To explore further the relationship between the distance apart and role strain, the length of travel time and role strain was correlated. The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.12 and again was not significant.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that a lower level of role strain will be present for couples who reunite more frequently than for those who

reunite less frequently. An analysis of variance determined that there was no significant difference between role strain means of respondents who reunited weekly, bi-weekly, every three weeks, monthly, every six weeks, and every three months. However role strain appeared to be lower for those reuniting every three months (See Table 2).

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis stated that lower role strain will be present for spouses who share traveling time equally than for spouses who do not share traveling time equally. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. An analysis of variance calculated no significant difference between those individuals in which the husband only traveled to wife's residence, the wife only traveled to husband's residence, the husband traveled more to wife's residence, the wife traveled more to husband's residence, and the husband and wife traveled equally. The means for individuals in which the wife or husband only traveled were lower than the other categories perhaps indicating higher role strains for those individuals (See Table 3).

Hypothesis 6

The final hypothesis stated that a higher level of role strain will be present for couples with dependent children than for couples without dependent children. The role strain mean for individuals with dependent children was 3.27 and for those without dependent

Table 2

Role Strain Mean Scores
for the Variable of
How Often Couples Reunite

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
Every week	3.22	38
Every two weeks	3.51	8
Every three weeks	3.20	4
Monthly	3.29	12
Every six weeks	3.13	5
Quarterly	<u>3.84</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	3.33	76
F Ratio	2.097	
F Significance	0.076	

children was 3.37. A t-test determined that there was no significant difference in role strain between the two groups. Hence Hypothesis 6 was not supported. To analyze further the relationship between children and role strain four categories were established: 1) No children, 2) Preschool children, 3) School age children, and 4) Children over 18. An analysis of variance determined no significant difference between the group means. Yet based on mean scores individuals with pre-school children seem to experience higher role strain (See Table 4).

Other Results

In addition to examining the relationship between the length of marriage when the commute began and role strain, the length individuals cohabited was considered. To examine the relationship between the length of a cohabiting relationship and role strain, the length of marriage when the commute began and the length of time the individuals lived together was added together. This score was correlated with role strain. As the length of the relationship increased, the role strain score increased indicating a lower level of role strain. The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.20 and was significant at the 0.04 level.

Finally, a t-test determined a significant difference in role strain between males and females. The mean score for females was 3.19 and for males was 3.46. These means were significantly different at 0.046.

Table 3
Role Strain Mean Scores
for the Variable
of Who Travels

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
Husband only to wife's residence	3.07	19
Wife only to husband's residence	3.19	10
Husband more to wife's residence	3.36	18
Wife more to husband's residence	3.54	11
Equal sharing of traveling time	<u>3.51</u>	<u>18</u>
	^a	
Total	3.33	76

F Ratio 2.036

F Significance 0.099

a Higher score indicates lower role strain

Table 4
Role Strain Mean Scores
for the Variable of
the Stage of the Family Life Cycle

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
No children	3.29	39
Preschool children	3.10	10
School age children	3.36	20
Children over 18	<u>3.37</u>	<u>5</u>
	^a	
Total	3.28	74

a Higher score indicates lower role strain

Summary

In analyzing the data the following results were found. The mean score of the sharing of family tasks was 2.99, supporting Hypothesis 1 that family tasks in commuter couples are shared equally. However in examining tasks individually, wives appeared to have more responsibility. The correlation between the length of marriage when the commute began and role strain was significant and supported Hypothesis 2. The distance of the commute and role strain did not correlate; therefore Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

No significant difference was found among groups who reunited weekly, bi-weekly, every three weeks, monthly, every six weeks, and every three months. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Although no significant difference in role strain existed among those individuals in which the husband only traveled to the wife's residence, the wife only traveled to husband's residence, the husband traveled more to wife's residence, the wife traveled more to husband's residence, and the husband and wife traveled equally; thus, not supporting the hypothesis, there appeared to be higher role strain when the husband only traveled to the wife's residence and when the wife only traveled to the husband's residence.

No significant difference was found between those individuals with dependent children and those without dependent children. Hypothesis 6 was therefore not supported. However, when the variable was further subdivided into groups of individuals with 1) No children, 2) Preschool children, 3) School age children, and 4) Children over 18, there was some indication that role strain was

higher for individuals with preschool children. Still no significant difference was found between groups.

Other results indicated a significant correlation between the sum of the length of time couples cohabited prior to marriage and the length of marriage when the commute began and role strain. A significant difference in role strain between males and females was also determined. These findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUMMARY

A discussion of the results, the limitations of the study, a summary of the findings, suggestions for future research, the conclusions, and the summary will be presented in this final chapter.

