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Emotion Work On The Home-Front: The Special Case Of Military Wives

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EMOTION WORK ON THE HOME-FRONT: THE SPECIAL CASE OF MILITARY
WIVES

EMOTION WORK ON THE HOME-FRONT: THE SPECIAL CASE OF MILITARY
WIVES

A thesis proposal submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Sociology

By

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University of Arkansas
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology & Criminal Justice, 2009

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ABSTRACT

This research includes interviews with twelve military wives to examine emotion-work techniques used to negotiate the everyday life of wives during their husbands' deployment. In this study, I seek to better understand the ways in which military wives negotiate their feelings within a context of military masculinity and how they manage role strain, feelings of loneliness, isolation, and marginalization. In addition, I examine the cultural constructs available to wives, such as traditional gender roles and subordination. Interviews confirm the complexity of the life of the military wife, revealing challenges of contradictory emotions in relationship to the military, her husband, her family, and the war in Iraq. Findings reveal that military wives engage in significant emotion work to support their husbands during deployment. Findings also identify the support structures that military wives either enjoy or lack during deployment, their views toward soldiers versus the bureaucratic structure of the military, and their participation in the moral order of military communities through patriotism. Suggestions for future studies are presented, as more research is needed to deepen our understanding of the isolation and marginalization of life for military spouses.

This thesis is approved for
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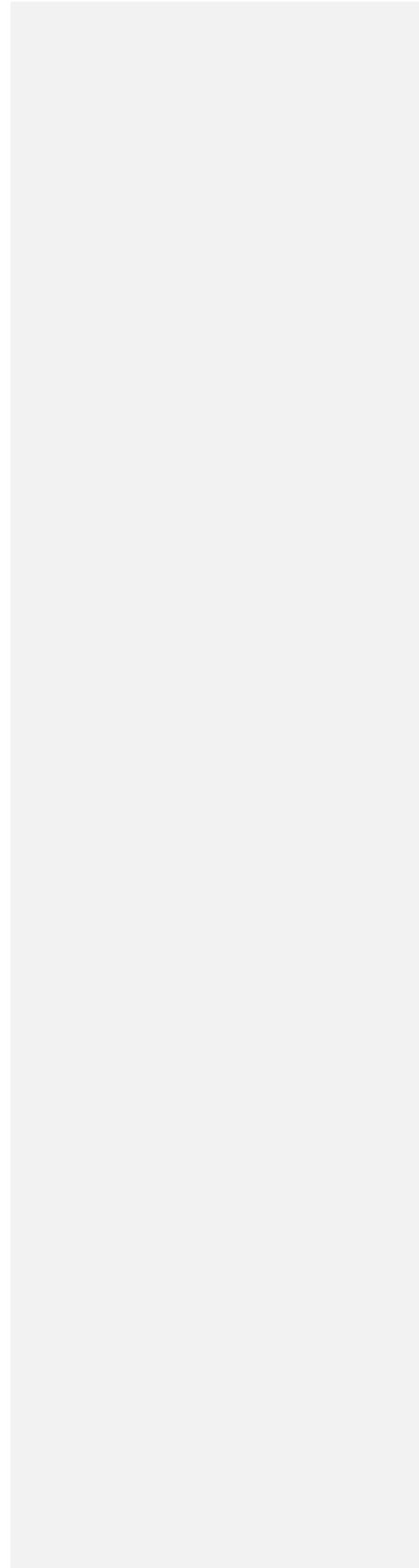
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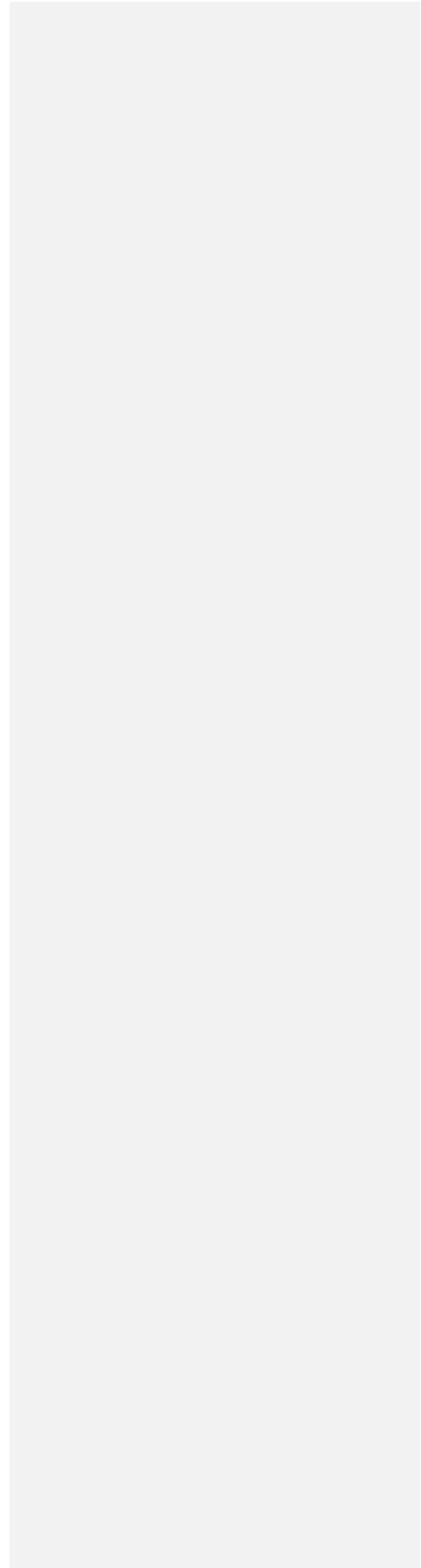


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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this paper to military wives. If not for their willingness to open up to a burgeoning social researcher, I would be lost. They gave up hours of their time to speak with me about the most intimate parts of their lives—their emotions. They risked speaking the truth about negative aspects of the military and opened up to me about their joys, fears, frustrations, and relationships. I have so much respect for them, their husbands, and their children, and wish them peace, love, and happiness in their future.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is a world I never thought I would know. Before my husband—at the time, my boyfriend—enlisted, I didn't know anyone who was in the military. When he gets out of the Army this summer, this place may become another story to tell my friends. But I can't avoid the fact that the military and I now have an inextricable connection. I know the soldier's lingo, and I've hung out in his barracks. I've been his spouse, waiting for his return home from war. Whenever a soldier is killed in Iraq or Afghanistan, I grieve because I feel as if someone I know has died. In that way, a part of me will always be an Army wife. —Gina Chon

During his speech on December 1st, 2009, President Barack Obama announced a controversial continuation of U.S. military presence in Afghanistan.¹ Past and current research, along with documentaries such as *Occupation Dreamland* (2006), *The Ground Truth* (2006), and *Combat Diary: The Marines of Lima Company* (2006), have highlighted the challenges facing deployed and returning military personnel, leading many to now oppose war. In August of 2010, 58 percent of American adults opposed the war in Afghanistan.² By November of 2010, the number had grown to nearly two-thirds.³ Americans are weary of the extended presence, the monetary costs of war in a difficult economy, and the emotional toll it has taken on U.S. military personnel and their families.

As of 2008, one in five returning soldiers were said to be suffering from PTSD or major depression (Tanielian and Jaycox 2008:45). Not only do U.S. citizens wonder

¹ Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/defense/afghanistan>. Retrieved March 14, 2011.

² Available at <http://www.ap-gfcpoll.com/pdf/AP-GfK%20Poll%2018th%20August%202010%20Iraq-Afghanistan.pdf>. Retrieved March 14, 2011.

³ Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/poll-nearly-two-thirds-of-americans-say-afghan-war-isnt-worth-fighting/2011/03/14/ABRbeEW_story.html?hpid=z3. Retrieved March 16, 2011.

whether or not the war can be justified, but they also question if the military has taken proper precautions for maintaining mental health among soldiers. Multiple or extended deployments not only hurt soldiers, but also their families. Military spouses and caregivers report they are taking on more responsibilities in the home and having to help children deal with the emotional challenges of deployment. Indeed, one study reveals that nearly 44 percent of children of deployed soldiers experience [emotional or behavioral] difficulties in the moderate-to-high range at baseline” (Chandra et al. 2011:xv-xvii).

Not only do military families face problems associated with extended time away from soldiers, upon return, many soldiers carry the trauma of war home to their families, adding to the stress already experienced. Some research suggests that military culture and its emphasis on emotional and mental toughness hinders U.S. troops from getting the help they need to return to civilian life (Hoge et al. 2004; Holyfield 2011; Ulio 1941). As of 2004, “rates of domestic violence [were...] three to five times higher among military couples than among civilian ones” (Lutz 2004:17). Lutz (2004:17) argues that “[t]he military as an institution promotes the idea of heterosexual male supremacy, glorifies power and control or discipline, and suggests that violence is often a necessary means to one’s ends.” When soldiers cannot properly readjust to life at home, the ones who suffer are often the ones they love most—their spouses.

Today’s soldiers join the military for a variety of reasons. Rather than fighting for a noble cause, many soldiers report that they joined the military mainly to take advantage of opportunities, such as funding for college, in order to improve their later careers (*The Ground Truth* 2006). Similarly, traditional appeals of patriotism encouraging the enthusiastic involvement of citizens in the war have been replaced by governmental

appeals addressed to civilians on the home-front, including military wives, to remain calm and act “normal,” thus changing the dynamics of modern warfare and weakening the honorability of the military identity (Montgomery 2008:606). But as this study reveals, normalizing life on the home-front is complicated at best.

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although extensive research has been conducted upon military morale, military families, and the current war, little is known of the private lives of military spouses at home. Military wives have become a favorite media target of news shows featuring soldiers who leave or return home; however, little is known about the ways in which they cope with their husbands' dangerous tours of duty during their everyday lives. In a recent report, just over half of married soldiers had been deployed more than twice (Department of Defense 2010:237). Research shows that for caregivers with children, “emotional well-being” is affected and “associated with greater stressors for the caregiver, including more challenges maintaining the household, parenting, and relating to the deployed parent” (Chandra et al. 2011:xv-xvii). Knowing that military couples are faced with stresses uncommon to most civilians and that soldiers face increased rates of PTSD and other mental health injuries⁴ (Basham 2008:83; Martin et al. 2007:588), there is a need to better understand the ways in which husbands and wives manage married life within the context of extended and repeated tours.

In order to mitigate marital disparities, research must seek to better understand the challenges faced by the military wife. She is vulnerable to constraints of the military

⁴ Available at <http://www.IAVA.org>.

institution and gender roles. Research has shown that women, on average, are more likely to develop mental illnesses, especially if they are married and are not financially independent/employed (Prior 1996:29). Recent literature on military culture focuses upon the masculinity of military life for soldiers (Holyfield 2011 forthcoming; Tick 2009), but little addresses how this impacts wives, specifically. Military wives may represent the passive population of the military, and their influence upon the institution is more subtle, but they do impact military involvement. For example, reports of life satisfaction are statistically significant with rates of “recruiting and retention,” which means that spouses are a deciding factor in the successful continuation of U.S. occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan (Klein, Tatone, and Lindsay 2001:465; Payne, Warner, and Little 1992:324). Research must be undertaken to examine how a military wife copes, feels about her husband’s occupation, manages the fear of losing him in combat, and negotiates her personal identity in the context of war.

For the purpose of this research, I apply a micro-level approach to examining the everyday life of a military wife, her expressions, felt emotions, language, interaction, and common sources of comfort during her husband's leave. More specifically, this research seeks to understand the ways in which military wives manage the inherent contradiction of being a military spouse against the backdrop of a masculine military institution. Specifically, I examine the emotional labor (emotion work and emotion management techniques) suggested by sociologist, Arlie Hochschild (1983), to understand how military wives negotiate contradictory emotions, feelings of fear and loneliness, public opinion about the war, and readjustment challenges upon their husband’s return home.

Examples of emotional labor would include whatever they do, say, or feel when their personal emotions do not match traditionally and/or culturally prescribed emotions.

B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to give voice to a part of the military that has been largely ignored. Military wives experience different, yet significant anguish related to deployment. Due to the “stop-loss” policy, the Army has been able to “...keep soldiers active beyond the end of their signed contracts,” and “more than 120,000 soldiers have been affected by stop-loss since 2001” (Dahr 2010:1). As a result, military wives have faced longer periods alone and higher risks of losing their husbands. “During deployment, the warrior and his [...] partner may have different emotional experiences, which they may not be able to share effectively via e-mail or cell phone communication” (Basham 2008:90). Not only are wives more likely to experience negative emotions due to separation from their husbands, but they are also less likely to relate those feelings to their husbands. Problems such as these are not always alleviated upon homecoming. The inability to communicate with her husband, along with the conflict between civilian versus military life, leaves the military wife’s overall well-being vulnerable. Research must seek to describe levels of emotionality among military wives in order to better understand this ambivalence and promote positive well-being.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that will guide this study are as follows:

1. What pre-determined meanings, cultural constructs of gender and military life, are readily available to the military wife?

2. What types of emotion work strategies are employed to cope with the inherent ambiguities of military life?

In order to answer the research questions above, I conduct in-depth interviews with twelve military wives. My overall aim is to reveal the significant impact military life has upon wives and the emotional gap that exists for military wives between how they should and how they actually feel. This gap—this negotiation of feelings—will be crucial to recognizing the complexities and problems associated with being a military wife.

D. SIGNIFICANCE

As previously mentioned, there has been a growing concern for soldiers coming home with symptoms of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) due to traumatic experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. Military families are at risk. For example, at North Carolina's Fort Bragg, the "cluster of domestic violence (DV) homicides and related suicides" gained national attention in the summer of 2002, highlighting the "impact of war zone exposure and 'high operations tempo' on marital stability" (Gerlock 2004:470). As multiple deployments take a toll on soldiers, there is evidence that the families suffer as well. Acts of domestic violence show us how marital problems and/or problems associated with deployment and military culture escalate if not addressed.

