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27 January 2005

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Reference: D Strat HR Research Note RN 17/04 "A State of Crisis? An Exploratory Examination of Family Breakdown in the CF", by Jason Dunn, December 2004 (enclosed)

1. A wide and deep belief currently exists within the CF that there is a state of crisis among CF families. As a result, the analysis found herein is being undertaken to further understand member's perceptions of military family breakdown. The research question being asked is: How do member's perceptions of the rate of military family breakdown compare to the available quantitative evidence on the strength of their marriages/relationships? It is hypothesized that the available evidence does not support the pervasive apprehension of a crisis among military families. That is, that member views on the overall rate of family breakdown are belied by the reported strength of their own relationships. The concept of "moral panic" is offered to explain this discrepancy.

1000-1 (DRH Strat)

le 27 janvier 2005

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DISTRIBUTION DE LA NOTE DE
RECHERCHE 17/04 DE LA DRH STRAT

Référence : Note de recherche 17/04 de la DRH Strat, « Peut-on parler de crise? Une étude prospective sur l'éclatement de la famille dans les FC », par Jason Dunn, décembre 2004 (joint)

1. Une croyance profonde et très étendue est actuellement véhiculée au sein des FC, voulant que les familles des FC soient en état de crise. En raison de cette croyance, une analyse est actuellement entreprise pour mieux comprendre cette perception des membres par rapport à l'éclatement de la famille militaire. La question de la recherche est : Comment la perception par les membres du taux d'éclatement de la famille militaire se compare-t-elle aux preuves quantitatives disponibles montrant la solidité de leur mariage et de leurs relations? Une hypothèse avancée énonce que les preuves disponibles n'appuient pas cette inquiétude concernant une crise omniprésente dans les familles militaires. C'est-à-dire que la perception par les membres du taux global d'éclatement de la famille est démentie par la solidité observée dans leurs propres relations. On propose le concept de « panique morale » pour justifier cette divergence.

2. If there are any questions or comments concerning this paper, they should be forwarded to Mr. Jason Dunn at 995-0706.

Directeur - Ressources Humaines
Stratégiques (DRH Strat)

2. Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements ou émettre des commentaires concernant ce document, veuillez communiquer avec Jason Dunn au 995-0706.

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Director Strategic Human Resources
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Enclosure: 1

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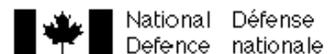
D STRAT HR RESEARCH NOTE RN 17/04

**A State of Crisis?
An Exploratory Examination of Family Breakdown in the CF**

by
JASON DUNN

December 2004

OTTAWA, CANADA



DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES

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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

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DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES
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D STRAT HR RESEARCH NOTE RN 17/04

A State of Crisis?
An Exploratory Examination of Family Breakdown in the CF

by

Jason Dunn, DQOL/SSORT

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OTTAWA, ONTARIO

DECEMBER, 2004

ABSTRACT

A wide and deep belief currently exists within the CF that there is a state of crisis among CF families. As a result, the analysis found herein is being undertaken to further understand member's perceptions of military family breakdown. It is also being conducted to shed some light on on-going debates within DND about the strength of CF families. The research question being asked is: How do member's perceptions of the rate of military family breakdown compare to the available quantitative evidence on the strength of their marriages/relationships? It is hypothesized that the available evidence does not support the pervasive apprehension of a crisis among military families. That is, that member views on the overall rate of family breakdown are belied by the reported strength of their own relationships. The concept of "moral panic" is offered to explain this discrepancy.

RÉSUMÉ

Une croyance profonde et très étendue est actuellement véhiculée au sein des FC, voulant que les familles des FC soient en état de crise. En raison de cette croyance, une analyse est actuellement entreprise pour mieux comprendre cette perception des membres par rapport à l'éclatement de la famille militaire. L'étude doit également faire la lumière sur certains débats en cours au sein du MDN, qui portent sur la solidité des familles des FC. La question de la recherche est : Comment la perception par les membres du taux d'éclatement de la famille militaire se compare-t-elle aux preuves quantitatives disponibles montrant la solidité de leur mariage et de leurs relations? Une hypothèse avancée énonce que les preuves disponibles n'appuient pas cette inquiétude concernant une crise omniprésente dans les familles militaires. C'est-à-dire que la perception par les membres du taux global d'éclatement de la famille est démentie par la solidité observée dans leurs propres relations. On propose le concept de « panique morale » pour justifier cette divergence.

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A State of Crisis?

An Exploratory Examination of Family Breakdown in the CF

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1. Researchers who undertake qualitative research within the CF often find themselves grappling with contradictory messages or points of view from CF members. Discussions surrounding family breakdown¹ are no different. As a result of constantly hearing contradictory anecdotal evidence about the “state of crisis in CF families”, this analysis was undertaken to further understand member’s perceptions of military family breakdown. It is also being conducted to shed some light on on-going debates within DND about the strength of CF families.