Discussion of the Findings

The present study examined the sharing of family tasks in commuter couples and factors affecting the level of role strain. The first question posed in Chapter I was 1) How do commuter couples share family tasks? From the results we find that commuter couples share family tasks almost equally. Yet, when the 26 tasks are examined individually, it appears that 17 of those tasks are performed more by females. At least two respondents have indicated the "wife only" category for every task except for planning investments; whereas no respondents recorded "husband only" for the seven tasks of shopping for food, after meal clean-up, chauffeuring children, attending functions with children, daily care of children, arranging sitters, and entertaining. Wives then seem to have more responsibility since they perform more tasks entirely by themselves than husbands do. Tasks in which husbands have more responsibility include repair and maintenance of the house, gardening lawn care, minor repairs of the car, repair and maintenance of the car, paying bills, and planning investments. These tasks generally are not done

on as regular a basis as preparing food, laundry, or childcare. After meal clean-up is the one exception in which husbands have more responsibility. Thus, even though the mean index score for the sharing of family tasks points to equity, it seems that under closer scrutiny females still have a greater responsibility for family tasks than males on a day to day basis.

The second major question entertained by the study was "What factors influence the level of role strain?" Overall the level of role strain reported is low for commuter couples perhaps suggesting they have adapted and are coping with their lifestyle. To assess the differences between those who experienced role strain and those who did not, five factors were examined.

First the relationship between the length of marriage and role strain was correlated. Previous research (Gerstel and Gross, 1982) indicated that couples who had been married longer when they began the commute would not feel as much role strain. The results support this finding. A correlation also existed between the length of the relationship including the time cohabited with the level of role strain. Thus it seems that lower role strain exists for couples who have had a longer relationship, as compared to those couples who have had a shorter relationship. Perhaps beginning a new relationship and commuting at the same time is too stressful. As one respondent commented, "the need for a well established marriage is critical."

Neither the distance of the commute nor the traveling time appeared to have an influence on the level of role strain. This

finding is contrary to Gerstel (1978) and Gross (1982) who found that the commuting arrangement was more stressful if the commuting couples had a longer distance to travel. However it should be noted that Gerstel (1978) and Gross (1982) did not take a quantitative measure of stress. One explanation for this finding may be that if one is a participant in a commuting relationship, it does not matter how far apart one is since the commuting arrangement still exists. One has to cope with the logistics and problems that arise from the separation whether he or she is 100 miles or 1000 miles apart. It is possible that the couples examined in the present study communicated frequently with each other. For example, they may have written letters and/or had telephone conversations bringing them psychologically closer together.

How often the couple reunites also does not seem to influence the level of role strain. However based on the mean score, role strain was lower for those respondents who saw each other every three months. Perhaps couples who see each other so infrequently have segregated their lives to the extent that they do not feel role overload. On the other hand it may be more difficult for couples who reunite and separate more frequently because they may be trying to integrate their lives more than couples who see each other so rarely. It should be noted that few individuals were in the three month category, so these conclusions may be biased.

No significant difference existed between the groups of individuals who did the traveling. If the means are examined, however, role strain is higher if only one spouse traveled. This

seems logical since the spouse who traveled would have to adjust to two environments. Probably the other spouse remained at the primary residence and felt more responsibility. The non-traveling spouse too, may feel segregated from the other spouse's life. On the other hand, if traveling time was shared, each spouse's social network and living surroundings would be more integrated. In addition, traveling may affect one's physical health. The traveler may be tired resulting in more strain.

The final independent variable investigated as having an affect on role strain was whether or not the couple had dependent children. Gerstel (1978) and Gross (1982) had indicated that commuting was more stressful for couples who had children, however, no significant difference was found between these two groups. The independent variable of children was further subdivided into categories including no children, preschool children, school age children, and children over 18. Even though no significant difference existed between these groups, when one looks at group means, role strain was the highest for those with preschool children. The presence of preschool children may produce increased role strain since care has to be arranged and the spouse the children are living with may feel more role overload. Indeed, one respondent remarked that "commuting was not very difficult prior to the arrival of the first child . . . Now I'm more unhappy over the unavailability of my husband to share in the care of our (child)."

Overall role strain was low for these commuter couples. The results suggest that they do not worry about what other people

think. Thus, perhaps little conflict exists for these couples between societal values and their personal values. One respondent even remarked that commuting "requires a person who is internally controlled and not easily affected by societal reactions."

Another reason for the existence of little role strain may be that as Gerstel and Gross (1978) suggest the commuter arrangement is the "best fit" for dual-career couples. Role strain may be reduced since commuting allows for a segregation of work and family roles yet allows a marriage and a career to co-exist. Dual-career couples living in one residence have to integrate family and work roles on a daily basis.

A significant difference of role strain, however, exists between males and females. It may be easier for the male to commute because traditionally the male has left the family for a period of time in order to seek work. Also as previous literature suggests (Bernard as cited in Skinner) combining a professional career and parenting is less stressful for the male than for the female because less is expected of the male. Since the majority of children (58%) live with their mother maybe this is contributing to a higher level of role strain which is experienced by females. At the same time the family tasks performed most often by females were those tasks which required daily attention which may cause the females to feel more role overload.

Limitations of the Study

Since this sample was drawn from a non-random population, caution should be exercised in generalizing to other commuter couples. Findings can only be attributed to this sample.