Community programs should focus not just upon soldiers, but on the family unit as a whole. Research on veterans supports the need for healing upon return. Soldiers recover from mental health injuries through "social vindication of their war efforts [...]" therefore, much of the healing for them and their partners should occur in the context of meeting with other veterans and their family members and of re-building a sense of community" (Basham 2008:91). Military wives should also be beneficiaries of communal

rituals such as these because of their intimate involvement within the military community. These rituals have the potential to give them a strong sense of purpose, improve their overall well-being, and facilitate better communication within the military marriage.

Through a better understanding of military wives' emotional coping techniques, sociologists will be better able to predict disparities within the military marriage, common problems associated with military wives both during their husbands' absence and when they return, and the ways in which culturally-prescribed meanings related to the military family might be keeping truths about military families from coming to the forefront of research. Through understanding, military communities will have the tools they need to develop effective healing rituals for veterans and their families.

E. SUMMARY

In this introduction, it is revealed that military life affects both soldiers and their families. Military wives face challenges and situations uncommon to civilian wives, making them a special population. As this study will reveal, military wives face increased levels of emotion work and isolation, during deployment, thus influencing their overall emotional well-being. These conditions may lead to marital problems and in the worst-case scenario, domestic violence. Despite these hardships, there is evidence of ways to counteract negative feelings and restore strained, broken, or deteriorating relationships.

In chapter two, I provide a theoretical overview that serves as my organizing framework. I combine symbolic interaction and Hochschild's (1979; 1983) notion of emotion work with cultural constructions of gender to examine both the available cultural meanings and demands of emotion work that accompany being a military wife. I also

present an empirical overview of previous studies of military families. In chapter three, I provide a methodological framework to explain how this study was conducted. In chapter four, I provide a description of the findings from this research and in chapter five, I discuss the significance of these findings and provide a conclusion that includes both the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW: SYMBOLIC INTERACTION, CULTURAL MEANINGS, AND EMOTION WORK

Although sociology largely ignored the term “emotion” in its classical years, emotionality has always been at its core. Early thinkers such as Auguste Comte believed “human nature” to consist of both “the heart and the mind,” with “emotional impulse” coming from the heart and adhering to a “moral order” that preserved the greater good for society (Barbalet 2002:17). Similarly, Durkheim (1912) paid notice to emotions as well, explaining that emotions are the site of social integration and solidarity, and our understanding of the sacred moral order.

Symbolic interaction also informs our understanding of emotional life because people interpret behavior and emotions based upon meanings derived from interactions with others and the larger society (Blumer 1969). Burkitt (2002) argues that emotions are necessarily embedded in the context of relationships, “[...] involving active bodily states or feeling and the speech genres through which we attempt to articulate those feelings” (cited in Barbalet 2002:153). Therefore, emotions are the results of our “bodies and discourse yet are reducible to neither” (cited in Barbalet 2002:153). For the purpose of this research, “emotion” can be thought of as Barbalet (2002:1) describes it, that is, a negative or positive “involvement” with “an event, condition, or person.” Accordingly, “[i]t is this experience that is emotion, not the subject’s thoughts about their experience, or the language of self-explanation arising from the experience, but that immediate contact with the world the self has through involvement” (Barbalet 2002:1).

The friction between emotionality and rationality can be found in a number of academic fields, thus allowing research to examine and apply a broad range of theoretical concepts. For example, in same premise of immediate involvement (emotion) followed by contextualized identities (emotion management). The “id” is spontaneous, while the “ego” and “superego” combine rationality psychology, Freud’s (1949) “id,” “ego,” and “superego” are understood based upon the normative conditions to create a “managed” self. However, Mead (1932) offers the important aspect of role-taking in his model of the self that is absent or overlooked by Freud’s focus upon the repression of the “id.” For Mead, the self occurs via role-taking. It is through social interaction that military wives learn what emotions are appropriate for their respective roles.

Emotions are biologically based but socially managed. Massey (2001) explains the ways in which emotionality, in many ways, holds precedence over rationality. Mead (1932) adds to this understanding by stating that we experience emotions and interpret these feelings based upon the interactions we have. Looking at Mead’s “I” and “Me,” one can see how emotionality and rationality influence behavior. The “I” is a spontaneous and immediate self that experiences a given emotion, whereas the “Me” is the internalization of social meanings that guides us in how best to express our emotions through taking the role of a generalized other. Ideally, the disjuncture is resolved in the role-taking process. It is when our felt emotions do not reflect the normative discourse that emotional labor takes place. This requires a broader approach to emotions.

As Hochschild (1979:212) notes, our feelings are tied to the organizations we encounter and influence the development of our selves. She notes that while Mead (1932) did not give significant notice to emotions, his concept of the spontaneous “I,” which is

described as the creative involvement of an actor, is a term similar to that of emotion.

The “Me” is the social part of the person that develops through interaction within a social and cultural context (Hochschild 1979:212). Just as norms influence our behavior and our subjective understanding of self, they also regulate and influence our emotions, both felt and displayed. Linking Mead’s concepts of the “Me” to emotion work, Hochschild reveals that “feeling rules” can be distinguished from felt emotions that are more reflective of the spontaneous “I,” and through social interaction, we negotiate and interpret our feelings much like we do our thoughts (Hochschild 1979:212-213). Uncovering friction between the “I” and “Me” allows one to think about emotionality in symbolic interactionist terms. For Hochschild, emotions are central to understanding the self and are continually subject to “feeling rules,” but symbolic interaction reminds us that we have agency in this process as well, allowing us to acknowledge then negotiate the emotional norms that surround us.

In some ways, her understanding of emotion is similar to that of Barbalet (2002); Hochschild (1979:551) describes emotion as a “...bodily cooperation with an image, a thought, a memory--a cooperation of which the individual is aware.” She writes that “an emotion-management perspective” is a way to “...inspect the self, interaction, and structure” (Hochschild1979:551). Emotion work “...requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (Hochschild 1983:7). Therefore, people with ambiguous identities are prone to develop certain emotion-management techniques that help them and others see their identities as less ambiguous. Military wives are ideal for studying emotion work because the war is of a prolonged and controversial nature and wives are both isolated from and

invested in it. Studying the emotion-management techniques of military wives should reveal how these women understand themselves, interact with others, and identify with the military institution.

Hochschild (1979) also explains that emotion work: (1) includes “face-to-face or voice-to-voice” interaction; (2) uses “emotional displays” intended to “shape others’ emotions”; and (3) is “shaped by the organizational display rules and requirements” of the context (Seery, Corrigan, and Harpel 2008:464). These identifiable categories of emotion work are applicable as I focus upon induced or suppressed feelings associated with emotions felt by military wives that contradict organized display rules determined by the larger military culture. Theory predicts that the ambiguity of military life will reveal itself through emotion-work techniques. Military wives are not “forced” to construct a masculine military identity in boot camp, which provides them more flexibility to think about the context of their emotions within a largely inflexible institution.

Because of the ambiguous nature of their identities and the large amounts of stress placed upon them, the theoretical framework predicts military wives to engage in larger amounts of what Hochschild (1983:35) has coined “surface acting,” in which actors attempt to appear as if they feel a certain way, when in fact they do not. Surface acting “drain[s] more energy than deep acting” and is more likely to increase an actor’s negative well-being (Seery, Corrigan, and Harpel 2008:473 cited in Hochschild 1983:35). The concept of surface acting is similar to Erving Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical performance, in which actors are always presenting a particular “self” to others in a given situation; however, Goffman fails to develop concepts that delve deeper into emotion

work than surface acting (Hochschild 1983:35, 37). “Deep acting” occurs when “...a real feeling [...] has been self-induced” (Hochschild 1983:35). Deep acting allows one to “muster” a genuine feeling, and it is possible that military wives use deep acting when justifying their roles within the military institution.

When studying veterans who suffer from PTSD and other trauma, one can see through real-life examples how emotionality precedes and often overcomes rationality. During the construction of the military identity, soldiers are trained to act aggressively upon impulse; anything slower than a reflex could mean death (*Combat Diary: The Marines of Lima Company* 2006). Upon returning home, soldiers “...may experience their partners and other family members as victims, victimizers, and bystanders, a phenomenon that leads to polarized beliefs and conflicts over power and control” (Basham 2008:88). Because they are accustomed to acting automatically upon emotional cues when threatened, they may continue to act upon emotion without taking the time to think logically about a situation and assure themselves that they are not in danger. This may help to explain how and why veterans come to commit violent acts upon loved ones.

Similarly, military wives face the challenge between emotionality and rationality on a daily basis. It is not rational to support a husband’s decision to leave his wife and children, enter into extremely dangerous situations in which he might be killed, and potentially kill other human beings. When a husband goes to war, military wives are likely to feel fear, sadness, loneliness, anger, vulnerability, and desperation. However, they are also likely to rationalize negative feelings with patriotic sentiments and other cultural narratives, such as self-sacrifice for the greater good.

Applying Hochschild's (1983) understanding of emotion work may help deepen our understanding of how military wives counteract negative images of their husbands with cultural images of soldiers portrayed as protectors of freedom, fighters against evil, and "the few, the proud, and the strong." As this work reveals, within military culture, wives negotiate the poles of patriotism and resentment, integration and isolation, and role strains that come with their support roles. This research seeks to show the ways in which military wives cope with negative emotions by "mustering" positive emotions to counteract them. In other words, emotion work may have both negative and positive consequences as coping skills.

B. CULTURAL CONSTRUCTS OF GENDER

Many symbols and images can be associated with femininity. Gender is learned through socialization during childhood. One study (Weitzman et al. 1972:1128) shows that there are typically eleven pictures of males compared to every one picture of a female in children's books. Little girls are seen as "delicate" and "pretty," while little boys are described as "strong" and "handsome" (Rubin, Provenzano, and Luria 1974:512-519). Similarly, girls' toys are associated with household chores, fashion, and care-giving (baby dolls, jewelry boxes, and dress-up clothes), while boys' toys focus on aggressive behaviors (guns, sports gear, and action figures) (Campenni 1999). Children learn that for women, "doing gender" means "sitting 'ladylike,' paying attention to appearance, wearing makeup and jewelry," and not acting assertive or aggressive (West and Zimmerman 1987, Newman 2006:54). During school years, children experience different types of education according to assigned gender roles (Sadker and Sadker 2002:583). For example, women's accomplishments are less likely to be in history books

(Newman 2006:134). In his book, *Goffman Unbound!: A New Paradigm for Social Science*, Scheff (2006) talks about male socialization at an early age and its consequences for aggression and hyper-masculinity. In sum, children learn that men are typically deemed more powerful than women in their relationships. Thus, the emotional division of labor is set up relatively early.

Results of socialization influence later marital life. Husbands tend to take control of the couple's conversation in a display of power, while wives are expected to manage emotional relationships and act more affectively (Lakoff 1995). Women are also labeled as mothers, nurturers, and comforters (Newman 2006:78). Over and over, women are more likely to be portrayed as emotional caretakers (Thompson and Zerbinos 1995). Being a "good mother" implies that women are better equipped for parenting than men, thus making the home the natural place for women with families (Gillis 1996, Newman 2006:297). Also, for women, their role as a wife takes on more significance than their employment status, which is not the case for men (Kaufman 1999). Basow (1986) describes in her book the negative stereotypes (the bad mother, the unfaithful wife, promiscuous, and masculine) often given to women. Women who do not adhere to these common cultural constructs are more likely to be isolated from mainstream society and less satisfied in their marriages.

Gender roles are also maintained through the media. Today, the media typically portrays women in opposing roles: that of "the perfect wife and mother, the triumphant career woman" and that of the "seductive sex object" (Newman 2006:91). Women often compare themselves to these "types" of women and often worry about looking sexy and/or whether or not they are a good wife and/or mother. Stone and McKee (2002:185)

explain how the American woman's identity is "discombobulated," meaning that parts of her identity do not fit together, whereas for men, they do. Inherent ambiguities in femininity constrain women and reduce them to fulfilling "one or two roles at a time" (Stone and McKee 2002:185). For this study, the literature leads us to believe that widely-felt gender constraints felt by wives are intensified within the masculine military.

Heterosexual attitudes about gender are fundamental in determining how a military wife feels about her identity and that of her husband's. American culture predominantly thinks about love, marriage, and sexual relationships in terms of attraction between men and women. Spousal roles within the marriage are largely determined by culturally-defined gender roles, the negotiation of those roles, and a common agreement reached between husband and wife through negotiation. For example, when adhering to culturally-defined gender roles, "[w]omen are more likely to be presented with the task of mastering anger and aggression in the service of 'being nice.' To men, the socially assigned task of aggressing against those that break rules [...] creates the private task of mastering fear and vulnerability" (Hochschild 1983:163). Despite known differences of emotion work between men and women, studies have consistently shown that women are more likely to be dissatisfied within their marriages (Mickelson, Claffey, and Williams 2006:73), perhaps due to some lack of agreement upon the negotiation of spousal roles, higher levels of surface acting, and/or their submissive position within the marriage.

Age is also an important contributor to the management of gender roles within the marriage and the ways in which couples handle the hardships of being in the military. Most military couples are young (Thompson 2001:36). Almost half of military couples (43%) have been married five years or less (Department of Defense 2010:235). They are

also more likely to have what Basham (2008:86) describes as “unresolved/disorganized attachment styles,” in which they suffer from lack of “insight” about their marriages. Young military couples who are recently married and faced with a deployment are more likely to have difficulty communicating with each other, reaching an agreement upon spousal roles, and having satisfactory attachment styles than married couples who have been acclimated to married life and able to interact daily without the added pressures of military life. Being in the military is stressful, but combining military pressures with lack of marital experience makes it even harder for these young couples to maintain healthy relationships.