2. In recent years, focus group and interview data (Dunn, Ford, Flemming, 2004a; Dunn, Ford, Flemming, 2004b; Dunn and Morrow, 2002) have revealed that many CF members and service providers believe that family breakdowns are occurring at an alarming rate. There is a wide and deep belief that a state of crisis currently exists among CF families as a result of the demands of military life. Although these studies consisted of large qualitative samples, their findings were not representative of their respective target populations. These qualitative data, however, were instrumental in designing “The Demands of Military Service Survey”, also known as “The PERSTEMPO and Human Dimensions of Deployment Study (HDDS). The data obtained from the HHDS will be instrumental in giving us a better understanding of the perceptions of CF members in relation to their perceptions of family breakdown as well as their own relationships.

3. The main HDDS survey comprised many questions examining a wide range of issues, one of which was family breakdown. In the questionnaire, CF members were asked to provide views on their perceptions of family breakdown in the CF, as well as in their current and past relationships. The research question being asked in this research note is: How do member’s perceptions of the rate of military family breakdown compare to the available quantitative evidence on the strength of their marriages/relationships? It is hypothesized that the available evidence does not support the pervasive apprehension of a crisis among military families. That is, that member views on the overall rate of family breakdown are belied by the reported strength of their own relationships. The concept of “moral panic” is offered to explain this discrepancy.

¹ Unless otherwise specified, family breakdown also includes intimate relationships with partners.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

4. The methodology employed for this research note consisted of three steps. First, a review of qualitative research was conducted to gain insight into members' views toward the incidence of family breakdown. Second, an analysis of HHDS data was undertaken on questions of interest (perceptions of marital breakdown and strength of CF marriages) within the questionnaire. Finally, members' views toward the incidence of family breakdown were compared to HHDS data on the strength of their marriages.

5. The review of qualitative research consisted of three recent studies. The first (Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004a) consisted of 214 focus groups with 2,136 CF members; the second (Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004b) was based on interview and focus group data from 107 service providers; and the third (Dunn and Morrow, 2002) was based on focus groups with 517 CF members.²

6. In addition, the responses to relevant items included in two HHDS surveys were examined. Survey One was administered to a national sample of 11,355 CF members randomly selected by Military Occupational Code (MOC). A response rate of 45.4% was achieved. Survey Two was a census administered to approximately 3,500 personnel deployed outside Canada, and nearly 50% of those members responded. The resulting data from both surveys are accurate to plus or minus 1.3%, 19 times out of 20 (Brooks and Flemming, 2004).

7. This paper consists of four major sections: the first, contains a review of qualitative data; the second, is an analysis of data on CF member perceptions of family breakdown; this is followed by an analysis of member perceptions of the demands of military service and their relationships/marriages; and the fourth, is an analysis of member perceptions of their own relationships/marriages. These sections are followed by a discussion, conclusion and recommendations for further research.

3.0 REVIEW OF QUALITATIVE DATA

8. Recent qualitative data (Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004a; Dunn, Ford and Flemming 2004b; and Dunn and Morrow, 2002) suggest that life in the CF can be problematic for families. Throughout these studies, members often expressed views that families were breaking down across the CF at an alarming rate and that in many instances

² For further methodological information on these studies, see Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004a; Dunn, Ford, and Flemming, 2004b; and, Dunn and Morrow, 2002.

the demands of military life were beyond the coping ability of families. *“The workload is so heavy that we don’t get to see much of our families, even if we are not deployed”* (member cited in Dunn and Morrow, 2002:5). Qualitative data shows that members normally attributed break-ups, separations and/or divorces to variables such as the CF’s heavy workload; time away for TD, training and exercises; deployments, etc., along with other aspects of military life such as postings. *“The stuff going on today is ridiculous. The TEMPO is destroying families. The young ones have not figured out the costs of all this yet. Wait till they find out how much a divorce costs”* (service provider cited in Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004:23).

9. The following quotations reflect the common range of comments made in the qualitative studies about family breakdown:

“We cut, cut and cut and now we and our families are suffering for it. I will not pay and suffer for their decisions” (member cited in Dunn and Morrow, 2002:7).

“If the military wanted you to have a family, they would have issued you one” (member cited in Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004a:46).

“The last ten years have been hard and bad. There have been a lot of divorces” (member cited in Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004a:48).

“There’s huge divorce rates in the Navy, perhaps you should ask people how many times they have been married. We take bets to see who will get divorced next” (member cited in Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004a:48).

10. Of interest, however, was that although members often reported that families were falling apart, only a small number indicated that their personal relationships had actually broken down. Very few of those who did discuss their own marital breakdowns entirely blamed the CF for their misfortune. A common theme throughout these discussions was that CF life can be very stressful for families, can exacerbate on-going/existing problems, and can be the cause of relationship breakdowns, but that strong marriages and strong family bonds tend to survive military life.