Because a population of commuting couples is difficult to obtain, couples were eligible to participate in this study if they were not presently commuting but had commuted within the past two years. Although participants were instructed to answer the questions based on their commuting experience, it may be difficult to remember how you shared family tasks or felt about the role strain statements if you are no longer commuting. Also one respondent mentioned that things seem better now that the commute had ended. Perhaps this accounts for the little amount of role strain felt. Future studies should compare those presently commuting and those not commuting. Since about half of the couples in this sample were presently commuting and half were not, it will be possible to conduct those analyses.

Accuracy in responding to the sharing of family tasks may have been hindered, since individuals who live in separate residences may have completed two sets of tasks. Individuals who reunited on a monthly or quarterly basis may complete the entire list of tasks when they are by themselves but may share tasks when they are reunited with their spouse..

Another limitation of the study is that some couples reported having more than one commuting arrangement during their time together. It was difficult for them to answer some questions since

the questionnaire assumed that there had only been one commuting arrangement.

Finally the statistical procedures ANOVA and t-test, used in the study assumed the sample was random. Since this was not a stratified random sample, caution should be taken in interpreting the results.

Findings

The findings of this research can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Although the mean index score for the sharing of family tasks indicated equity, wives seem to have responsibility for more tasks than husbands.
- 2) Individuals did not report a high level of role strain.
- 3) The length of the marriage did affect the level of role strain. Individuals who had been married longer when the commute began experienced less role strain.
- 4) There was no correlation between role strain and the distance of the commute or the time apart.
- 5) No significant difference of role strain existed between those individuals in which the husband only traveled to wife's residence, the wife only traveled to husband's residence, the husband traveled more to wife's residence, the wife traveled more to husband's residence, and spouses shared the traveling.
- 6) How often a couple reunites did not significantly affect the level of role strain.

- 7) No significant difference of role strain was present between those individuals with dependent children and those individuals without dependent children.
- 8) Role strain was significantly higher for females than males.

Suggestions for Future Research

These findings, though revealing, indicate the need for further research related to commuter couples.

More dual-career couples may find themselves in the situation where they need to commute in order to pursue their separate careers. Few studies have addressed the issues involved in helping individuals cope with this alternative lifestyle. Although this study examined some of those issues, (the distance of commute, the length of marriage, how often the couple reunites, the sharing of traveling time, the stage of the family life cycle) a need exists for future explorations. The support network established may affect the adjustments to this alternative marriage structure. Obviously the level of work commitment must be high for couples to decide to commute. However if job satisfaction was low after the commute began, stress may be exacerbated. The decision-making process also needs to be examined. Couples who decided jointly and/or are satisfied with the decision would probably feel less role strain than couples in which an individual decision was made to commute and/or were not satisfied with the decision to commute.

Orten and Crossman (1983) noted that society may view the commuting couple as wanting marital freedom. In the present study

the divorce issue was not addressed since married couples were solicited. However, two couples did indicate that they were maritally separated but that they did not attribute their separation to commuting. A follow-up study could be made of the same sample to see if any marriages ended in divorce and if commuting was a contributing factor.

Although the majority of couples expected to commute on a temporary basis, some couples had no definite ending time. Several commuters stated that because they knew the commute was temporary and would end within a certain time they could cope with the situation. It would seem then that a higher lever of role strain might exist for couples who did not know when the commute would end. It would be important to examine the difference between the couples who viewed the situation as being more temporary than those who did not.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from this research study on commuter couples. In regard to the sharing of family tasks, equity appears to exist but if individual tasks are examined, wives not only perform more tasks than their husbands, but their tasks are probably more time-consuming and performed more on a regular basis. One concludes then that even though commuter couples are nontraditional in their lifestyle, they still seem somewhat traditional in the sharing of family tasks. Contrary to Gerstel and Gross's findings (1982) that husbands and wives gained competence in

tasks traditionally sex-linked, from this study it appears that this is truer for wives than for husbands.

In examining the level of role strain it is surprising to find that little role strain exists among these commuter couples. Of the five factors, the length of marriage, the distance of the commute, the sharing of traveling time, how often the couple reunites, and the stage of the family life cycle, only the length of marriage significantly affected the level of role strain. This finding concerning length of marriage supports previous findings by Gerstel and Gross (1982) and Orton and Crossman (1983). One would conclude that an established relationship is important if a couple is contemplating commuting.

The distance of the commute and how often the couple reunites did not seem to affect the role strain level. Other factors such as how often individuals communicate and the ease of the commute itself may psychologically make the distance of the commute seem shorter. Gerstel and Gross (1982) found the commuting arrangement more stressful if the couple spent more time apart. However in the present study no significant difference was found between groups based on how often the couple reunited. Those couples who saw each other infrequently may have segregated their lives to the extent that they did not feel role overload. However it is not clear what stress means in the study conducted by Gerstel and Gross (1982).

Although the sharing of traveling time and the stage of the family life cycle showed no significant affect on role strain, these factors should perhaps be considered in making the decision to

commute. The role strain means were lower when only one spouse traveled indicating a higher level of role strain. Couples may want to share their traveling time or at least recognize that if only one spouse travels an attempt should be made to integrate their environments. As for the stage of the family life cycle, it is probably more difficult to commute if preschool children are present. The logistics of arranging childcare and the attention that preschoolers demand are additional sources of stress the parent may experience.