As stated previously, research seeks to uncover ways in which military wives negotiate their roles against the backdrop of a masculine military institution. One study (Echabe and Castro 1999:287) shows how masculinity dominates public spheres of society, while femininity dominates the private spheres. Private spheres are minimized and often neglected within the military because it is a total institution. Military wives are submerged in a masculine culture, their husbands leave them during tours of duty, and their private spheres suffer. This study seeks to reveal the ways in which the military both intensifies and reproduces traditional gender roles and ways in which military wives react to these alterations.

Research has shown that soldiers often come home desensitized, unable to provide their wives the emotional support they need. “Emotional support is thought to be more important for women’s well-being, in general, because of women’s emphasis on intimacy in relationships” (Mickelson, Claffey, and Williams 2006:73). Also, “women make a resource out of feeling and offer it to men as a gift in return for the more material

resources they lack,” thus making “relational” work more important to women (Hochschild 1983:163). Military husbands return to the home-front in a “warrior” state of mind, which inhibits marital growth, increases chances of domestic violence and puts a heavier emotional strain upon their wives (*Economist* 2004:30-31; Lutz and Elliston 2002:18; *Women’s International Network News* 1994:38; *Women’s International Network News* 2002:89). Again, this research seeks to understand the ways in which military wives cope with emotional neglect from their husbands, whether through appeals to traditional gender roles, responses that appeal to the moral order or normative discourse within military culture, or avoidance.

As illustrated above, a broad view of symbolic interaction, gender, and emotion work reveals that emotionality is an underlying influence of social life. What people think and how people act are the results of emotional labor. For this project, emotion work is critical to understanding the military wife’s identity, her managed “self,” and her negotiation of feelings pertaining to the challenges of being a military wife. I turn next to a review of previous studies of military wives.

C. EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW

In the past decade, the government has regarded military wives in a negative light. “[A] report from the Rand Corporation, the longtime supplier of research to the Pentagon,” described military wives as “[...] young, immature, lower-class spouses who are in financial difficulty and who have difficulty controlling their reproductive tendencies” (Thompson 2001:36). However, this definition is misleading, for military wives face institutional disadvantages unknown to civilian wives.

Little is known about the true impact that military wives have had on the outcomes of war. Historically, women have been marginalized in military life. They have assumed roles as “unpaid cooks and laundresses, as “nurses [who] tended the wounded and dying” or as “servants and prostitutes, [who] provided a wide range of informal, poorly compensated services for military personnel” (Booth 2003:26) Today, military wives continue to be marginalized and face more sacrifices for their husbands and families than most civilian women, specifically in terms of their careers. Dempsey (2008:9) explains that military wives face many career setbacks due to frequent moves, such as out-of-state tuition fees, lay-offs, fewer retirement benefits, business relocations, and differing state laws about how to obtain licenses. “The probability that the wife works in a year declines with age in the military, but changes little with age for civilian wives” (Bourg 2003:171). Because of this, military wives report high rates of employment in low-paying jobs such as “child care, domestic service, food service, and the like” (Booth 2003:31) and have faced lower earnings than civilian wives in all areas except the service industry (Payne, Warner, and Little 1992:334).

Most articles written about military wives are non-scholarly interest stories. They typically feature wives who send their husbands off to war or welcome them home, usually with patriotic themes or undertones (e.g., local newspaper articles and daily news shows). Many focus on the attractions of becoming a military wife; for example: “[a] lot of young girls fall in love with the whole idea of this [military life]...There are a lot of second honeymoons and the marriage is never dull” (Witchel 2005:62). Numerous wives are extremely supportive of their husbands. One journalist reports on an interview with a military wife: “[m]y husband loves the Army, he loves this country, and he loves his

job,' she said with a picture-perfect smile that wavered for only a moment. 'Knowing that he's happy makes it all worth it to me'" (Colloff 2004:89). Another wife writes, "[w]e military wives live our lives like patches on a quilt, lives we stitch together to make a blanket of memories, and of strength, that covers us forever, no matter where we go, no matter how hot the water gets" (Dominski 2008:18). In these accounts, military wives adhere to larger cultural constructs of patriotism and sacrifice for the benefit of others.

Studies conducted upon military wives give insight to the problems military wives face. Research shows that the only significant relationships that help buffer the stress of a husband's absence are the ones military wives have with each other (Rosen and Moghadam 2002:200, 203). These findings show a strong sense of solidarity shared among military wives, but they also show how military wives become isolated from previous support networks and from each other due to relocations. However, there are ways to promote positive well-being:

Spouses who function most effectively during this time [during deployment] are those who use active coping styles (Jensen & Shaw, 1996), those who "make meaning" of the situation (Hammer et al., 2006), those who receive community and social support (Weins & Boss, 2006), those who accept the military life style, are optimistic and self reliant (Patterson & McCubbin, 1984), and those who adopt flexible gender roles (Kelley et al., 1994). (Johnson et al. 2007:17)

Although there is evidence that the military wife is lonely, isolated, and stressed during deployment, there is also evidence of successful coping strategies than can be employed to improve her well-being.

Similarly, another study recorded life-satisfaction rates among military wives. Wives with low "levels of emotionality" who controlled their levels of "fear" and "stress" were generally more satisfied (Klein, Tatone, and Lindsay 2001:465). These results support governmental appeals to civilians and military wives to repress arousing

emotions and maintain normal routines on the home-front. This and the previous study show that the military wife is more likely to be “on her own” when it comes to suppressing negative emotions. Wives who successfully counteract negative emotions and accept their place within the military appear to be happier, even though that also means accepting their marginalization and vulnerability within military culture.

Military families face the consequences of war upon the soldier’s return, and many families are permanently damaged. Re-locations, deployments, financial difficulties, and soldiers’ exposure to violence increase the chances that military families will experience domestic violence (Gerlock 2004:470-474). Domestic violence has long been a concern of military families. From 1990 to 1996, “...domestic violence in the military rose from 18.6 to 25.6 per 1000 military personnel,” and in 1998, rates of “severe aggression against spouses” were “more than three times higher [and more extreme in nature] in Army families than among civilian ones” (Lutz and Elliston 2002:18; *Women’s International Network News* 2002:89). As of 1994, “an average of one child or spouse” died every week from domestic violence cases in the military (*Women’s International Network News* 1994:38). “A growing literature indicates that the relationship partners of military veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are at heightened risk for partner violence victimization” (Taft et al. 2005:151). The *Economist* (2004:30-31) reported on the brutal murders of their wives committed by returning soldiers at Fort Bragg in 2002, two of which committed suicide after the act, raising fears in military families.

Besides domestic violence, military families face a number of other problems. Cases of rape are of concern for military wives due to the masculine, aggressive nature of

a soldier in combat, which, if not controlled, can result in sexual violence (Littlewood 1997:8). Military couples under financial pressure are less likely to be satisfied in their marriages and more likely to experience depression (Thoresen and Goldsmith 2001:546). Also, military families live in military towns that “are remote and isolated” from civilian life, resulting in readjustment complications (Booth 2003:30). One reason why more cases of abuse and depression are not made known is that military wives are financially disadvantaged and therefore prone to stay in abusive relationships (Lutz and Elliston 2002:19). Even military wives who maintain positive outlooks adopt submissive stances that could potentially keep them from defending themselves from abuse.

In sum, the empirical research reveals that although themes of patriotism and being a patient loving wife are popular among military wives, one cannot ignore problems specific to military wives. The extent to which military families face problems more than civilian families is quite severe, due to extended separation, higher reports of domestic violence, financial inadequacies, and the collision of the aggressive, warrior military roles of husbands with the more vulnerable, alienated, and dependent roles of military wives. Military wives are victims of the military institution in many ways, yet they have the least representation in research and literature. By observing their emotion work, this research seeks to understand the ways in which the larger military culture and other cultural narratives, especially those of gender, influence the military wife’s identity, with hopes to help the military family and promote empowerment and positive well-being for military wives.

III. METHODS

A. EPISTEMELOGICAL STANCE

Demerath (2002) provides a micro-theoretical approach to understanding cultural constructs that coincides with symbolic interaction and emotion work. Individuals construct culture and meaning, and it becomes an epistemological stance “because it makes our experiences understandable, and makes us feel as if we know our world and places in it” (Demerath 2002:208). A qualitative approach to this study of military life among wives is appropriate for this study in that it allows the voices of military wives to come through as they both encounter cultural constructions and negotiate those through emotion work. Examining emotion-work techniques employed by military wives helps us to understand how military wives make sense out of their lives in relation to a controversial war, placement within a masculine institution, and appeals to traditional gender roles. Interviews provide us with rich, grounded data from which to understand the complexities of the military wife identity from the military wife’s point of view.

B. GAINING ENTRY

I obtained initial permission for this research project through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Arkansas beginning in February of 2010, and began conducting interviews the following spring. The data for this research project was collected under the supervision of my thesis chair, Dr. Lori Holyfield. Interview data was made available for both my thesis project and Dr. Holyfield’s overall research project of veterans and their families (see Appendix A – Informed consent). Our goal was to provide a collaborative manuscript for possible publication from our collective data.

C. SAMPLE

Unlike quantitative data, a qualitative sample is not typically used to generalize about the larger population, which makes sample size less of an issue; rather, it focuses on information-rich cases (Patton 2002:244-245). I collected a purposeful criterion, snowball sample of twelve American military wives who have been involved with the military at least six months, currently have or are about to have a husband on active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan (in response to the “pull out of Iraq,” I conducted one interview with a wife whose husband was deployed in Kuwait), and who are below the age of 40 (Patton 2002:235, 243). I selected women who fit under these categories because they are typical of the majority of military wives.

Through snowball sampling, I found military wives who lived both on post and off post. At the end of each interview, I asked for contact information of other wives that might be interested in interviewing and found some of my interviews using that technique. However, to avoid having a sample in which all of the wives knew each other, I also found groups online by searching for military wives via Facebook.com. This is where I was able to find many of my interviewees. As for the few contacts I interviewed that I found using my own social ties, I only interviewed friends or family members of people that I knew, meaning that the individuals I interviewed I did not know well.

As for other informant requirements, I made sure the interviewees allowed up to two hours for the interview and asked them to speak comfortably using everyday communication styles (Spradley 1979:52). Commonly accepted terms and conditions were less “normal” to me, as I was unfamiliar with everyday lives of military wives, which helped reduce prior assumptions and biases (Spradley 1979:50). The interviews

were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim for coding purposes (see Appendix B – Interview Guide). While I did use an interview script to facilitate discussion of topics relevant to my theoretical framework and literature review, I maintained a conversation-style approach to the interviews, allowing participants to offer other categories to the research. The letter of informed consent was read at the start of each interview and the participant chose a pseudonym prior to the start of the interview in order to provide confidentiality to each participant. Interviewees were given information on the basic purpose of the project and provided with “project,” “recording,” “native language,” “interview,” and “question” explanations before and during the interview as deemed necessary for enhanced quality (Spradley 1979:59-60). Interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes but varied widely.

D. SETTING

Interviews constitute the primary data for this study. I was unable to conduct my interviews face to face. My interviewees lived in various locations to which I could not travel, and almost all of them could not leave their children unattended. Therefore, I conducted my interviews via telephone. While lacking the more personal face-to-face connection, I do feel as if military wives were comfortable and willing to talk. Each interview was audio-recorded. Interviewees were given information on the basic purpose of the project and provided with “ethnographic,” “project,” “recording,” “native language,” “interview,” and “question” explanations before and during the interview as deemed necessary for enhanced quality (Spradley 1979: 59-60).

E. DATA ANALYSIS

Using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2007), new questions were added as the research progressed and data was initially coded. The interview data was coded for expressed emotions and emotion management strategies. The interview guide addressed questions, such as: what emotions are felt, ways that these emotions are negotiated, wives' attitudes about deployment and about the war in general, everyday life as a military wife, and the benefits as well as costs of being a military wife.

Initial coding addressed the data line by line and detected any "gaps" in the provided information (Charmaz 2007:48). I went quickly through the data, provided "short codes," "preserve actions," and later compared different parts of the interview (Charmaz 2007:49). This helped me to identify "implicit actions and meanings" and "in vivo codes" associated with being a military wife (Charmaz 2007:50, 55). After initial coding, I used "focused coding" in order to "synthesize" the initial codes with a purpose to explain the data (Charmaz 2007:57). Finally, I also coded according to the theories presented in the literature review and focused specifically on my research questions using these theoretical terms (Charmaz 2007:63). Interviews were analyzed individually as well as within the context of other interviews.

Immediately after each interview, I provided reflective thoughts about how the interview went by asking myself structural and descriptive questions (Spradley 1979:61), such as: where did the interview take place, was anyone else present, were there any distractions, what was the overall tone of the interview, and what types of emotions did I feel? After multiple interviews, I asked myself contrast questions, such as: how did interviewees differ from each other, what might be causing these differences, what similar themes have surfaced, how might future interviews be structured to understand

these similarities and differences, and what types of emotion-management techniques are presented in the interviews? I then compared my responses to those of the interviewees concerning descriptive, structural, and contrast questions asked during the interview.

However, although theory led me to specific research questions, I engaged in peer debriefing with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Holyfield, in order to mitigate a temptation to manipulate the data in order to support a particular theory (Charmaz 2007:68). Dr. Holyfield read transcripts and reviewed the codes that I applied to the data (Lincoln and Guba 1985:301) in order to enhance agreement and credibility and “eliminate inaccurate interpretations” (Adler & Adler, 1987:381). She also helped me to construct an interview guide that addressed my research questions to ensure that it held validity, meaning, I was asking questions that could answer my research questions and did not have to stretch the data to fit in my findings section. Finally, as previously mentioned, each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation. Verbatim transcription assists in ensuring that what is said is not misunderstood or filtered through the words of the researcher.