11. Regardless of the causes or reasons for family breakdown occurring in the CF, two common themes emerge in all discussions: a) that members place a lot of importance on their families when making career decisions (see quotes below), and, b) that there is a widely held belief that families are either in trouble, are breaking down, or are in a state of crisis. The next section will examine some quantitative data in relation to the latter theme that families are in trouble and/or are breaking down.

“I’ll sacrifice myself for this country and the CF, but [I won’t sacrifice] my family. When I was single, who cares. Today, I’ve been divorced already and my second wife has already told me if I do not leave the CF...she will. My family comes first, I’m leaving” (service provider cited in Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 200b:39).

“Today, the spouses/partners are voting. The TEMPO is high and it’s having a huge impact on the family. There are often only two options. You either leave the CF and stay married or run the risk of losing your family” (service provider cited in Dunn, Ford and Flemming, 2004b:39)

4.0 CF MEMBER PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN

12. This section will review some of the questions that CF members were asked in the HDDS survey on their perceptions of family breakdown at a CF wide level. Specifically, responses to the following items from the instrument will be examined: a) A state of crisis exists among our personnel and their families because of the frequency of deployments; b) Military families are breaking down at a much higher rate than a decade ago; and, c) Divorces and breakdowns in military families are more frequent than when I first joined the CF.

13. Member responses to the first question, that a state of crisis exists among CF personnel and their families as a result of the frequency of deployments, show that a large percentage of members agree with the statement (Figure 1). Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated that they either agreed (39.8%) or strongly agreed (33.2%) while only 9.3% either disagreed (8%) or strongly disagreed (1.3%).

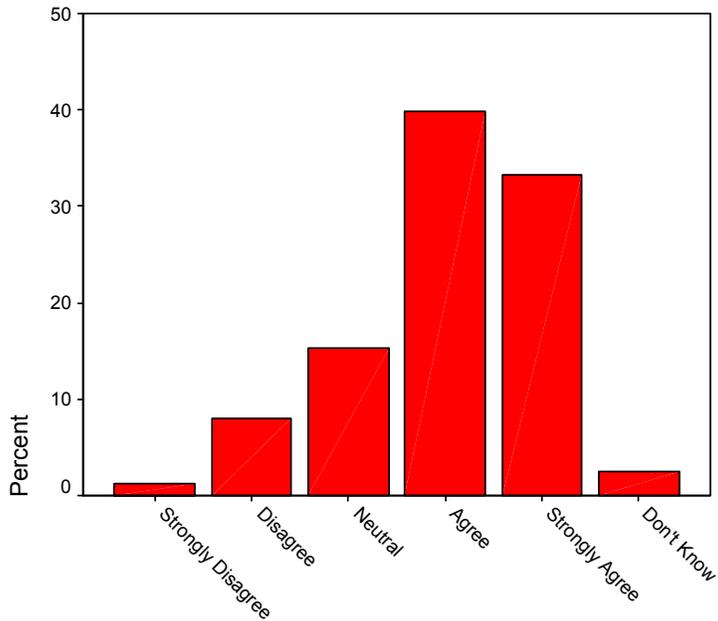


Figure 1: A State of Crisis Exists Among Our Personnel and their Families Because of the Frequency of Deployments (n = 5635)

14. When asked if they believed military families were breaking down at a much higher rate than a decade ago (Figure 2), 53.9% of the respondents either agreed (28.6%) or strongly agreed (25.3%). Only 6.1% of members disagreed (5.8%) or strongly disagreed (.3%).

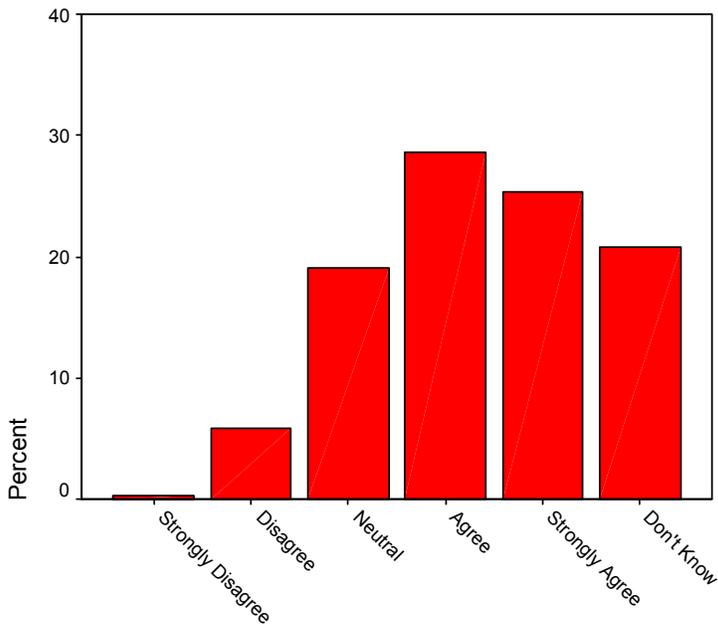


Figure 2: Military Families are Breaking Down at a Much Higher Rate Than a Decade Ago (n = 5648)