The commuter family structure is an example of a family system that has adapted to the changing society. Since it may be difficult for spouses in a dual-career family to locate jobs in the same geographic area, they have chosen to commute. As a result the family system has had to adjust to spouses living apart and reuniting periodically. Changes within the family system usually produce stress. Although in the present study couples do not seem to be experiencing a high level of strain, females experienced more strain than males. Traditionally it has been expected that the wife's career is subordinate to the husband's. Thus she would move to the husband's job location and take a job in which she may be overqualified. Females in commuter marriages may be experiencing a conflict in values.

However our changing environment and our changing family has prompted us to examine some of our values. The family's isolation forced the wife to be separate from work outside the home and to "live vicariously through her children" (Lasch, 1977, p. 145). Our

values have been guided by a paradigm that includes the idea that men and women psychologically need to be different, and that an isolated family as well as individualism are necessary.

Although commuting couples physically separate their work and family roles, they have adopted an alternative lifestyle in which marriage and career goals can be achieved. Even more so than dual-career couples, commuting couples need support from society. Policies in the work setting such as flexible working time would allow commuting spouses to redistribute their time so that they could spend more time together. Quality day care also would help relieve commuting couple's worry about the care of their children.

Even if these policies lend support to commuting couples, they will have to resist the pressure from traditional societal values. We have seen that the family and the environment are in a constant state of change and adaptation. The commuter family is one outcome of the changes that are occurring. Individuals should be able to choose this alternative lifestyle without constraints from society but with its support.

Coping Skills

Based on the data in the present study, it appears that couples are better able to cope with commuting if they have a well established relationship. The distance of the commute and how often they reunite may not be as important as how often they communicate when they are apart. It may be easier to commute if a couple shares traveling time. The presence of preschool children may increase

role strain since care has to be arranged for them during working hours. However from the additional comments made by the participants, it seems that a positive attitude toward the commuting arrangement may help in overcoming the obstacles involved.

Summary

Limited research has been conducted on the commuter lifestyle. Participants are difficult to identify and are highly mobile. Previous studies have mostly utilized qualitative data and have been descriptive in nature.

The purpose of this study was to examine the husband - wife sharing of family tasks and the presence of role strain in a selected sample of commuter marriages. The effect of the length of marriage, the distance of the commute, the sharing of travel time, how often a couple reunites, and the stage of the family life cycle on role strain were assessed. Specifically the study attempted to answer the following questions: 1) How do husbands and wives in commuter relationships share family tasks? and 2) What factors affect the level of role strain?

Thirty-nine commuter couples located geographically throughout the United States participated in the study. Couples were solicited for participation by using a nonrandomized snowball sampling technique. The questionnaire determined the sociological characteristics, the commuting arrangements, the sharing of family tasks, and the role strain of the respondents. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, ANOVA, and t-test were used to analyze the data.

The mean score of the sharing of family tasks was 2.99 which supported Hypothesis 1 that family tasks in commuter couples were shared equally. However in examining tasks individually, wives seemed to have more responsibility. The correlation between the length of marriage when the commute began and role strain was significant and supported Hypothesis 2. The distance of the commute and role strain did not correlate; therefore Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

No significant difference was found among groups who reunited weekly, bi-weekly, every three weeks, monthly, every six weeks, and every three months. Although no significant difference in role strain existed among those individuals in which the husband only traveled to the wife's residence, the wife only traveled to the husband's residence, the husband traveled more to the wife's residence, the wife traveled more to the husband's residence, and the husband and wife traveled equally, there appeared to be higher role strain when the husband traveled only to the wife's residence and when the wife traveled only to the husband's residence.

No significant difference was found between those individuals with dependent children and those without dependent children. However when the variable was further subdivided into groups of individuals with 1) No children, 2) Preschool children, 3) school age children, and 4) Children over 18, there was some indication that role strain was higher for individuals with preschool children. Still no significant difference was found between the groups.

Other results indicated a correlation between the sum of the length of time couples cohabited prior to marriage and the length of marriage when the commute began and role strain. A significant difference in role strain between males and females was determined with females experiencing more strain than males.

It was concluded that commuter couples may be nontraditional in choosing their lifestyle but they still seem somewhat traditional in the sharing of family tasks. An established relationship between spouses is important if a couple is contemplating commuting. The distance of the commute and how often a couple reunites did not seem to be important factors affecting the level of role strain. Although the sharing of travel time and the stage of the family life cycle indicated no significant effect on role strain, couples may want to consider these factors in making the decision to commute.

It was further concluded that the commuter marriage is an emerging family structure that individuals should be free to choose without constraints from society but with society's support. Continued research on commuter marriages is needed in order to help those who choose this alternative lifestyle.

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APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE SENT TO COMMUTER
COUPLES DURING COLLECTION OF DATA

DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND 20742 U.S.A.
(301) 454-2142

August , 1983

Dear Participant:

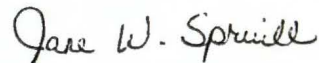
We would like for you to participate in our research on the commuter marriage. Since there have been few studies done in this area, we feel that it is very important to analyze more data on this lifestyle. Therefore, we solicit your cooperation in answering the questions completely and honestly so as to obtain reliable and insightful information.