IV. FINDINGS

As stated previously, the research questions that have guided this research are 1) What pre-determined meanings, cultural constructs of gender and military life, are readily available to the military wife? and 2) What types of emotion work strategies are employed to cope with the inherent ambiguities of military life? In this section, I will address the main research findings. Drawing heavily upon Hochschild's (1979; 1983) study of emotional labor, I reveal that using "an emotion-management perspective" is a helpful way to "...inspect the self, interaction, and structure" (Hochschild 1979:551).

As stated in theoretical review, we can understand emotion as a negative or positive "involvement" with "an event, condition, or person" (Barbalet 2002:1). It is when our felt emotions do not reflect the normative discourse that emotional labor takes place, and that is of main concern to this research. Military wives interact and employ "emotional displays" within the context of the military's "organizational display rules" (Seery, Corrigan, and Harpel 2008:164), but they also experience emotions that are not consistent with the normative posture of military culture. As the following illustrate, in one instance a military wife might adhere strongly to the sentiments of military culture and in another part of the interview, she may contradict these sentiments. Similarly, military wives may embrace some of the traditional gender constructs available to her under some conditions and oppose them in other circumstances. These seeming contradictions do not point to a confused military wife who has lost her sense of self, but rather, these illustrate the deeply complex reality of military wives and the inherent contradictions that come with military life in general. Therefore, in addition to emotion

work strategies, other challenges and coping strategies will be presented to illustrate the benefits and costs of military life.

A. CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS: TRADITIONAL FEMININITY BUT ARMY STRONG

Military families move often. Few of the wives in this study work outside the home (four out of twelve), and while research reveals that women benefit from multiple roles, this is more problematic for military wives due to the frequent moves (Dempsey 2008). Those who do work accept jobs that are not tied to career investment, but are more likely to be temporary service work that can support their husbands' military careers. For example, Melissa struggles with work and traditional gender expectations of her support role as a military wife. Because she has no children, Melissa works from seven in the morning until seven at night as a call representative for Fed Ex, but also finds time to crochet blankets, send her husband "packages" from home, and money to buy minutes for his phone [Personal interview Jan. 8th, 2011]. Traditional gender roles become increasingly important in maintaining the family during deployment, and wives use each other, media outlets, cultural narratives, and hobbies that support these roles. Sacrifice and assuming the caretaker role for their families are "normal" roles for military wives.

Most, however, are stay at home mothers who assume especially traditional roles in the home. Research reveals that chances for developing a mental illness, such as depression, increase when women are married and unemployed, placing the majority of military wives at higher risk (Prior 1996:29). This does not mean that those who are unemployed are not working, rather, "more women at all class levels do unpaid labor of a

highly interpersonal sort...The world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to many a job description” (Hochschild 1983:170).

It is not surprising then, that daily life for the military wife revolves around her husband and children. According to Thompson (2001:36), military wives are often portrayed as poor, immature, and unable to control “their reproductive tendencies,” revealing that women are highly feminized by military culture. Thompson explains that this may lead women to feel compelled to be the ideal woman for her family, and having children is a way to fulfill this desire. They must contend with societal images of “the perfect wife and mother,” and much of their dialogue during interviews reflects this process, that is, to be seen as an “ideal woman” (Newman 2006:91). When asked what a typical conversation with her husband was like, Jackie replies much like the other wives, “mostly about our children. (laughs) Um, about the future” [Personal interview June 11th, 2010]. Talking about the children is a way to feel like a family and induce feelings of intimacy, whereas imagining what the future holds gives couples a creative space that is not darkened by deployment, which induces feelings of hope and excitement.

Eleven out of twelve interviewees have at least one child that is five years of age or younger that require a large amount of attention, and only one wife has no children at all. Children’s activities are not only ways in which the military family entertains itself during deployment, but they also keep military wives from sitting still for too long and feeling sad. Amber says, “...you try and keep yourself busy to make the time go by quicker, so anything I can get the kids into...like we’re going to get registered for sports pretty soon, so they’ll probably be in dance and softball and stuff like that” [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2011]. Other than their children’s activities, military wives also set

aside time in the day to work out or do a hobby, such as scrapbooking and other activities, but as will be revealed, most of their time, however, revolves around other family members.

Research reveals that wives negotiate their feelings in order to make sense of their lives. This is compounded against the backdrop of a masculine institution such as the military. For example, Newman (2006:78) reveals that women have been traditionally labeled as mothers, nurturers, and comforters. Similarly, women are more likely to be portrayed as emotional caretakers (Thompson and Zerbinos 1995). Personal interviews reveal that the dominant cultural constructs available to military wives are uniquely traditional in the sense that military wives assume support roles to their husbands who in turn submit to military service and its cultural norms.

B. “DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL” WHAT YOU FEEL

Military wives experience feeling rules by their placement within the military and the general social hierarchy. Hochschild (1983:56) explains that “[f]eeling rules are what guide emotion work by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges.” As the literature review and interviews reveal, military wives have a strong sense of obligation to their husbands and their children in light of military feeling rules and traditional ideals of femininity. Through military wives’ accounts, the social researcher can see “...the very ways in which [military wives] acknowledge feeling rules [that] reflect where [they] stand on the social landscape” (1983:57). In other words, the military remains, for the most part, a man’s world, and women remain at the margins of military life. Military wives submit not only to their husbands’ and children’s

emotional needs, but also to the cultural scripts of military masculine culture, creating a traditional role that is specific to military culture.

Patriotism, primacy of the mission, and the secrecy that surrounds deployment, along with emotional stoicism, seem to be the dominant conditions that lead military wives to engage in emotional labor. “They talk of their feelings not as spontaneous, natural occurrences, but as objects they have learned to govern and control” (Hochschild 1983:133). For instance, Melissa’s motto is, “[d]istance is not for the fearful, it’s for the bold. It’s for those who know a good thing when they see it, even though they don’t get to see it enough. It’s for those who are willing to spend a lot of time alone in exchange for a little time with the one they love” [Personal interview Jan. 8th, 2011]. Wives assume, sometimes hesitantly, behind-the-scenes support for military masculine notions of “the few, the proud, the Marines,” and must adhere to “there’s strong, and then there’s Army strong.” Courtney, a twenty-one year old mother of four, speaks of the pride she has for her husband’s service,

The pride in knowing that (pause) my husband fights for the freedom. What he does-there are people that did it before him, just what they do, and even though if people do not agree with us being over there in Iraq, even the soldiers may not agree with it, they go over there and they do their job and they-just the pride of knowing that my husband is a soldier. There is nothing that anyone can say to me that would make me be ashamed of that. My husband is a soldier. He has been deployed four times and if you-I know people say, ‘Oh my God, he has been deployed four times,’ but he has been deployed four times and he has come home. It’s just-it is an amazing sense of pride. [Personal interview May 17th, 2010]

For Courtney, the military is a moral community. Her husband’s sacrifice is charged with an “emotional power of the collective life of the country” (Durkheim 1912 cited in Barbalet 2002:19). Just as soldiers face increased pressure to stay strong for the benefit of their families and country, so are women encouraged to maintain the home-front so that

husbands do not have to experience additional worry. Kayla adds, “I mean, that’s the biggest thing is being able to say, you know, that you know, yeah, they may be fighting over here, but we’re holding up the home front. You know, together we can help our husbands without putting all the armor on and you know, shooting the weapon,” and, “I don’t want it to be a pity party” [Personal interview Nov. 11th, 2010]. Most share this view and for the most part, accept their subordinated roles in military life. Terms such as “love” and “freedom” are used by wives to highlight their own sense of what is sacred in society. This provides motivation to adhere to the “symbolic order of society” and “act in relation to the moral norms of that order” (Barbalet 2002:19). Wives seek to preserve the moral order through their negotiation of feelings, even if it means accepting their submissive roles to not only their husbands, but the military as well. Other times, they challenge the very moral order they adhere to.

Interestingly, while wives submit to traditional roles, they also muster emotional resilience that is culturally in line with military masculinity, such as being “tough” like their husbands, focusing on discipline, and obedience to military command. Natalie advises that a military wife “better be very patient!” and later, “...because if you have the insecurities that you know, like, if you need constant attention or something like that, you’re not going to get it. You just have to pretty much get over it. Learn how to get over it or you know just not be that way” [Personal interview December 9th, 2010]. Hochschild (1983:112) explains that “[b]y linguistically avoiding any attribution of blame, the idea of a right to be angry [...] is smuggled out of discourse.” Instead of being angry or feeling neglected, Jackie advises, “I mean, it’s Army life, you’ve got to deal with it (laugh)” [Personal interview June 11th, 2010]. The military wife understands that all of her

personal needs are not going to be fulfilled, and these inadequacies are “treated as unalterable facts of life” (Hochschild 1983:113).

As military spouses, they too must “stay strong” for their family members, and keep a positive outlook both during deployment and everyday life without their spouses.

For example, Melissa states she has already learned to,

Stay strong. Be faithful and just let them know that you're there for them 110 percent. I mean, you have to. If you're going to be a military wife, you have to understand that there's things that are gonna happen. He could get called at 2:30 in the morning to go leave for another deployment or something or to leave to go to a different base to do some sort of job. And you have to be ready to handle it. [Personal interview January 8, 2011]

Throughout interviews, wives describe this stance that requires one be tough and accept not having personal needs met. On the other hand, they speak to the loneliness of deployment, challenges of being a single parent, lack of privacy of military life on base, and their need to “handle” military life. Unlike the previous literature that argues wives are happier when they “accept the military life style” (Patterson and McCubbin 1984 cited in Johnson et al. 2007:17), “handling” it for most means resignation to the fact that life will be unpredictable, lonely, and when called upon, wives must be flexible and willing to defer to the demands of military life. Amanda, a twenty-seven year old mother of two, explains that in order to be a military wife, a woman needs to know “it’s hard,” but she also “can’t be scared to be alone” [Personal interview May 25th, 2010]. She also recognizes that wives need to be prepared to be out-of-the loop when it comes to missions. When asked when her husband would return home, Samantha responds, “...who knows...it’ll happen when it happens...that’s as far as I know... for me personally, I don’t look at the date [when he is scheduled to return].” As for the “when”

and “where” of deployments, she is quick to acknowledge, “there is nothing we can do [about it]” [Personal interview May 25th, 2010]. Sabrina says helplessly,

So, your husband can leave today, tomorrow, next year, you know, and there’s nothing you can do about it unless you’re something’s really wrong... Sometimes you can’t make a choice, you know. The military will make it for you... And they don’t always compromise with your situation... [Personal interview Nov. 15th, 2010]

Courtney speaks to these demands and considers wives as enlisted as well, stating, “We, my husband and I, always looked at it as, when we enlisted, we knew he’d deploy and knew all the pros and cons and we did it anyway” [Personal interview May 17th, 2010]. She also defers to her husband’s service as more important than her role of providing parenting to their children during his deployment, adding, “I stop to think of how lucky I am compared to what he’s actually doing” [Personal interview May 17th, 2010]. Although wives to a large extent adopt an “army strong” mentality during deployment, they also adhere to traditional gender roles, such as being submissive to their husbands.

Wives report that there are benefits to military life, but there are also costs, and most of these come in the form of emotional and physical isolation. Melissa, a twenty-four year old newly-married wife of a deployed soldier, admits:

In deployment, there’s not really a good day. The good day will be when he is here on American soil and in my arms and I can see him and know he is okay instead of having to wait for a text message or wait for a phone call, um, worrying all the time while he’s gone. [Personal interview Jan. 8th, 2011]

Sabrina is a twenty-four year old mother of two who has been married two years, and due to deployment, her husband was absent for the birth of both of their children. She speaks to the isolating experience stating,

For one, like my first son, I lived in an apartment all by myself, pregnant. So he was gone through my whole pregnancy. And he came back-he came back three weeks after my son was born. So, he wasn’t there at all. And, we were having a

lot of difficulties you know at the time because we just got married and we had our ups and downs a lot. [Personal interview Nov. 15th]

C. ROLE STRAIN AND EMOTION WORK

Military wives experience increased role strain and emotion work during deployment. Wives "...with children basically become single parents. Everyday problems such as car repairs, household maintenance, and yard work can suddenly become overwhelming" (Rosen et al.1993 cited in Johnson et al. 2007:21). Hochschild (1983:74) speaks to roles by stating that a role "establishes a baseline for what feelings seem appropriate to a certain series of events. When roles change, so do rules for how to feel and interpret events." Thrown into a role where the military wife must play the mother and the father means that she must shift her feelings to accompany the transition. Wives become single parents during deployment and extensive training periods. Hochschild (1983:69) writes: "[t]he family is often considered a 'relief zone' away from the pressures of work, a place where one is free to be oneself [...] but it quietly imposes emotional obligations of its own." As "single parents," many find themselves consumed by the everyday life of parenting. The role-taking tasks associated with parenting are stretched to the limits in some cases. Ashley, a twenty-five year old mother of two and pregnant, states,

I think for me, the biggest challenge is being married, but a single parent. Uh, I really, the more you have, the more of a challenge it is! [laughs] That's the biggest [child yelling in the background] challenge is, uh, just being married and, and being classified as that single-one-time parent. [Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]

Sabrina says that one coping strategy she uses is investing more time and energy in her children. Similar to the other wives, Sabrina says, "Well, I mean I just keep my head up

you know and enjoy being with his family and the kids. Uh, the kids keep me pretty strong, you know? I try not to think about, you know, him being gone” [Personal interview Nov. 15th, 2010]. Hochschild (1983:38-39) also notes that “[p]eople sometimes talk as much about their efforts to feel (even if these efforts fail) as they do about having feelings.” Thus, trying to stay busy and avoid thinking about the pain of deployment is evidence of “deep acting,” in which the military wife actively attempts to change her own negative feelings rather than pretending everything is okay.