15. A larger percentage of CF members (46.1%) also agreed (28.6%) or strongly agreed (17.5%) that divorces and breakdowns in military families were more frequent than when they first joined (Figure 3). In total, 10.6% either disagreed (9.8%) or strongly disagreed (.8%).

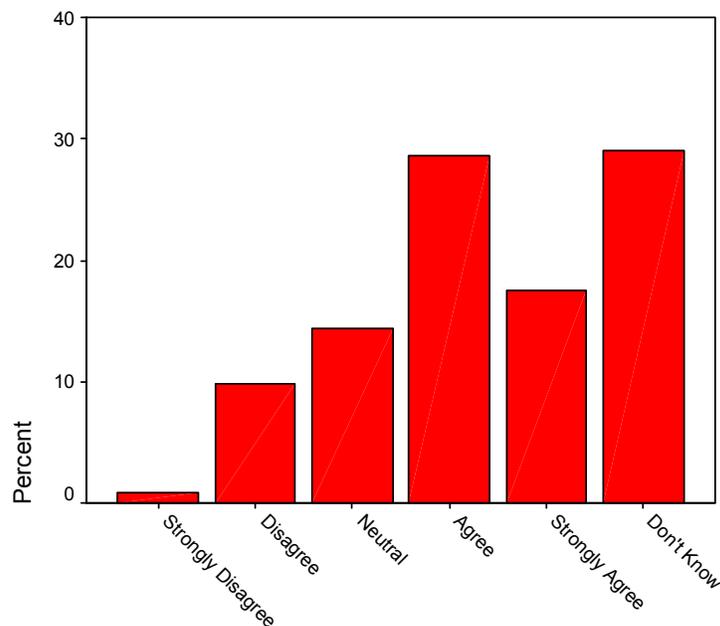


Figure 3: Divorces and Breakdowns in Military Families are More Frequent than When I First Joined the CF (n = 5777)

16. Based on the responses above, there is evidence to support qualitative data findings that a perception exists that CF families are in a state of crisis and/or are breaking down at a high rate. In sum, a large portion of CF members believe that military families are in “trouble”. We will now examine what members are currently reporting in relation to military life and individual relationships.

5.0 MEMBER PERCEPTIONS OF DEMANDS OF SERVICE AND RELATIONSHIPS/MARRIAGES

17. Qualitative data suggest that members believe that families are breaking down across the CF at an alarming rate and that in many instances the demands of military life are beyond the coping ability of families. This section will review some of the questions that members were asked in the HDDS in relation to the demands of military life and their personal relationships.

18. When members were asked if the demands of service interfere with their home and family life (Figure 4), 50% the respondents either agreed (39.3%) or strongly agreed (10.7%), while 22.4% disagreed (20.7%) or strongly disagreed (1.7%). Furthermore, 44.2% of members either disagreed (29.3%) or strongly disagreed (14.9%) with the statement: My marriage or partnership is stronger because of frequent time apart (Figure 5). While 16.1% either agreed (13.9%) or strongly agreed (2.2%), 27% reported being neutral. In their Work-Life Balance Study³, Duxbury and Higgins also found that “achieving a balance between work and family is a real problem for many in the CF. Individuals in the CF have heavier family demands ..., spend very high amounts of time in travel and away from home, and are more likely to report negative spillover from work to family and high work to family interference” (2002:19).

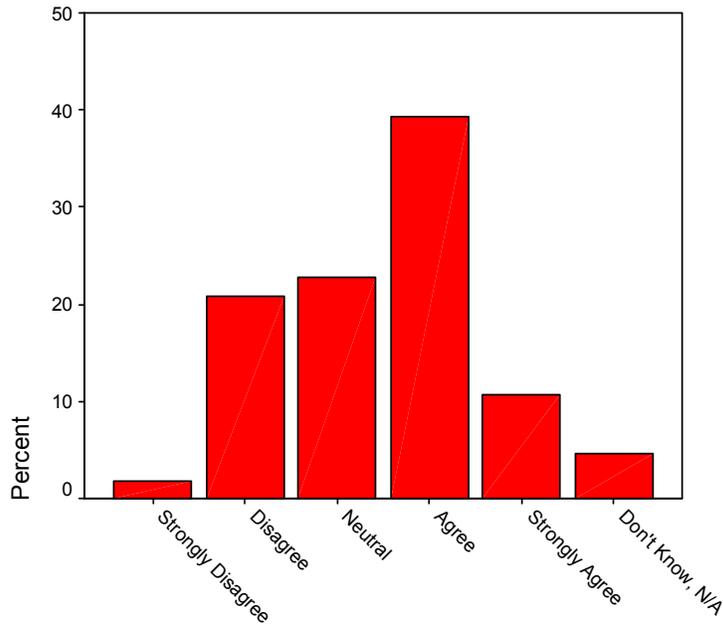


Figure 4: The Demands of Service Interfere with My Home and Family Life (n = 5773)

³ For further information on work-life balance in the CF and DND, see Duxbury and Higgins (2002) and Evans (2004).