Your name was given to us as a possible participant in this study. Each spouse is asked to complete their questionnaire independently. Please return your survey in the self-addressed envelope by September 6, 1983. Even though some of you responding are no longer in a commuter marriage, please answer the questions according to how you felt when you were commuting. Your name will never be associated with the study. Findings will be reported in group form only.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your cooperation.



Elaine A. Anderson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Dept. Family & Community Development
University of Maryland



Jane W. Spruill - Student
Dept. Family & Community
Development
University of Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND 20742 U.S.A.
(301) 454-2142

August 30, 1983

Dear Participant:

This is a reminder that the dead-line for returning your questionnaire on commuter marriages has arrived. If either you or your spouse has not returned the questionnaires we would appreciate your response. If you have already returned the questionnaires please ignore this letter.

We realize that not all of the couples who are completing the survey are currently commuting. The main criteria is that you need to have been commuting sometime within the last 2 years.

We appreciate you taking your time to fill out our survey. Once again we want to reassure you of the confidentiality of your responses. Any identifying codes will be cut off your returned survey once we receive it back.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely yours,

Elaine A. Anderson

Elaine A. Anderson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Dept. Family & Community Develop.
University of Maryland

Jane W. Spruill

Jane W. Spruill-Graduate Student
Dept. Family & Community
Development
University of Maryland

DIVISION OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES
COLLEGE OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

APPENDIX B

THE INSTRUMENT USED FOR THE COLLECTION OF THE DATA

COMMUTER MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

Following are some questions about you and your family. Please answer all of the questions. Either circle the number beside the most appropriate response or fill in the blank. Provide only one answer for each question.

1. What is your sex?

1. MALE 2. FEMALE

2. How old are you? How old is your spouse?

AGE _____ AGE _____

3. What is your present marital status?

1. MARRIED 3. SEPARATED
2. DIVORCED 4. WIDOWED

4. If married, are you currently living with your spouse?

1. YES 2. NO

5. How many years have you been married to your present spouse?

YEARS _____

6. Did you live with your spouse prior to getting married? 1. YES 2. NO

If YES, how long did you live together? YEARS _____ MONTHS _____

7. How long were you married when you began your commuting relationship?

YEARS _____ MONTHS _____

8. How long has this commuting arrangement lasted?

YEARS _____ MONTHS _____

9. Are you currently commuting? 1. YES 2. NO

If you have children, please answer the following questions. If not, go to Q. 13.

10. What were the ages and sex of your children when you began your commute?

(1st child)	AGE _____	1. MALE	2. FEMALE
(2nd child)	AGE _____	1. MALE	2. FEMALE
(3rd child)	AGE _____	1. MALE	2. FEMALE
(4th child)	AGE _____	1. MALE	2. FEMALE
(5th child)	AGE _____	1. MALE	2. FEMALE
(6th child)	AGE _____	1. MALE	2. FEMALE

11. With whom do your children live when you are apart?

1. WIFE HAS ALL THE CHILDREN.
2. HUSBAND HAS ALL THE CHILDREN.
3. SOME OF THE CHILDREN LIVE WITH THE FATHER AND SOME LIVE WITH THE MOTHER.
4. THE CHILDREN LIVE WITH RELATIVES.
5. THE CHILDREN ARE AWAY AT SCHOOL.
6. OTHER, please specify: _____

12. Who decided where the children would live?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. CHILDREN DECIDED. | 4. WIFE DECIDED. |
| 2. JOINT DECISION OF THE FAMILY. | 5. HUSBAND DECIDED. |
| 3. WIFE AND HUSBAND DECIDED JOINTLY. | |

13. If you do not have children living at home, would you consider commuting if children were present?

1. YES 2. NO

14. When you were growing up, (1-18 yrs.) what was your mothers employment history? Please describe if she was employed out of the house how old you were and if her employment was full or part-time.

15. What was the occupation of your parents?

MOTHER _____ FATHER _____

16. How much education had you and your spouse completed before you began your commuting arrangement?

	<u>SELF</u>	<u>SPOUSE</u>
1. LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	_____	_____
2. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	_____	_____
3. BUSINESS OR TRADE SCHOOL	_____	_____
4. SOME COLLEGE TRAINING	_____	_____
5. COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATE	_____	_____
6. COLLEGE GRADUATE (bachelor's program)	_____	_____
7. SOME GRADUATE TRAINING	_____	_____
8. MASTER'S DEGREE, specify degree: _____	_____	_____
9. POST MASTER'S TRAINING	_____	_____
10. DOCTORATE, specify degree: _____	_____	_____

17. What was the occupation of you and your spouse during your commute?

	<u>SELF</u>	<u>SPOUSE</u>
TITLE		
KIND OF WORK		
BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION		

18. How would you describe your ethnic background or race?

1. WHITE AMERICAN, CAUCASIAN
2. BLACK AMERICAN
3. NATIVE AMERICAN, AMERICAN INDIAN
4. SPANISH SURNAMED AMERICAN, CHICAN, PUERTO RICAN
5. ORIENTAL AMERICAN, ASIAN
6. OTHER, please specify: _____

19. What was the average annual income of you and your spouse during your commuting arrangement: Place W for wife and H for husband.