Sabrina left her own family and moved north to live with her husband’s parents to soften the economic challenges, but it has also meant losing her support network. “So, it’s harder to go-like if I was in Louisiana, I could go see my family...Here I’m out in the middle of nowhere, so I really can’t do very much unless I’m driving an hour away” [Personal interview Nov. 15th, 2010]. The challenge of being a single parent during deployment can sometimes result in unwanted isolation. Although children are often sources of happiness and support to wives, Ashley admits that “...sometimes I feel just like a maid and...a nanny, but that (laugh) that’s beside the point (laugh)” [Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]. Ashley’s felt ambivalence reflects Hochschild’s (1983:69) notion that, “Any bond like the one between parent and child is subject to ambivalence and the rules that contain it.” Courtney speaks to the added stress of being both a temporary single-parent and the wife of a deployed soldier. She has learned to self-isolate from others who do not understand the unique conditions of military life. She explains,

I think that other people just assume that it’s not that hard, uh, because there are single moms everywhere in the world, you know? But I don’t think people understand that it’s not, “yes, we willingly enlisted into the army,” but it’s not... “I cannot wait to get to Iraq,” or “I cannot wait to get to Afghanistan.” We...people just...don’t understand, because I have a few friends, you know, they’re single moms. They don’t see how my life is any harder than theirs, but I

everyday have to think, what I think every night when I lay down is, is “God forbid something happens to my husband, what-how do I tell my kids?” No one else has to think about that every night. [Personal interview May 17th, 2010]

Courtney reports that her civilian friends “...can listen, but to them, my husband is just gone, like they don’t understand what it feels like to be scared every day” [May 17th, 2010]. The sacredness of being part of the military can be benevolent, but as Courtney reveals, it can also be “associated with disorder, fear and horror” (Durkheim [1912]:412-416 cited in Barbalet 2002:19). The fear of what could happen causes some wives to self-isolate, but civilians also play their part in making military wives feel like outsiders. For example, Ashley admits that “...it feels like every once in a while, people look down on me because they see a wedding ring on my hand, but they don’t ever see my other half (laugh)” [Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]. Civilians are perceived as less supportive of the military wife. This also serves as a call to the civilian community, meaning, there seems to be a need for more efforts made to bridge the gap between military and civilian life.

The role strains associated with military life means that women have more duties within the home and this takes an emotional toll as well. “Adults in the midst of their own distress are often anxious and uncertain about how to respond to their children’s emotional needs. The strain of separation can weigh heavily on both the deployed parent and the caretakers left behind” (Johnson et al. 2007:9). Jackie, when asked about what three emotions are most prevalent for her during deployment, says, “lonely, depressed and (sigh) um, overwhelmed. Overwhelmed because I do everything all by myself, you know. And when you tend to get used to your spouse being home and helping you out-next thing you’re doing it all by yourself. It’s overwhelming” [Personal interview June

11th, 2010]. Some of the wives interviewed are not comfortable taking on traditionally masculine roles such as disciplining children, doing typically “male” work, and making repairs on their houses and vehicles.

Military wives are faced with the predicament of preparing their children for the real world without their husband. Hochschild (1983:161) explains that it is in the family where children “prepare for the call from central casting that will let them display their skills on a larger stage,” which places extra parental pressures upon the military wife to be a father as well as a mother and increasing her emotional strain. “Having a primary caretaker deployed to a war zone for an indeterminate period is among the more stressful events a child can experience” (Johnson et al. 2007:9). For these women, the absence of their spouse may cause confusion for children, especially when it comes to discipline. Courtney reports, “Daddy is disciplinary-as soon as Daddy spanks him, he will go to Daddy instead of Mom” [May 17th, 2010]. Similarly, Kayla says, “not having a man there to help discipline your children is extremely hard. To have to take over the role of mother and father so that’s a big issue that we talk about a lot” [Personal interview Nov. 11th]. Amber makes sure that she gets “stuff in order” and says military wives must get whatever they need “done to the house before they [their husbands] leave,” such as getting the “pipes covered” and checking “tires” [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2011]. Military wives are not comfortable taking on the jobs of their husbands and find the thought of disciplining children alone very difficult, increasing role strain.

Another theme found throughout all of the personal interviews is emotional suppression, as wives talk about how they hide their feelings in order to adhere to the normative feeling rules associated with traditional gender roles and military culture. “The

deferential behavior of servants and women-the encouraging smiles, the attentive listening, the appreciative laughter, the comments of affirmation, admiration, or concern-comes to seem normal, even built into personality...” (Hochschild 1983:84). Military life may accentuate this process. Wives are expected to manage emotional relationships and act more affectively (Lakoff 1995). Suppressing negative emotions is a form of emotion work which Hochschild (1983:33) describes as a product of surface acting and deep acting. To reiterate, surface acting occurs when the actor is aware that she is pretending to feel a certain way, and deep acting occurs when she feels and displays a genuine feeling. For example, during missions, when soldiers are most susceptible to insurgent attacks, wives refrain from telling their husbands anything that they feel would distract them from their tasks out of fear that their husbands will be distracted and get hurt. Surface acting to their husbands hurts their wellbeing and causes disconnect between husband and wife.

Hochschild (1983:53) writes: “Any institution with a bit of hierarchy in it must suppress democracy to some extent,” and we can see how the military does this through secrecy and withholding information from military wives. Military wives are at the “bottom” of the military hierarchy and are not allowed “access to information,” which may reveal how the military “...sets limits to the emotional possibilities of all concerned” (Hochschild 1983:53). Amber says, “you’re not really supposed to talk about it [the mission] with anybody...definitely not your family because you know, they gab more than anything,” and later, “it’s nobody’s business, and it can get them in trouble” [Personal interview Jan. 14th, 2011]. These conditions may serve to disconnect the military wife from previous support systems such as her family. Secrecy keeps her from

being honest with not only her husband, but also her family and friends. She is more likely to connect with her husband's family because they understand military culture and the importance placed upon keeping information secret, whereas her family and friends are more likely to feel as if they are purposely left out of the loop. Thus, she is further kept under control by the military through isolation from support networks. Without specific and whole information, the military wife is limited in her abilities to understand "what is going on" and therefore experiences additional stress and anxiety with less sources of comfort.

It is mentioned in the literature review and across interviews that military wives turn towards each other more than anyone else for emotional support during deployment. Hochschild would argue that the "needed mood" determines the "collective talk" of military wives, and "to keep the collective mood stripped of any painful feelings, serious talk of death, divorce, politics, and religion is usually avoided" (1983:115). When asked why she turns to other military wives for support, Kayla answers,

"...because their husbands are with my husband...we lean upon each other a lot because in most circumstances...the girls that I am friends with...their husbands are...in the same, right next sleeping to my husband...we [military wives] just kind of cling together...yes, we all love our husbands, but together we love each other...We're more like family now...Your family is in the Army." [Personal interview Nov. 11th, 2010]

The ways in which military wives form collective talk within the military stem from a needed mood to be strong, yet feminine. Here, we can see how military wives relate to each other as members of a family, drawing upon traditionally-feminine roles in order to give each other emotional support. The family metaphor is extended to their husbands, who are all living together and forming their own "family" during deployment. Wives form these relationships with each other in an attempt to connect with their husbands'

experiences and induce feelings of intimacy with their husbands through a better understanding of the people in his unit.

As previously mentioned, collective talk of military wives avoids disheartening subject matter. Rather, they focus discussion on their children, future plans, and everyday routines; for example, Amber says when asked what her and other wives talk about,

Oh, you know, daily life. 'How's your kids, your family?' Uh, don't really concentrate on the husbands being away...Just kind of talk about, you know, your daily life, or what ticks you off or what you ran into at Wal-Mart or, 'Was there a good sale at the mall?' or something (laughs). [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2011]

Again, we see traditional gender roles framing the collective talk of military wives.

Conversations revolve around family, children, and shopping. Wives also feel comfortable "venting" every-day frustrations to each other, which serves as an emotional outlet for the times during which they feel that venting to their husbands would distract them on a mission. So, although they do support one another, there is evidence that the military wife cannot fully relate her fears to anyone that she knows.

Throughout interviews, military wives avoid talking about their fears and suppress negative feelings; for example, Amber says that she likes to talk mainly with other military wives because she doesn't "...get that puppy dog look [from them] when [she says], 'Oh, my husband's deployed, [...and they] don't look at you like he's dead (laughs)'" [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2010]. Any form of sympathy or fear expressed to her by civilians forces the military wife to confront her own fears about becoming a widow or telling her children that their dad is not coming home. Civilians are insensitive to the emotion-management techniques of military wives, and although their puppy-dog looks are intended to express sympathy, military wives would rather avoid scary subjects or focus upon the "normal" parts of their lives.

Aside from having civilians feel sorry for them, military wives complain that civilian wives experience a totally different situation when their husbands are away.

Natalie explains the disconnect between military and civilian wives during deployment,

They'll [civilian wives] be like "Oh well, my husband left for about a week and it was just so terrible," and...there's a lot of controversy...some people would say, "you're nothing special because...your husband's deployed. My husband's gone, too." He has a dangerous job and...I can fire back that, "I'm sorry, I didn't know your husband was being shot at while he was like, you know, putting a roof on a house because that's a dangerous job." [Personal interview December 9th, 2010]

Civilian friends they had prior to their husband's deployment do not understand their current situation, making it hard for them to keep in touch and relate to one another, further isolating the military wife. Again, when civilians attempt to sympathize with military wives, military wives feel as if civilians have no idea what it takes to be a part of the military; in fact, military wives are insulted when civilian wives try to compare their experiences.

Although some wives do express their loneliness to their husbands, they are also very aware of feeling rules established by the military through its organizational culture that suggest they act otherwise. When something bothers her she may find she has to "pretend" that everything is okay using surface acting, which is more likely to increase her negative well-being than deep acting (Seery, Corrigan, and Harpel 2008:473). Wives readily admit this is hard to "pull off" sometimes. The more wives have to "pretend," the more they are likely to develop a sense of disjuncture between what they feel and what they reveal. If their husbands do or say something that upsets them, wives admit that they often "let it go" or keep quiet about their feelings because keeping their husbands at ease during deployment is a top priority. When this occurs, the military wife places her emotional health after that of her husband's (Hochschild 1983:37). For example, Sabrina

worries about keeping her husband calm during deployment and has learned to stop arguments before they escalate. She says, "...if me and Richard have a disagreement, I... try to talk to him about it...and if it doesn't do anything, I just blow it off, you know, like just whatever. Just don't worry about it, you know?" [Personal interview Nov. 15th, 2010].

There is evidence that husbands hide their feelings from their wives as well. Across interviews, wives acknowledge that their husbands harbor a lot of burdens that they are unable to share. This is partly due to military rules surrounding missions but also traditional masculine roles to master "fear and vulnerability" (Hochschild 1983:163). In the Army, missions are often secret in nature. Lack of complete and truthful communication between husbands and wives may result in relationship problems during deployment and upon return, especially because most military couples are relatively young and married less than five years (Department of Defense 2010:235) and are more likely to have "unresolved/disorganized attachment styles" (Basham 2008:86).

Military secrecy may increase communication problems. Melissa reports that her husband is "...not allowed to tell [her] exactly where they're at on mission, exactly what's going on, anything like that" [Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]. Soldiers are not allowed to tell their families exactly what they are doing or the nature of their work. But they also engage in their own emotion work to reduce stress for their spouses. Amber speaks to this necessity, "It could jeopardize them-put them in harm...a lot of the time, like last time, I know my husband didn't tell me a whole lot because he wanted to protect me" [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2011]. Thus, while emotional labor is prevalent among all married couples, it appears as if military couples are subject to larger amounts of

emotion work due to the extreme context of war. Ashley says, “I don’t know exactly what he does on a daily basis, and you know, how he deals with people...He doesn’t know what I do on a daily basis with the kids...So, we just kind of try to keep, you know, open minds, and-and uh, we support each other” [Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]. Kayla, who has a three-year old and a four-month old, says, “...in all reality, you have to keep a lot of stuff [in]...you can’t have your children worrying about you” [Personal interview Nov. 11th, 2010]. When talking about her relationship with her friends, Jackie says, “...we don’t even like, my friends-I don’t need to talk about stuff like that with them” [Personal interview June 11th, 2010]. Again, we can see how emotion work comes into play even amongst military wives. Wives hide negative emotions and counteract them with feelings of, “nobody needs to know,” or “I can’t have anyone worry about me.”

Interestingly, wives are more likely to feel admiration and love for their husbands if they think that they are subject to danger every day rather than staying on base and not going on missions. Allison, a 20 year-old mother of a five-month old, knows her husband’s assignment has been particularly dangerous and worries about him. “He has a lot going on and um, so far they’ve lost about four soldiers, so it hasn’t been the greatest experience for him, so he tries not to talk about anything that’s going on over there” [Personal interview Nov. 12th, 2010]. Conversely, when wives know that their husbands are not going on many missions, they are more likely to express frustration and discontent with his deployment. For example, Courtney, who communicates with her husband often, knows more about her husband’s everyday routines and reports, “...they are doing nothing but sitting over there” [Personal interview May 17th, 2010]. Therefore,

we can see that military wives face contradictory feelings about their husband's work based upon the type and amount of information they are given.

For some, the withholding of information creates a communication gap that can lead to increased stress and anxiety and larger marital problems. Not talking about their feelings with one another can lead to a gap that extends upon return. Jackie explains that the military and families "...tend to forget to do communication. Then that-if they don't communicate, then that's where everything is going to go downstream..." [Personal interview June 11th, 2010]. Some learn only too well to hold their feelings in and once home, this practice may hinder relationships.