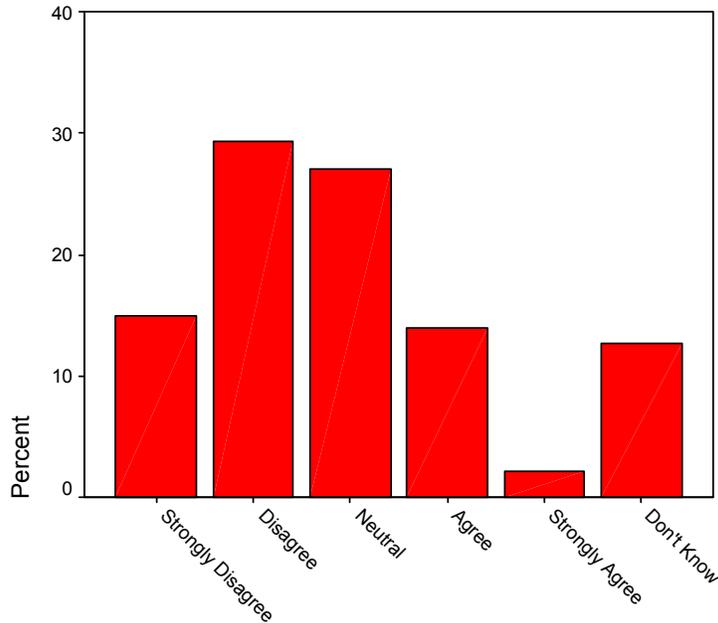


Figure 5: My Marriage or Partnership is Stronger Because of Frequent Time Apart (n = 5680)

19. When responding to a question related to their family life suffering as a result of their work commitments (Figure 6), 38.1% either disagreed (30.7) or strongly disagreed (7.4%), 35.2% either agreed (26.5%) or strongly agreed (8.7%), and 19.7% were neutral. Interestingly, when asked a similar question on what effect members believed their service in the CF has had upon the quality of their relationship with their spouse or partner (Figure 7), 40.7% reported neither negative nor positive effect. While 31% responded either a negative effect (25.9%) or very negative effect (5.1%), 19.9% stated that it either had a positive (16.8%) or very positive effect (3.1%).

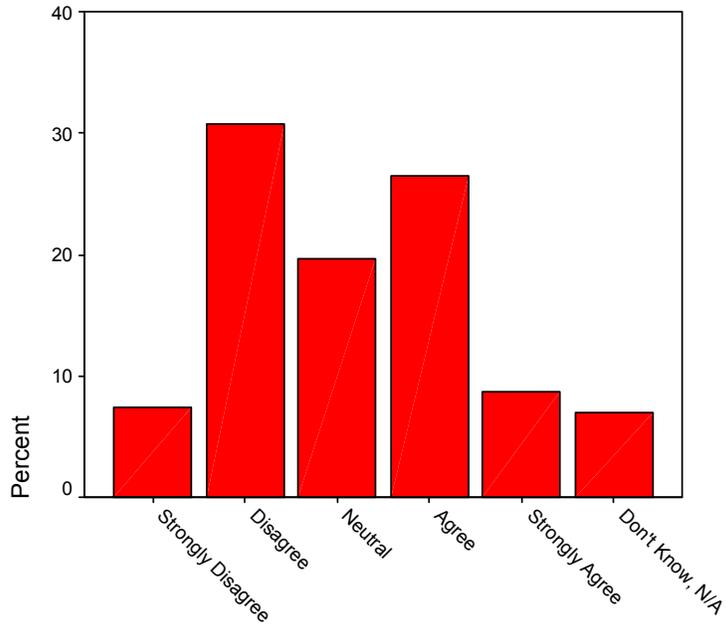


Figure 6: My Family Life has Suffered as a Result of My Work Commitments (n = 5758)