1. Below 10,000 _____	4. 20,001-25,000 _____	7. 35,001-40,000 _____
2. 10,000-15,000 _____	5. 25,001-30,000 _____	8. 40,001-45,000 _____
3. 15,001-20,000 _____	6. 30,001-35,000 _____	9. 45,001-50,000 _____
		10. Above 50,000 _____

20. How far apart are your residences? Please indicate both miles and travel time.

MILES APART _____ TRAVEL TIME _____

21. How do you commute? Circle YES or NO for each option.

- | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|-------|----------|--------|-------|
| a. CAR | 1. YES | 2. NO | c. TRAIN | 1. YES | 2. NO |
| b. PLANE | 1. YES | 2. NO | d. BUS | 1. YES | 2. NO |

22. Who travels to whom?

1. HUSBAND ONLY TO WIFE'S RESIDENCE
2. WIFE ONLY TO HUSBAND'S RESIDENCE
3. HUSBAND MORE TO WIFE'S RESIDENCE
4. WIFE MORE TO HUSBAND'S RESIDENCE
5. EQUAL SHARING OF TRAVEL TIME
6. BOTH SPOUSES COMMUTE FROM THEIR OWN RESIDENCES AND MEET IN THIRD LOCATION
7. OTHER, please specify: _____

23. Which do you consider your primary residence?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. WIFE'S RESIDENCE | 3. AN OTHER MUTUAL RESIDENCE |
| 2. HUSBAND'S RESIDENCE | 4. OTHER, please specify: _____ |

24. What specific factors influence the decision as to which spouse travels to the other when you come together as a couple? Circle YES or NO for each question.

- | YES | NO | |
|-----|----|--|
| 1 | 2 | a. Existing common residence viewed as "home base" by both partners. |
| 1 | 2 | b. Flexibility of time provided by the occupation of the commuter. |
| 1 | 2 | c. Decision based on spouse who has the greater income which would cover travel costs more easily. |
| 1 | 2 | d. Better health and stamina of the commuter. |
| 1 | 2 | e. Presence of children in home to which commuter travels. |
| 1 | 2 | f. Presence of relatives and/or shared friends in area to which commuter travels. |
| 1 | 2 | g. Community commitments of non-commuter. |
| 1 | 2 | h. Second job of non-commuter. |
| 1 | 2 | i. Other, please specify: _____ |

25. How often do you see each other?

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. WEEKLY | 3. MONTHLY |
| 2. BI-WEEKLY | 4. OTHER, please specify: _____ |

26. How would you rate the quality of your time together?

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. VERY SATISFACTORY | 3. SOMEWHAT UNSATISFACTORY |
| 2. SOMEWHAT SATISFACTORY | 4. VERY UNSATISFACTORY |

27. Do you employ someone to do the housework in either of your residences?

1. YES 2. NO

28. On the continuum below please identify where you are in the development of your career.

BEGINNING			WELL			RETIREMENT
CAREER			ESTABLISHED			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

29. Another important purpose of this study is to learn more about how busy couples like yourselves divide household responsibilities. Using the scale below, circle the description which best describes how you perceive your family divides household tasks. If a third party does the task, circle the description for who arranged for that task to be done and check task completed by third party.

W Wife Only	W MORE Wife More Than Husband	W and H Wife and Husband About Same	H MORE Husband More Than Wife	H Husband Only	N/A	3rd P Third Party	
							<u>FOOD</u>
							1. Planning menus
							2. Shopping for food
							3. Food preparation
							4. After-meal cleanup
							<u>CLOTHING</u>
							5. Shopping for clothing
							<u>HOUSE</u>
							6. Laundry
							7. Vacuuming
							8. Cleaning Bathrooms
							9. Picking up clutter
							10. Other cleaning
							11. Repair and maintenance
							<u>LAWN/GARDEN</u>
							12. Gardening
							13. Lawn mowing and care
							<u>CAR(S)</u>
							14. Washing car(s)
							15. Minor repairs
							16. Repair and maintenance
							<u>CHILDREN AND PETS</u>
							17. Chauffering
							18. Attend functions with child
							19. Daily care of child(ren)
							20. Care of children by sitter or day care provider
							21. Feeding and care of pets
							<u>MANAGEMENT</u>
							22. Pay bills, balance checkbook
							23. Planning investments
							24. Coordinate daily family activit: <u>LEISURE</u>
							25. Plan family recreation
							26. Organize social activities (entertaining)