Husbands sometimes take out their stress and anxiety that they experience during deployment on their wives. This is compounded by the aggression they learn to display in military training. Holyfield (2011:22) argues that during military training, "males, especially, are encouraged to display characteristics that match an American ideal of manhood." Sociologist Michael Schwalbe (1996:18) defines this as a norm men must adhere to revealing one's self as "rational, tough, indomitable, ambitious, competitive, in control, able to get a job done, and ardently heterosexual." Sabrina reports that her husband has changed due to military life. "He's very-I wouldn't say cold-hearted, but he's his own self, you know, and we see different things, like he's not a holiday person, you know" [Personal interview Nov. 15th, 2010]. Hochschild (1983:113) would explain that in order to combat feelings of anger for her husband when he is not sensitive to her needs, the military wife will "imagine a reason that excuses his [...] behavior." Natalie, who is newly married and experiencing her first deployment is trying to work through her marital difficulties, says,

Oh, it's really hard (laughing) because-I'm not the only one-like, I talk to other wives and their husbands are just like-they're really edgy and they're kind of mean and, you know, you can't take it to heart, but like, sometimes you know, they just need to yell or talk it out... [Personal interview December 9th, 2010]

Natalie also finds herself engaging in emotion management to make her husband feel better even when she is stressed. Hochschild (1983:163) writes:

Women are more likely to be presented with the task of mastering anger and aggression in the service of 'being nice.' To men, the socially assigned task of aggressing against those that break rules of various sorts masks the private task of mastering fear and vulnerability. (Hochschild 1983:163)

After one conversation, Natalie remembers her husband telling her, "I'm so glad that I called you because, you know, I'm-I'm not feeling real good and you really calmed me down a lot" [Personal interview Dec. 9th, 2010]. Natalie was "nice" to her husband and helped him "calm down" from the aggression he was feeling that day. Here, we can see how military couples adhere to gender roles within their relationships and act according to culturally-prescribed feeling rules.

As the above reveal, emotional labor is a constant for military wives and perhaps their husbands as well. In his discussion of primary and secondary emotions, Simmel (1917) argues that while primary emotions derived from individual needs bring people together, it is secondary emotions, such as gratitude and faithfulness that keep people together (Barbalet 2002:21). Secondary emotions facilitate communication and are "derived from the exchanges and sacrifices integral to human associations" (Barbalet 2002:21). Wives excuse "bad behavior" by saying that yelling at their wives and being mean, edgy, and insensitive is what soldiers need to do to cope with their own problems during deployment, thus dispelling her anger at her husband. This seems especially likely for military wife who must consistently put her husband's emotional health before her

own. Hochschild (1983:195) warns, however, “[i]n our culture, women-because they have been traditionally assigned the task of tending to the needs of others-are in greater danger of over-developing the false self and losing track of its boundaries.”

D. FAITH, APPEALS TO NORMALCY, AND AVOIDANCE

When military wives avoid asking questions about deployment, it leads to enhanced fear and the need to control it. Deep acting often occurs from “...a desperate inner desire to avoid pain” (Hochschild 1983:39). Military wives use many different tactics to avoid pain. Some turn to their faith as a coping mechanism, such that their husbands’ lives are “in God’s hands.” Through appeals to faith, military wives seek to “preserve the moral order” and think in terms of the greater good in order to keep society healthy. Faith as a coping mechanism may help to reduce individual fears and wives trust that the overall moral order will be preserved. Sabrina reports, “...I do listen to a lot of like Christian music just to help me get back, um, into that way, you know?” and upon hearing about her husband’s mission one day, “...it just got me, you know, wanting me to pray more, you know” [Personal interview Nov. 15th, 2010]. Melissa argues that, “you have to trust God is going to take care of him” [Personal interview Jan. 8th, 2011]. Jackie agrees, stating, “You always have to be-you always have to-that’s one person you can look up to, you know. Just pray every day, everything will be okay” [Personal interview June 11th, 2010]. Janice uses her faith as a retreat, saying, “I put my earphones on and just go because I can zone out like, once I do it, there is nothing there. Like, there is my earphones, the music, me and God and basically that’s it. And that’s usually all I need” [Personal interview May 25th, 2010].

Military wives with low “levels of emotionality” that can control their “fear” and “stress” are said to be more likely to have a positive well-being (Klein, Tatone, and Lindsay 2001:465). If the negative feelings are not managed, the wife can become overwhelmed and not able to function within her role. Some wives report staying away from media coverage to reduce their fear. For example, Allison remembers watching a “60 Minutes” news program about where her husband was deployed: “...the first day the news people got there they had bullets already coming at them...I watched it with his family and it kind of worried us thinking, ‘this is what my husband’s going through every day’” [Personal interview Nov. 12th, 2010]. Sometimes avoiding the news and zoning out with music are ways in which wives avoid thinking about what they are feeling; however, not facing the inherent ambiguities of being a military wife may further contribute to a false sense of self for some.

Another way military wives manage conflicting feelings about their husbands’ military involvement is through appeals to normalcy. The Department of Defense (2010:240) reported that 30.6% of military spouses reported having an equal mix of positive and negative feelings, indicating ambivalent feelings of military spouses, which explains why the need to feel normal is one of the ways wives cope with the abnormal situation of deployment. Military wives also use appeals to normalcy to make light of marital problems. Janice, a 32 year-old mother of three who has been married for 12 years to her husband, feels that she has a “typical normal marriage.” She says,

You never get along, you never agree on everything. It’s really kind of basically all about compromise, so we tiff and we try not to fight when he’s deployed, but if you call it fighting- I don’t know what-but we, I call it a tiff-and if we tiff, then we just scream like everybody else, but then instead of just letting it go, we...go back and revisit it and talk about whatever the issue is, and then we kind of try to move on from that. [Personal interview May 25, 2010]

She uses the word “tiff” to lessen the negative impact of the fights that she has with her husband. The literature tells us that military couples are typically faced with more stresses than civilian couples, so it would not be surprising to hear Janice talk about a large amount of arguing or other types of marital problems; however, she compares her marriage as similar to everyone else’s, thus helping her manage negative feelings about fights.

Later on in the interview, Janice admits more honestly, “...I don’t know, to be really honest, I don’t know if it’s harder than somebody being civilian and their spouse being there all of the time because I don’t know what that’s like, so for, for us, it calls out a lot of problems” [Personal interview May 25, 2010]. Here, we see evidence of an emotion-driven response whereas in the previous paragraph, we see evidence of emotion-management. From this example, findings reiterate the specific challenges related to the military as an institution (including how it manages deployment) and the ways in which military families suffer from them. Janice feels that this is because, “they [the military] don’t tell you that you have to learn how to communicate” [Personal interview May 25, 2010]. Having been married longer than most of the wives interviewed, Janice is all too aware of the change in soldiers’ perspectives over time.

They don’t tell you that and it’s not like it’s a secret, but like, they don’t tell you, your, if your soldier has been gone, like he’s been gone more than three years out of seven years, that basically their mentality is that they are single. When they are there in Iraq, when they’re gone for the twelve months minus the two weeks that they get to come home on R&R, they have nothing to worry about but self [May 25th, 2010].

Appeals to normal marriages juxtaposed to long periods of separation, fears of infidelity, and living separate lives apart from their husbands during deployment shows a considerable amount of emotion work taking place on the part of military wives.

One of the consequences of deployment is that it may allow couples space to successfully resolve conflicts or it may bring about conflict. While some wives agree that “there are a lot of second honeymoons and the marriage is never dull” (Witchel 2005:62) for military couples, others speak to the infidelity that can accompany military life. For example, Amber says that some military wives cheat “...because they’re either lonely...or they get ticked off that their husbands are gone for so long. They get mad at them” [Personal interview Jan. 14th, 2011]. Jackie adds: “I don’t agree with it, but it is true that there are some wives out there who go out and tend to get lonely and want intercourse. They-you know-they don’t want to wait for their husbands. There are a lot” [of women] who do” [Personal interview June 11th]. While none of these women report having cheated on their husbands, they acknowledge it is a common occurrence and the ways in which women rationalize cheating on their husbands through emotion-management.

Adultery also happens abroad. During deployment, Sabrina reports, “It’s [sex with other women] probably easy to get to...there’s nobody around. Maybe they [married soldiers] don’t think they’re going to get caught” [Personal interview Nov. 15th, 2010]. However, military wives make excuses for their husbands and not for other wives or enlisted women. Interestingly, when men have affairs with women during deployment, wives describe the men as victims of women’s promiscuity. Amber says, “You have females over there that would rather go ahead and get knocked up so they can come

home” [Personal interview Jan.17th, 2010]. Thus, marital renewal and infidelity appear to be woven into the fabric of military life and for some the extended time away from spouses may lead to further stereotyping of women.

Hochschild (1983:43) explains that “[s]ometimes we try to stir up a feeling we wish we had, and at other times we try to block or weaken a feeling we wish we did not have.” Several wives admit that they use music or entertainment to facilitate their emotional release or bring their emotions into balance because they cannot express these feelings to their husbands or their civilian friends and family. Some coping techniques include watching movies, scrapbooking, and taking children on outings. Movies induce feelings of love and happiness that wives feel with their relationships during hard times when they might be feeling neglected, lonely, or frustrated. Movies, such as “comedies,” help wives to avoid thinking about serious topics that might spark extra fear and anxiety about her husband being away [Personal interview Kayla Nov. 11th, 2010].

Hochschild (1983:41) uses the term “emotion memories” to describe how actors “recall feelings.” Amanda says that she and her children “...watched a lot of um, home videos” [Personal interview May 25th, 2010]. Courtney reports, “Um, we usually just load up in the car, go get some movies, some ice cream, some popcorn, go home, put pajamas on, and watch cartoons” [Personal interview May 17th, 2010]. Military wives also “scrapbook” together to create nostalgic memories of their family time. Amanda combines scrapbooking with working out, “I did a lot of working out. (laugh) I worked out probably about um, two to three times a day [to reduce stress]” [Personal interview May 25th, 2010]. Others listen to music in order to facilitate “emotional memories” during deployment. For example, Jackie likes to listen to the song, “Traveling Soldier,”

by the Dixie Chicks, which is about a man who goes off to war and comes back in a pine box; she reports that when she listens to that song, “I just stop crying” [Personal interview June 11th, 2010]. Nostalgic songs that speak of longing, loss, and love resonate with military wives and the emotions they feel. Anticipating the potential death of her husband through bittersweet songs intensifies the longing she has for her husband and affirms the sacrifices that she is making for him and her family. For Jackie, listening to the song helps prepare her for the worst-case scenario while at the same time inducing feelings of love for her husband.

On the other hand, some songs may lead one to replace a negative emotion such as fear, with another equally negative emotion, like anger. Natalie says that she likes to listen to “The Taliban” by Toby Maguire because her husband and members of his company “get fired up to” it before “they go out on missions” [Personal interview December 9th, 2010]. In that song, Maguire sings, “So we prayed to Allah with all of our might/And then those big U.S. jets came flyin’ in one night/They dropped little bombs all over there holy land/And man you should have seen ‘em run like rabbits, they ran, the Taliban.” Songs such as this one simplify war, making light of insurgents in the Middle East. Like her husband, Melissa listens to help her “get fired up,” but it also serves to dehumanize the enemy, “...to be honest, though, if it was me, I’ve said this to my cousins, my whole family has heard it. I would nuke the whole entire Middle East” [Personal interview Jan. 8th, 2011]. Songs may serve to affirm relationships but may also provoke emotional responses that coerce people to adhere to the larger moral order (Lukes 1982:5 cited in Barbalet 2002:19). Whether by shifting fear to anger, inducing feelings of sacrifice or creating emotional memories to recall feelings, military wives

seek to put the well-being of their husbands before themselves. While this may serve to temporarily preserve the “the moral order,” it may also contribute to further alienation.

In the next section, I describe the conditions of everyday life that influence military wives, from geographic location to bureaucratic rules, to modes of communication. While these do speak directly to the emotional labor, they do reveal how military life further influences the emotional well-being of military life.

E. EVERYDAY LIFE AND COMMUNICATION

Geographic location can also influence not only the living conditions but also the emotional well-being of military wives. Living off post is seen as beneficial to some of the wives because they can have “a bigger house” and extra money to spend left over from their housing allowance [Personal interview Amber Jan. 17th, 2010]. On post, families have predetermined housing, and many wives report that families live in town houses wherein the amount of rooms they receive are dependent on the number of children that are living in the home [Ashley Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]. However, sometimes the housing on-post is not as accommodating as wives would like; for example, Ashley “...did live on base in a two-bedroom apartment” with her three children who were all under the age of three, “and that’s just not-handling it for me” [Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]. Allison says, “You’re more aware of your bills when you are off post than when you are on post,” which is beneficial in that wives are more aware of their finances, but also not beneficial in that they have to take more care to manage their finances properly [Personal interview Nov. 12th, 2010].

Living on post is more convenient, especially for wives with small children who do not have time to drive long distances to receive benefits on post. Living on post is

described as “a throwback 50’s community,” where “you can just let your kids run out and play and...you don’t have to worry about somebody running over them...” [Personal interview Amber Jan. 17th]. Safety is a point of contention; whereas Kayla reports that “it feels safer on post because, you know, you’re surrounded by walls,” [Personal interview Nov. 11th, 2010], Amanda recalls that when she lived on post, “...within probably a week, every single thing [toys left in the yard] was either stolen or broken” [Personal interview May 25th, 2010]. Walls signify protection but they also signify containment.