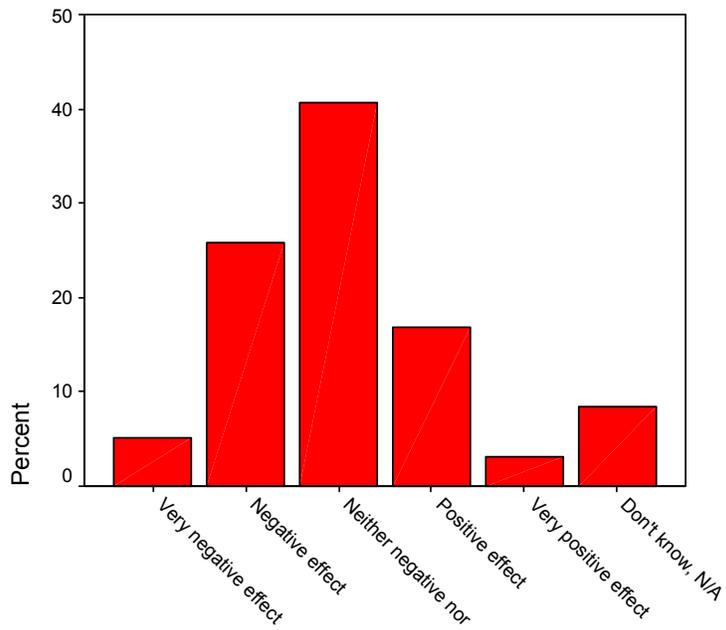


Figure 7: The Quality of Your Relationship(s) With Spouse(s) or Partner(s) (n = 5695)

20. When examining the questions above, it appears that members generally agree that the demands of military life do interfere with their home and family life but that their family life is not necessarily suffering as a result of their work commitments. To date, member perceptions again support qualitative findings that the demands of military life do interfere with family life, however, there is conflicting data in relation to whether or not families are in “trouble”. We will now further examine member responses on their own marriages/relationships.

6.0 MEMBER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR OWN RELATIONSHIPS/MARRIAGES

21. This section will review the responses of CF members to questions about their own relationships and their relationship history. In the first set of questions, members who were married or living with an intimate partner were asked to describe their current marriage or intimate partnership. The remainder of the questions that will be examined deal with the number of times members have been married or have had intimate relationships, how many times they have been divorced or have had live-in relationships end, and finally, what impact their military service has had on the relationships they described.

22. HDDS survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they either agreed or disagreed that the following statements described their current marriage or intimate partnership:

- 1) We have a good marriage/partnership;
- 2) My relationship with my spouse/partner is very stable;
- 3) Our marriage/partnership is strong;
- 4) My relationship with my spouse/partner makes me happy;
- 5) I really feel like a part of a team with my spouse/partner; and,
- 6) Everything considered, I am happy in my marriage/partnership.

The table below, shows that a very large number of CF members believe that they have a good marriage/partnership (83.9%), that their relationship is stable (82.1%), strong (81.2%), makes them happy (85.8%), that they feel like they are part of a team (82%), and that everything considered, they are happy with their marriage/partnership (86.1%). These findings are consistent with Dowden’s (2001) findings that CF members were satisfied with their marriage/partner relationship. He found that 89% of CF members were either completely satisfied (36%), satisfied (41%) or somewhat satisfied (12%)

versus 6% who were either completely dissatisfied (1%), dissatisfied (2%) or somewhat dissatisfied (3%). Interestingly, when examining satisfaction ratings of CF members' spouses in relation to their marriage/partner relationships, Dowden (2002) found that 91.7% were either completely satisfied (38.5%), satisfied (42%) or somewhat satisfied (11.2%) compared to only 4.3% who were either completely dissatisfied (.3%), dissatisfied (1.3%) or somewhat dissatisfied (2.7%). In sum, member relationships seem to be doing extremely well.

Table 1: Descriptions of Marriage/Intimate Partnership (Data in %)

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Don't Know |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------------|
| We have a good marriage/partnership | 2.2 | 5.2 | 8.2 | 38.8 | 45.1 | .5 |
| My relationship with my spouse/partner is very stable | 2.5 | 6.8 | 8.2 | 38.5 | 43.6 | .5 |
| Our marriage/partnership is strong | 2.5 | 6.3 | 9.6 | 36 | 45.2 | .5 |
| My relationship with my spouse/partner makes me happy | 1.8 | 3.9 | 8 | 36.5 | 49.3 | .4 |
| I really feel like a part of a team with my spouse partner | 2.2 | 5.5 | 9.8 | 36.8 | 45.2 | .5 |
| Everything considered, I am happy in my marriage/partnership | 2.2 | 4.4 | 6.7 | 35.3 | 50.8 | .5 |

23. Since they joined the CF, 73.9% of members stated that they were married once, 12.4% reported being married twice, and 1.4% have been married three plus times. Only 12.4% of CF members have never being married. In relation to live-in relationships with an intimate partner since they joined the Forces, 46.7% of members have experienced one, 14.9% have experienced two, 5.3% have experienced three, and 3.6% have experienced four plus. Never having a live-in relationship since they joined was reported by 29.4%.