30. Please indicate by circling the relevant number next to each statement how often you feel each of the following:

	Always	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Rarely	Never	Not ap- plicable
a. My job keeps me away from my family too much.	1	2	3	4	5	9
b. I feel I have more to do than I can handle comfortably.	1	2	3	4	5	9
c. I have a good balance between my job and family time.	1	2	3	4	5	9
d. I wish I had more time to do things for the family.	1	2	3	4	5	9
e. I feel physically drained when I get home from work.	1	2	3	4	5	9
f. I feel emotionally drained when I get home from work.	1	2	3	4	5	9
g. I feel I have to rush to get every-thing done each day	1	2	3	4	5	9
h. My time off from work does not match other family members' schedules well.	1	2	3	4	5	9
i. I feel I don't have enough time for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	9
j. I worry that other people at work think my family interferes with my job.	1	2	3	4	5	9
k. I worry whether I should work less and spend more time with my children.	1	2	3	4	5	9
l. I find enough time for the children.	1	2	3	4	5	9
m. I worry about how my kids are while I'm working.	1	2	3	4	5	9
n. I'm comfortable with the arrangements for my children while I'm working.	1	2	3	4	5	9
o. Making arrangements for my children while I work involves a lot of effort.	1	2	3	4	5	9
p. I worry that other people feel I should spend more time with my children.	1	2	3	4	5	9

The following questions are designed to help us learn how you feel about your job. Please circle the number that most closely reflects your feelings. Circle only one number for each question.

31. Do you wish to continue working during the next 10 years?

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. DEFINITELY YES | 3. PROBABLY NOT |
| 2. PROBABLY YES | 4. DEFINITELY NOT |

32. In general, how do you feel about your present work situation?

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. VERY SATISFIED | 3. DISSATISFIED |
| 2. SATISFIED | 4. VERY DISSATISFIED |

33. How committed are you to your work?

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. COMPLETE COMMITMENT | 3. LITTLE COMMITMENT |
| 2. SOME COMMITMENT | 4. NO COMMITMENT |

34. How high are your aspirations in regard to occupational recognition and achievement?

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. VERY HIGH | 3. LOW |
| 2. HIGH | 4. VERY LOW |

35. How do you view your present level of competence in regard to your work?

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. VERY HIGH | 3. LOW |
| 2. HIGH | 4. VERY LOW |

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
36. The most important things that happen to me involve my work.	1	2	3	4
37. I spend a great deal of time on matters related to my job both during and after working hours.	1	2	3	4
38. I feel badly if I don't perform well on my job.	1	2	3	4
39. I live, eat, and breathe my job.	1	2	3	4
40. I would probably keep working even if I didn't need the money.	1	2	3	4
41. To me, work is only a small part of who I am.	1	2	3	4
42. How well I perform on my job is extremely important to me.	1	2	3	4
43. Most things in life are more important than work.	1	2	3	4
44. I avoid taking on extra duties and responsibilities in my work.	1	2	3	4
45. I enjoy my work more than anything else I do.	1	2	3	4
46. I'll stay overtime to finish a job even if I'm not paid extra for it.	1	2	3	4
47. Sometimes I lie awake thinking ahead to the next day's work.	1	2	3	4

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
48. I am able to use abilities I value in the performance of my job.	1	2	3	4
49. I feel depressed when I fail at something connected with my job.	1	2	3	4
50. I feel good when I perform my job well.	1	2	3	4
51. The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.	1	2	3	4

What do you do to achieve closeness with your spouse when you are apart? Please circle the appropriate responses.

	EVERY DAY	SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	ONCE A WEEK	SEVERAL TIMES A MONTH	NEVER
52. How often do you write to your spouse?	5	4	3	2	1
53. How often does your spouse write to you?	5	4	3	2	1
54. How often do you telephone your spouse?	5	4	3	2	1
55. How often does your spouse telephone you?	5	4	3	2	1

56. Do you have other ways of achieving closeness when you are apart? Please describe.

57. Please respond how supportive you perceive each of the following to be during your commuter marriage.

	VERY SUPPORTIVE	SOMEWHAT SUPPORTIVE	NOT VERY SUPPORTIVE	NOT AT ALL SUPPORTIVE	NOT APPLICABLE
a. your employer	1	2	3	4	9
b. your colleagues	1	2	3	4	9
c. your friends	1	2	3	4	9
d. your spouse	1	2	3	4	9
e. your children	1	2	3	4	9
f. your relatives	1	2	3	4	9
g. your neighbors	1	2	3	4	9
h. other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	9

58. Have you ever been apart previously for 3 or more days from your spouse for job related reasons? Circle one response.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. MANY TIMES WE'VE BEEN APART | 3. A FEW TIMES WE'VE BEEN APART |
| 2. SEVERAL TIMES WE'VE BEEN APART | 4. NEVER HAVE WE BEEN APART |