Off post, military families are more likely to treat the military like a civilian job because they have more privacy and can “escape” the military when they go home and are less likely to be “remote and isolated” from civilian life (Booth 2003:30). While Kayla acknowledges it is safer living on post, she resents the lack of privacy that comes with it. She says, “...everything is tooth and nail in the Army. If you’re seen doing something and it gets back to the commander, it comes back to your husband,” and later on in the Personal interview, “when you live on post, they can walk in your house at any time...” [Personal interview Nov. 12th, 2010].

Although regarded frequently as warm and close-knit communities, military communities lack the privacy of civilian communities, especially on post, and interviews reveal the ways in which the military, as an institution, affects the military wife’s emotion management. Amber speaks of how having her husband’s boss living right next to her could be “awkward” because of the lack of privacy [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2011]. The military wife understands that anything negative she says or does can hurt her husband’s career, and consequently her family’s financial well-being and status and prestige within the military community. Kayla says that there was once a “dispute

between wives,” in which “the husbands were given extra duty because it was brought to the attention of the commander” [Personal interview Nov. 11th, 2010]. As findings have shown, wives report that many of their companions during deployment are wives of soldiers that are in the same company or unit as their husband. So, while military wives are more likely to receive benefits of being part of military culture by living on post, they are also subject to the constraints that accompany living in close contact with people who could potentially harm their financial well-being if they do not act within military guidelines.

I expected to find that those who live on post may experience more integration but as these interviews reveal, it is a mixed bag. Living on post lacks privacy, as previously stated, but it also provides opportunities for wives to counteract negative emotions and establish relationships with each other and the military institution.

There are on-post activities available to military wives that give them a sense of solidarity and contribution to the military institution such as the Family Readiness Group (FRG) and other volunteer activities. Many view this as a critical role of support. For example, the FRG distributes information about casualties to families and makes sure that family members have the resources they need, as well as arrange flights for soldiers returning home [Personal interview Courtney May 17th, 2010]. Whenever a soldier is killed in combat, the FRG is there “...for moral support, you know to go over there to take them [the soldier’s family] a meal, help with their children, anything like that” [Personal interview Kayla Nov. 11th, 2010]. As Kayla reports, “well, we don’t get any money. This is all volunteer work,” revealing that providing emotional support is seen as inherently feminine. These positions, if paid, would be much more accessible for military

wives living on post whose job opportunities are limited. However, due to the traditional-feminine roles they assume during deployment, volunteering and taking care of other military families are additional ways that military wives assume care-taking roles. Even if they were paid for this important service to military families, they would still be "...symbolizing the transfer of homespun femininity into the impersonal marketplace, announcing, in effect, 'I work in the public eye, but I'm still a woman at heart'" (Hochschild 1983:175).

While these are volunteer activities, they do appear to increase feelings of sacrifice and duty and give them a sense of selflessness that they experience in other areas of their lives. Courtney, who again has four children, two of them twin nine-month olds says, "...I honestly sometimes feel like I don't do enough as being just a wife. Before we enlisted, we both worked full-time jobs and went to school. Now, he's the only one working and I sit at home with the kids" [Personal interview May 17th, 2010]. Courtney is bothered by the fact that she no longer contributes financially to the family. This may lead to more emotional labor for her. Hochschild (1987:165) writes, "...women tend to manage feeling more because in general they depend on men for money, and one of the various ways of repaying their debt is to do extra emotion work-especially emotion work that affirms, enhances, and celebrates the well-being and status of others." Thus, some wives also have to manage the guilt of assuming traditional roles and have a need to compensate for their lack of employment even though they do a significant amount of unpaid labor.

Some wives make use of military services during deployment. For example, Ashley finds the website, Military One Force, particularly helpful because it provides

help for all branches of military, directing families in how to cope with the very challenges that military life creates. Hochschild (1983:75) speaks to this irony, stating, “[i]n times of uncertainty, the expert rises to prominence [...] The need for guidance felt by those who must cross shifting social sands only adds importance to a more fundamental principle: in the matter of what to feel, the social bottom usually looks for guidance to the social top.”

They have different numbers you can call if you need help, like finding financial advisors or um, life consultants, or behavioral people. Um, they’ll send you pamphlets and uh books and CDs and stuff like that to help, uh, like I utilize it for my, my kids because (child screams), they did have issues when he deployed. [Ashley Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]

However, Ashley is also grateful for the benefits her family would not otherwise have. Her child, Kayla, is ill and they have gone to “lots of doctors’ appointments...trying to get a diagnosis,” and the military provides coverage. For some, life without the military would mean poverty. Jackie says, “[o]ur life was really hard, harder than now because of the fact that we’re on our own and we have, you know, we-he has a job and we have medical and everything ...life before was nothing” [Personal interview June 11th]. Similarly, Natalie admits that “pre-military, he [her husband] was in a really bad place with himself, so the military really straightened him up and I know if it wasn’t for the military...he wouldn’t be a good dad or you know, a husband” [Personal interview Dec. 9th, 2010].

On the other hand, Amber reveals that the bureaucratic structure of military life only adds to her problems. “I’ll tell you about the medical care...it’s terrible,” and later, “you have to prac-practically be dying to get an antibiotic” [Personal interview Jan. 14th, 2011]. Also, she is not allowed to bring her children to the clinic with her. Therefore, she

must find other arrangements for her children, sometimes on a very short time basis. She had a miscarriage earlier this year, and when she had to go into the clinic unexpectedly, doctors at first refused to treat her because she brought her three daughters with her. She was very upset about her treatment and feels that the military should provide childcare assistance for emergencies such as hers because "...everyone there is like a single mother." Amber reports that she would "...rather pay for it and be treated than not paying for it and be like I'm imposing myself on them" [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2010]. Indeed, many speak of the "red tape" associated with military life that causes long delays, inadequate care, and frequent anxiety for military wives. Natalie bluntly reports, "paperwork sucks" [Personal interview Oct. 25th, 2010]. Ashley, too, admits that while healthcare is important, "[y]ou have to wait for the referrals and then you have to wait for the appointments, and there's only so many doctors that accept the military insurance and, you know, it can get aggravating" [May 3rd, 2010].

Communication is especially different for military couples in today's highly technological age and becomes a double-edged sword. What is unique about the current war is that this is the first time that military couples are able to see and talk to each other every day via Skype, Yahoo Messenger, and Facebook. When asked about how they communicate with their husbands, answers vary. Some wives talk to their husbands once or twice a week, while other wives talk to their husbands multiple times a day. Some use e-mail or phone calls, whereas some wives talk to their husbands using webcams. Many times, they remain close to their computers and phones, not making calls or leaving the house in hopes that their husband will call or get online. Janice says that she is "on pins and needles until he [her husband] buzzes me" [Personal interview May 25th, 2010].

Hochschild (1983:196) warns that "...the altruist [in this case, the wife who anxiously waits for her husband to call] is more susceptible to being used-not because her sense of self is weaker but because her 'true self' is bonded more securely to the group [the military/her family] and its welfare." While rewarding in many ways, having the possibility of speaking to their husbands more frequently than any war in history does restrict military wives in that they might spend much of their time anticipating contact with their husbands instead of adjusting to life without them and creating their own daily rituals. While frequent communication helps to ease the worry of whether or not their husbands are okay, it also increases daily anxiety about when their husbands are going to contact them. For example, Kayla says, "...the days you get to talk to him are the best, because you're kind of stress free" [Personal interview Nov. 11th, 2010].

Although convenient, talking via phone and internet is not the same as having their husbands home. For example, Amber says, "I felt like I had an internet lover" during deployment [Personal interview Jan. 17th, 2011]. Online support networks also lack the physical presence of other people, which might lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Also, Natalie reports that "sometimes you get cut off on the phone and you can't finish your conversation and it's really frustrating" [Personal interview Oct. 25th, 2010]. Thus, communication via internet and phone lacks the continuity and flow of everyday life.

F. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

To summarize, although their challenges are uniquely different, both soldiers and wives face problems that are less likely to be understood by the civilian world. Military wives face intensified amounts of sadness, loneliness, and fear than civilian wives. They

look to each other for support, but also adjust to the emotional labor that military life demands. Together, they “stitch together...a blanket of memories, and of strength,” that they will always share no matter where they live or what problems they face (Dominski 2008:18), but they do so under the watchful eye of the military. Amazingly, they manage to do so even when they cannot believe in the war itself. All but one military wife, Melissa, feel strongly that the war has lasted too long and that military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan is not necessary. She supports the war mainly to keep soldiers that have been killed during deployment from dying in vain and believes that soldiers must “finish the job” so that the U.S. does not have to handle future problems [Personal interview Jan. 8th, 2011]. Other wives report that they do not support the war. Ashley says, “I think we’ve been there long enough” adding that it is time to “return their stuff to them and say ‘sink or swim’” [Personal interview May 3rd, 2010]. Thus, while their emotions are managed through appeals to patriotism and freedom in certain parts of the interviews, they do not support the war, only adding to the stress of military life. Patriotism is relative to the conditions of war, not the policies that surround them. Jackie sums this sentiment up stating, “I don’t support the war. I support the troops” [Personal Interview June 11th, 2010].

These findings reveal that emotion work is present and has significant consequences for military wives. She deals with the ambivalence of military life such as feeling isolated from civilians, supporting the troops but not the war, and being submissive to the military and her husband, in order to negotiate living on the margins. Research shows that military wives negotiate their feelings about their husband’s career, their marriages, their families, and military culture. On one end of the spectrum, they are

proud of what their husbands do to protect Americans' freedom, but on the opposite end, they think the war has gone on too long. They speak of loving their husbands and families more than anything, yet they sometimes feel neglected and alone. Interview responses confirm that military wives feel pressured to fulfill traditional gender roles, but they also reveal the multiple roles women assume during deployment.

Military wives constantly regulate their emotional responses to their husbands' stress, telling themselves to not worry about it, let it go, and try to not fight with them during deployment, thus increasing the potential for alienation, resentment and anger towards their husbands. These findings reveal that the emotional and mental well-being of military wives are at risk during deployment especially when isolation, lack of continuity in everyday, subordination to both the military and their husbands take a combined toll through emotion work. Even military wives avoid highly-charged topics when around each other. Military wives also feel a large disconnect between their previous support networks, particularly civilians.

As soldiers battle with PTSD, their wives, who are typically the emotional caretakers of the family, are at a loss. They are less likely to understand what their husbands experience abroad and are left without the emotional outlets to communicate their fears and frustrations, which lessens their life satisfaction (Mickelson, Claffey, and Williams 2006:73).

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is important to understand the ways in which military wives cope with deployment and their marginalized position within the military. Echabe and Castro (1999) tell us that masculinity dominates public spheres of society, and the military is no exception to the rule. Military wives are submissive and their needs are largely silenced, which is evident in their negotiation of feelings. “Emotion is a sense that tells about the self-relevance of reality. We infer from it what we must have wanted or expected or how we have perceived the world. Emotion is one way to discover buried perspective on matters” (Hochschild 1983:85). The military as an institution has the power to influence emotion on a daily basis:

Those who perform emotional labor in the course of giving service are like those who perform physical labor in the course of making things: both are subject to the rules of mass production. But when the product—the thing to be engineered, mass-produced, and subjected to speed-up and slowdown—is a smile, a mood, a feeling, or a relationship, it comes to belong more to the organization and less to the self. And so in the country that most publicly celebrates the individual, more people privately wonder, without tracing the question to its deepest social root: What do I really feel? (Hochschild 1983:198)

This also raises another important question regarding emotion work in masculine organizations. Here we find individuals who are constrained via the organizational culture and spouses who are once removed from this process yet vulnerable to its power. Findings show that military wives are doing unpaid labor that affects their emotional and overall well-being. The military wife is a non-soldier female within the military institution, and therefore she has little financial, political, and prestigious power. She is subject to marginalization in the military as well as subject to the pressures associated with the traditional role of “woman,” “wife,” and “mother.” Hochschild warns us that military wives will, in a sense, lose themselves if changes are not made to address their

needs. As a population with little clout, it is imperative that sociologists make people aware of the dangers and provide insight as to how these problems should be addressed.

Traditional gender roles heavily enforced within the military direct the types of emotions and emotion management techniques that she experiences during every-life and deployment. “Rules as to the type, intensity, duration, timing, and placing of feelings are society’s guidelines, the promptings of an unseen director” (Hochschild 1983:85), and this is especially evident among military wives. Through interviews and exploration of military wives’ emotions, we can better understand the stage upon which they act, i.e. the military institution and the home, the cast members with whom they interact, i.e. military, civilian, and familial contacts, the props that they use, i.e. cultural and symbolic objects, and the feeling and framing rules associated with their daily lives, i.e. cultural and gender narratives. This helps us to better understand their specific needs and counteract parts of their lives that harm their well-being.

Finally, military wives experience not only stresses specific to their placement within the military, but “...also a general source of stress, a thread woven through the whole [...] experience: the task of managing an estrangement between self and feeling and between self and display” (Hochschild 1983:131). Here, we can see how,

[a] principle of emotive dissonance, analogous to the principle of cognitive dissonance, is at work. Maintaining a difference between feeling and feigning over the long run leads to strain. We try to reduce this strain by pulling the two closer together either by changing what we feel or by changing what we feign. (Hochschild 1983:90)

Large amounts of emotional labor, specifically surface acting, can harm the military wife’s emotional well-being. Hochschild notes that when organizations are successful in eliciting deep acting, the potential exists for individuals to feel as if their emotional

transactions are genuine or authentic. However, this is a messy enterprise within military culture because when the person is too identified with a “mandated” role, burnout is more likely. On the other hand, while the assumption is that those who can separate perceived “real” selves from their jobs are not as vulnerable to burnout, if they perceive themselves as “surface” acting, they may come to be estranged from their work. Life in the military does not tolerate anything less than full role commitment, therefore the “mandated” role extends itself to spouses who must also be married to the military.