24. When members were asked if they were in the process of obtaining a legal separation or divorce, 7.2% of CF marriages were reported as being in a state of formal breakdown. Responding to the question how many times they have divorced since they joined the CF, 76.3% stated zero, 20.9% reported being divorced once, 2.3% twice and

0.4% three plus times. For those who had experienced live-in relationships, 69.5% reported that there had been no relationship break-up since they joined the CF, 18.3% had experienced one, 7.4% two, 2.7% three, and 2.1% four plus times.

25. Directly following the above questions, respondents were asked to look back on all their experiences and describe what impact their military service had on the relationships they had just described (Figure 8). When doing so, 42.3% stated that it either had some negative impact (31%) or a highly negative impact (11.3%), versus 9.9% who said it had some positive impact (7.4%) or a highly positive impact (2.5%). Of the respondents, 18.1% reported that it had no impact. Similarly, Duxbury and Higgins found that between 40% and 50% of their CF sample felt that “work has had a negative impact on their relationship with their spouse, the amount of time they can give to and the amount of time they can spend in volunteer work” (2002:8). They also found that “relatively few (10%) of those in the CF reported that work was having a positive impact on their family situation” (2002:8).

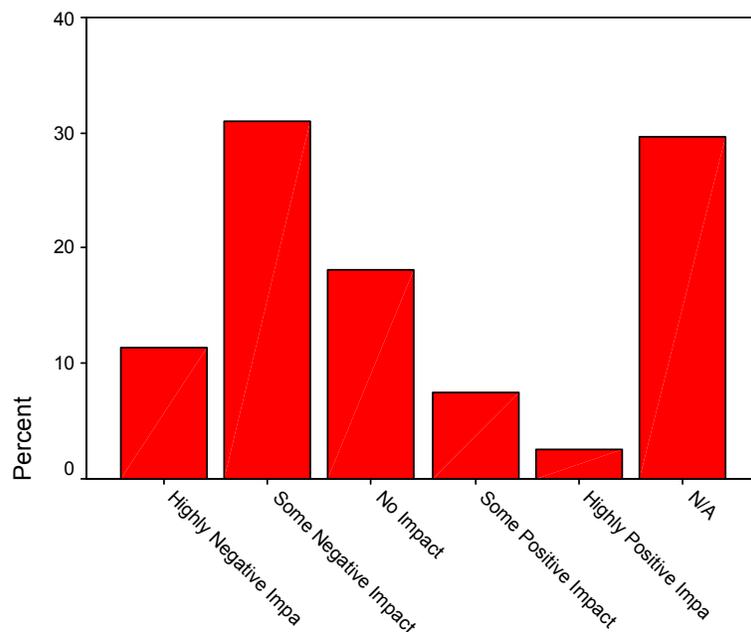


Figure 8: Looking Back on all Your Experiences, what impact did Your Military Service have on the Relationships You Described Above (n = 4343)

26. The first set of questions examined in this section show that from the members’ perspective, their relationships seem to be doing extremely well. Member responses do not appear to support qualitative data findings that describe the CF family as being in “trouble” or in a state of crisis. Similarly, the data presented on the incidence of family

breakdown do not seem to indicate anything that could be interpreted as being troublesome – this will be discussed further in the next section. Although these data do not support the perception that CF families are breaking down at an alarming rate, many members do believe that service life has a negative impact on their relationships. The trend that seems to be emerging in this section is that while members perceive that work is having a negative impact on their relationships, they are in fact reporting strong and positive relations with their spouses/partners.

7.0 DISCUSSION

27. When we examine quantitative data on member perceptions of the rate of family breakdown, we discover that it is consistent with qualitative findings that a perception exists that CF families are in a state of crisis and/or are breaking down at a high rate. A large portion of CF members do believe that military families are in “trouble”. Member perceptions also support qualitative findings that the demands of military life do interfere with family life.

28. Although these perceptions exist, contradictions emerge when we examine data on member perceptions of their own relationships. While a large number of members believe that military life interferes with their home and family life and that families are breaking down or are in trouble, they also report that their family life is not necessarily suffering as a result of their work commitments. In fact, when asked to describe their personal relationships, members reported having good marriages/partnerships, that their relationships were stable, strong, made them happy, that they felt like they were part of a team, and that everything considered, they were happy with their marriage/partnership. Based on member descriptions of their own relationships, CF families seem to be doing extremely well.