59. How many other commuting couples did you know prior to beginning your commuter arrangement?

WRITE IN NUMBER _____

60. How much did you discuss with any of these couples the issue of commuting prior to entering into your commuting arrangement? Circle one answer.
1. DISCUSSED A LOT WITH THEM
 2. DISCUSSED OCCASIONALLY WITH THEM
 3. MENTIONED IT BRIEFLY TO THEM
 4. DIDN'T DISCUSS AT ALL WITH THEM
61. When you entered your commuting relationship, how long did you expect the commuter arrangement to continue? Circle one answer.
1. I expected the commute to continue (please specify) _____ months
 2. I thought the commute might continue for an extended period of time.
 3. I could see the commute continuing indefinitely.
 4. I really didn't have a good idea how long the commute would continue.
62. When you began the commuter relationship had you made specific plans to re-evaluate your decision to commute after a specific period of time? YES- 1 NO- 2
If yes, describe your re-evaluation plans.
63. When you and your spouse originally were contemplating entering a commuter marriage what alternatives did you consider in your decision? Please list all the alternatives you considered. If you didn't consider any other alternative but the one to commute please specify that.
64. How much of a financial burden was the commuter arrangement on your economic well-being? Circle one response.
1. VERY MUCH OF A BURDEN
 2. SOMEWHAT OF A BURDEN
 3. A LITTLE BIT OF A BURDEN
 4. NO BURDEN AT ALL
65. Please list all the people you talked to prior to making your final decision to commute, and the specific information you collected from them. ie. accountant-tax advantages or disadvantages; mother-arrange after school care for children.
- | <u>RELATIONSHIP</u> | <u>TOPIC DISCUSSED</u> |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |
| 6. | 6. |
| 7. | 7. |
| 8. | 8. |
| 9. | 9. |
66. Prior to commuting, how much of a support network at the new residence did you perceive to be present for the person commuting away from the primary residence?
1. A VERY WELL ESTABLISHED NETWORK
 2. A FAIRLY WELL ESTABLISHED NETWORK
 3. NOT MUCH OF A NETWORK
 4. NO NETWORK AT ALL
67. Who originally brought up the possibility of your family entering into a commuter marriage? Circle one answer.
1. HUSBAND
 2. WIFE
 3. OTHER (please specify) _____

68. How important was the issue of commuting to you? Circle one answer.
1. VERY IMPORTANT 3. NOT VERY IMPORTANT
 2. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT 4. NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
69. How would you characterize the decision you made concerning your family's commute?
1. You and your spouse were in total agreement over the decision
 2. You had a basic agreement but you are still negotiating specifics
 3. You had a basic agreement but your spouse is still negotiating specifics
 4. You disagree but you agree to accept your differences
 5. You disagree but you are still trying to negotiate the specifics
 6. You disagree but your spouse is still trying to negotiate the specifics
 7. You disagree but don't talk about your disagreement
70. How do you feel toward your commuter decision? Circle one answer.
1. SATISFIED 3. RESENTMENT
 2. RESIGNED 4. OTHER (please specify) _____
71. How difficult was it for you to reach a decision about the commute?
1. VERY DIFFICULT 3. A LITTLE DIFFICULT
 2. SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT 4. NOT AT ALL DIFFICULT
72. How beneficial do you believe the commute has been for the development of your career? Circle one answer.
1. VERY BENEFICIAL 3. NOT VERY BENEFICIAL
 2. OF SOME BENEFIT 4. OF NO BENEFIT AT ALL
73. How has the commute affected the well-being of your family? Circle one answer.
1. VERY POSITIVE AFFECT 3. NO AFFECT AT ALL 5. VERY NEGATIVE AFFECT
 2. SOME POSITIVE AFFECT 4. SOME NEGATIVE AFFECT
74. In comparing yourself with others, how much time do you like to spend by yourself? Remember, in answering this question we want you to think of yourself in comparison with most other people? Circle one answer.
1. I like to be alone a lot more than most people
 2. I like to be alone somewhat more than most people
 3. I'm about the same as most people
 4. I occasionally like to be alone
 5. I very rarely like to be alone
75. How pleased are you that you decided to commute? Circle one answer.
1. VERY PLEASED 3. NOT VERY PLEASED
 2. SOMEWHAT PLEASED 4. NOT PLEASED AT ALL
76. How desirable do you and your spouse view your commuting lifestyle? Place a Y beside your view and an S for your spouse's view.
1. VERY DESIRABLE _____ 3. SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE _____
 2. SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE _____ 4. VERY UNDESIRABLE _____
77. Generally speaking, how happy are you and your spouse with your marriage? Place a Y beside your view and an S for your spouse's view.
1. EXTREMELY HAPPY _____ 3. SOMEWHAT HAPPY _____ 5. VERY UNHAPPY _____
 2. VERY HAPPY _____ 4. SOMEWHAT UNHAPPY _____

If you are no longer in a commuter marriage, please answer the following questions. Otherwise, go on to question 82.

78. How long did the commuter arrangement last? _____ MONTHS

79. What prompted you and your spouse to terminate the commuter arrangement?

80. HOW was the commuter arrangement terminated? Please circle one answer.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. WIFE JOINED HUSBAND | 3. BOTH MOVED TOGETHER TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION |
| 2. HUSBAND JOINED WIFE | 4. MARRIAGE WAS TERMINATED |
| | 5. OTHER, please specify: _____ |

81. If the marriage was terminated, do you feel that the commuter arrangement was a major contributing factor to the break-up? 1. YES 2. NO

82. Do you have any additional comments in areas not covered which you feel are important for us to know?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

If you know any other couples who are commuting or have been within the last 2 years we would appreciate if you would provide us with their names and addresses.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.