29. Similarly, the data presented on the incidence of family breakdown do not seem to indicate anything that could be interpreted as troublesome. Since there are no comparable national statistics, it is difficult to comment on the finding that 7.2% of CF marriages are in a state of formal breakdown. Marriage stability can, however, be assessed using divorce rates based on years of marriage. Statistics Canada reports that the proportion of marriages that are expected to end in divorce by the 30th wedding anniversary is 37.6% (Statistics Canada, 2004). Although there are severe methodological issues and it is extremely difficult to compare the CF population to this average, 23.6% of members reported being divorced at least once since they joined the

CF. The argument here being that had the CF rate been closer to or higher than 37.6%, there would have been reason for concern.

30. Earlier, it was hypothesized that member views on the overall rate of family breakdown would be belied by the reported strength of members' own relationships. Although the available evidence does not support the pervasive apprehension of a crisis among military families, there are many who believe this to be the case. A common trend and contradiction in both the qualitative and quantitative data examined is that when members are asked directly about their relationships their comments are positive, yet, when asked for their perceptions of member marriages/relationships at a CF wide level, there is a sense that families/relationships are in trouble. What we can conclude from this is that members' perceptions of family/relationship breakdown at a CF wide level support the belief that CF families are breaking down or are in "trouble", but that these perceptions run counter to the reported strength of members' own relationships. A plausible explanation for this contraction lies in the concept of "moral panic".

31. The term moral panic was coined by Stanley Cohen in the early 1970's. Cohen used the term to "characterize the reactions of the media, the public, and agents of social control to youth disturbances" (Killingbeck, 2001:187). According to the Cohen, the key elements in a moral panic are: a) someone or something is defined as a threat to values or interests; b) this threat is depicted in an easily recognizable form by the media; c) there is a rapid build up of public concern; d) there is a response from authorities or opinion makers; and e) the panic recedes or results in social changes (Killingbeck, 2001:187). An influential piece in this literature is also the work of Stuart Hall. According to Killingbeck, it was through Hall's approach to "ideology that the media's use of moral panics to both define and distort social problems was fleshed out into a general critique of the media's construction of social reality" (2001:187). Although both academics' work⁴ was not related to the military, the ideas they put forth are of interest and can be applied to this analysis.

32. When we look at the recent amount of attention CF members and their families have received (SCONDVA, CF Ombudsman, media, etc.), the CF is often portrayed as an overstretched, overworked, constantly deployed organization where families are left behind. Similarly, when conducting focus groups with CF members on family/relationship issues, members' portray life in the CF as one that is causing many families/relationships to breakdown. Members' often discuss the "stories" of their

⁴ See Cohen 1972, 1980; and Hall 1978 for further discussion.

military colleagues; how constantly being away is destroying an enormous amount of relationships but not their's; that they know of someone who returned from a deployment to an empty house; and so forth. Together, these accounts reinforce each other, that is, that media accounts are supported by member stories and vice versa. Over time, these portrayals, accounts, and stories of family/relationship breakdown are repeated, are perpetuated through "gossip" or conversation, they enter the individual's consciousness and become accepted by both CF members and the general public as conventional wisdom. What is occurring, however, is that a social reality is being constructed that is not necessarily true but based on anecdotal evidence. In this case, family/relationship breakdown is being presented as a growing phenomenon when in fact the evidence does not support this. It is possible that member perceptions at a CF wide level are more symbolic of a moral panic than they are of reality- reality being, that CF members actually report high levels of satisfaction (Dowden, 2001) as well as good, stable, strong marriages/relationships that make them happy.

8.0 CONCLUSION

33. For the purposes of this analysis, three qualitative studies involving thousands of CF members were reviewed as well as quantitative data from the HDDS study. At this time, it is recommended that further analyses of HDDS data on CF members and their relationships be conducted to deepen our knowledge of the strength of CF families. It is also recommended that the findings of this research note, which are based on CF member input, be compared to similar HDDS data that will be available from CF spouses in 2005.

34. The research question being asked in this paper was: How do member's perceptions of the rate of military family breakdown compare to the available quantitative evidence on the strength of their marriages/relationships? Although the available evidence does not support the pervasive apprehension of a crisis among military families, there are many who believe this to be the case. What we can conclude from this is that members' perceptions of family/relationship breakdown at a CF wide level support the belief that CF families are breaking down or are in "trouble", but that these perceptions run counter to the reported strength of members' own relationships. Based on the data in this analysis, member views on the overall rate of family breakdown are belied by the reported strength of their own relationships.

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A wide and deep belief currently exists within the CF that there is a state of crisis among CF families. As a result, the analysis found herein is being undertaken to further understand member's perceptions of military family breakdown. It is also being conducted to shed some light on on-going debates within DND about the strength of CF families. The research question being asked is: How do member's perceptions of the rate of military family breakdown compare to the available quantitative evidence on the strength of their marriages/relationships? It is hypothesized that the available evidence does not support the pervasive apprehension of a crisis among military families. That is, that member views on the overall rate of family breakdown are belied by the reported strength of their own relationships. The concept of "moral panic" is offered to explain this discrepancy.

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