This research reveals that policy changes are needed to provide stronger support for those on the home-front. Child care should be provided for military wives who are unable to break away from the routines of full time, single parenting. Policies regarding children at clinics should be reversed in order to accommodate the needs of families. Support groups that encourage rather than inhibit expressed concerns about military life should be made available to both wives and their children. Acknowledgement of the important roles they perform in support of their spouses could add to their sense of well-being. Allowing wives a voice in relocation, timing of deployments, and providing soldiers with temporary leave for significant life events such as childbirth could reduce the estrangement that builds among couples. Future research and policy evaluations might consider possibly ways to reduce the role strains associated with military life. Some of this could be accomplished within the military and some requires that civilian communities step up the plate to assist military families.

As mentioned previously, Holyfield (2011:28 forthcoming) suggests that powerful emotional healing rituals can help military families confront and heal their negative feelings that emerge during deployment and involvement within the military.

Military wives have the potential to find empowerment and meaning within the military through these healing rituals as well as “re-building a sense of community” (Basham 2008:91) in which members have a “common goal that drives their behavior” in order to produce “morally positive emotions in individuals” (Barbalet 2002:16). Not only could these healing rituals address veterans coping with combat trauma, but they could also target military wives, allow their experiences to be heard in a non-threatening environment, and seek avenues to heal emotional wounds and raise awareness about their own needs.

There are challenges to creating successful healing rituals for military wives. Only 20% of military spouses attended deployment-support gatherings during their spouse’s most recent deployment since September 11th, 2001, perhaps because the gatherings were not convenient to attend, they did not feel comfortable attending, or they did not feel welcomed or as if these gatherings would benefit them (Department of Defense 2010:248). This makes sense after reviewing literature and listening to interview responses that speak of the rigid regulations that the military holds about secrecy, maintaining order, and putting the soldiers first. Therefore, outlets that provide for honest dialogue between military couples may assist in efforts to give the military wife a voice, although such programs necessarily may have to “occur outside the military’s sphere of influence” (Holyfield 2011:259). Providing a “safe place” to share their worries and frustrations might help reduce stress and drawing civilians into the process during these rituals may serve to bridge the divide between military and civilian life.

B. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research does provide insight into the ways in which this particular group of military wives experiences the military and deployment on an everyday basis. However, there are limitations to this type of research. For example, as this study reveals, a survey of military wives might provide more information regarding the emotional challenges wives face. Understandably, this research raises more questions than it answers. For example, are these experiences representative of the larger population of military spouses? It also raises the important question of military husbands. How might their experiences differ? Future research might also consider whether living on or off military posts influence the everyday life of spouses. As this research revealed, it is a mixed bag for some, thus, there is more research needed. Another limitation to this project, specifically, is that my sample was homogeneous. Future research needs to examine differences in age, race, and educational level of wives in order to tease out the differences these characteristics play in everyday life of military couples. All of my participants were white and with the exception of one, they were young wives and mothers. I did not ask about education but it was revealed in the interviews, that few had a completed college education. In a more representational survey given to military spouses, approximately a third had some college credit, but no degree (Department of Defense 2010:253). This may compound their subordination to military life.

Another limitation and suggestion for future research is that these women have children and few of them work outside the home. A comparative study might find important differences among couples who have children and those without children, as this is an important contributor to the role strain felt at least in this group of women. Also, infidelity came up although it was not reported for these women. Future studies

might examine this phenomenon to see how it influences the marriages of military couples. Interviews with the soldiers versus their spouses might provide an important comparison. How much emotion work do soldiers engage in? It appears from this group of women that their husbands may be subject to a similar disconnect between what they feel and what they feign, influencing their emotional well-being as well. Finally, this study should provide future researchers with a vast array of topics about military couples and families that deserve sociological inquiry.

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APPENDIX

Attached A:

The interview script will begin with the following:

Before we begin, I would like to thank you for participating in this interview and for your willingness to be part of my thesis research on Challenges Faced by Military Spouses. I also want to confirm that you can receive a copy of this interview in CD format for your own use if you would like to have a personal copy. I want to be sure that you also realize that your information is also being used by my supervisor, Dr. Lori Holyfield. She has been researching veterans' experiences and the challenges they face. This research will contribute to her larger research project.

I would like to also inform you that this interview is confidential. Your name, address, and other identifying information will not be used in any form. Your age, pseudonym, and your spouse's service category (Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force, Guard) will be the only identifiable information recorded. Any names mentioned during the interview will be omitted from transcription as part of our attempt to provide confidentiality (e.g., names of children, co-workers, family members). While there are no physical risks involved in this research, this interview will cover topics that may cause some emotional discomfort, such as recalling difficult emotions or traumatic events. I want to confirm that you realize that you can stop at any time and choose not to participate and there will be no penalty for choosing to do so. Finally, if you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact my project supervisor, Dr. Lori Holyfield at 479-575-3807. If your concerns are not addressed via Dr. Holyfield or if you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the U of A Institutional Review Board at (479) 575-3845.

Attached B:

Data Collection Instruments (Interview Guide):

Below are a general set of questions that will be asked. However, the interviews will be conducted as open-ended and participants will be allowed to expand on any topic covered.

Today is _____(date)and I am Kimberly Murray from the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Arkansas.

I am interviewing (*pseudonym*) _____ about the challenges military spouses face during deployment.

- Let's start with your age and how long you've been married or living with your partner?
- Do you have children? If so, I will ask for children's age(s).
- Are you currently employed? If so, I will ask descriptive questions about where and what type of work she is doing.
- Can you tell me a little bit about your partner's _____ military service?
- What branch is he in?
- How many years has he been in the military?
- What is his rank?
- Where is he currently deployed?
- How long has he been deployed and when do you expect him to return?
- How do you communicate with one another and how often? (e.g., Skype, email, phone, or mail)
- Maybe you can finish the following sentence for me. "A typical conversation with _____ is about _____."

- Now I would like to hear about your experiences here at home. Can you walk me through a typical day as a military spouse?
- Do you know other military spouses? If so, I will ask how they communicate.
- Do you use the internet to communicate with others in your situation?
- What activities (above) would you not be doing if _____ were home?
- Are there any websites that are specific to military wives that you regularly visit? If so, I will ask her why she goes to them, and what she does when she visits them.
- Who do you look to the most for support when your husband is away? After she answers, I will ask, why this person? After response, I will ask, what do the two of you talk about?
- What do you find most rewarding about your experience as a military spouse?
- What do you find most difficult as a military spouse?
- What is a good day as a military spouse?
- What is a bad day?
- On “bad days” do you listen to a genre of music, watch a certain kind of movie, or do a hobby?
- Do you watch news reports on military action? If so, I will ask how she feels when she watches news pertaining to the war.
- What three emotions would you say are most prevalent for you during _____ deployment?

- How do you cope with fear...loneliness...anger...confusion? (ask consecutively)
- What would you say are the main challenges that military spouses face?
- Many soldiers are expected to stay longer on their tour of duty. How do you feel about that?
- What are your feelings about the war? If answer is ambiguous, ask: On a scale from 1-10, how much do you support the war?
- What things do you think are least understood about being a military spouse?
- For you, what was the biggest lifestyle change when your husband entered the military?
- Have you moved recently? Probe for how many times. After she answers, ask her to describe what this was like for her.
- What are your feelings about relocation?
- Are there any other problems that you and your husband face? (e.g. financial, emotional, social, etc.)
- Do you ever feel conflicted about your role as a military spouse?
- If someone were considering becoming a military spouse, what advice would you provide?
- If you could change anything about your situation as a military wife, what would it be?
- Is there anything you would like to add that we didn't cover?

Attached C: Line-by-line Coding, Memoing, and List of Codes

Example of initial line-by-line coding from Amber's interview:

A: So it's not um-you know-you don't get the puppy dog look when you say, "Oh my husband's deployed." (laughs). So you all-know what each other's going through and you uh, ban together I guess. And you always, uh, there's always something going on at somebody's house or kid's birthday party or whatever. I tend to make friends a lot quicker on post. I like it. So, everybody's out.

K: OK, and what are some of the disadvantages of being on post if there are any?

Um, you live next to say somebody your-your husband works for.

Example of initial line-by-line coding from Courtney's interview:

K: So you-that's kind of more of a perk for you? Like being able to relocate?

C: Yeah, I mean, I've think I try-I guess I try to look everything half full, um. Relocating, of course, it sucks. I mean, you uproot everything. You leave people, but you-I mean you-you're not anywhere for very long-the people you just finally got close to and have to do it all over again, but I mean, on the upside, who gets to travel, you know, all these places? I've been to Florida now, Georgia, I'm going to New York soon. I've lived in California my whole entire life and I've never been out of it before now.

K: Okay, are there any other problems that you and your husband face that we haven't talked about, whether they be financial, emotional, social?

C: Um, not really, it's-I mean, not really, just deployment's really the only thing that is a pain in the butt, really.

K: Okay, and do you-have you ever felt conflicted about your role as military wife?

C: Um, no. Um, I honestly sometimes feel like I don't do enough as being just a wife. Before we enlisted, we both worked full-time jobs and went to school. Now, he's the only one working and I sit at home with the kids.

Example of memo-writing:

List of Codes of Common themes:

Avoiding negative emotions:

1. Not watching the news
2. We support the troops, but not the war
3. Thinking about the future
4. Talking about the children
5. Working out, zoning out
6. Trying not to think about fears/loneliness

Inducing positive emotions:

1. Thinking about the future
2. Watching comedic movies and cartoons with children
3. Comparing “bad” past with current situation
4. Opportunities to go to school
5. Opportunities to travel
6. Medical insurance
7. Living on post-being in supportive community
8. Relationships with other military wives—talk about normal parts of everyday life without getting sympathetic looks from civilians
9. Faith-everything will be okay, give it up to God, listening to Christian music

Self-Sacrifice:

1. Military feeling rules: self-sacrifice for the good of the whole
2. Mother-hiding feelings to protect children
3. Wife-submission to husband, living in private sphere, hiding negative emotions to help husband focus on missions
4. Religion, give up personal needs for God, for greater good
5. Volunteer work
6. Feelings of guilt for not doing enough

Traditional Gender Roles:

1. Wives staying at home
2. Daily life revolves around children and husband
3. Do gendered labor for military-checking on families, office work, disseminating information
4. Working part-time or hobby-related jobs such as scrapbooking and crafts
5. Crocheting
6. Emotional labor-being the cheerleader for husband, military, children
7. Submissive to military and husband
8. Mother-nurturer; Father-disciplinarian
9. Wife and children-private feminine sphere; Husband-public masculine sphere

Military Culture:

1. Extension of masculine warrior mentality to wives—pressure to be mentally tough, alert, do everything without complaint

2. Soldiers come first, families come second
3. Language: the mission, the family readiness group, Ft. Stewart, etc. reflect warrior mentality
4. Wives take care of each other and families (FRG)
5. Secrecy of the mission-withholding information to wives
6. Rules and regulations-what the military says goes
7. Relocation, deployment, longer tours of duty are “part of” being in the military

Disconnect between military culture and civilian culture:

1. Civilians look down on them for wearing wedding ring but never seeing husband
2. Civilians give them puppy dog looks
3. Civilians act as if husbands were already dead
4. Civilian wives compare deployment to their husband’s business trips—military wife resents that
5. Civilians do not even know what is going on in Iraq and Afghanistan
6. Contradictory war-civilians do not support the military, which is felt personally by military wives
7. Rand Corp. labeled them as poor, immature wives that cannot control reproductive tendencies
8. On post, physical isolation from civilians

Conflicting Emotions/Ambivalence

1. They don’t support the war, but they support their husbands
2. Feeling like a maid and nanny, but children are a source of happiness
3. Love their husbands, but sometimes they are mean and edgy
4. Enjoy living on post, but lack of privacy and poor living conditions aren’t convenient
5. Can relate best to military wives, but they don’t talk about serious topics
6. Love their families, but can’t really relate to them during deployment-lean on husband’s contacts more
7. Military doesn’t put the family first, but it provides all necessities for families
8. Red tape and feeling neglected, but life before military was much worse

Frustration

1. Problems communicating with husband during deployment
2. Single mother
3. Civilians don’t support or understand the military wife
4. Military forgets about the family
5. Husband’s don’t come home when expected sometimes
6. Husband’s get mean and act like they’re single
7. Assuming both parental roles with children and maintenance of house and cars
8. Red tape: medical care, housing, other benefits require a lot of paperwork
9. Military doesn’t cater to wife: in an interview, clinic won’t allow wives to bring children with them

10. Can't tell husbands daily frustration b/c it might make him lose focus during mission
11. Bored at home, can't go out with friends

Fear

1. What am I going to tell my kids if something were to happen to my husband?
2. Preparing for the worst
3. Getting affairs in order before he leaves
4. Waiting by the phone/computer all day-if he doesn't call, assuming the worst
5. Children won't have a disciplinary figure

Love

1. Proud of husband
2. If he's happy, then I'm happy
3. Children get her through the darkest moments of deployment
4. Compares her life to what her husband is going through-stimulates love and respect for him
5. Trust in God to take care of her and her family
6. Support from other military wives is the strongest
7. Love and self-sacrifice go together-the more you sacrifice, the more you love
8. Altruistic love-giving to family out of love

Needs:

1. Less red tape
2. Babysitting during the wife's clinic visits
3. More support from civilians
4. Emotional support from husband
5. Less isolation-especially the need to stay close to her side of the family
6. Less marginalization-military needs to put the family first
7. Paid labor-the FRG is volunteer work but they do legitimate labor for military
8. Better services-health care "sucks" and living conditions are not that great on post
9. Sharing among couples, people in the military, and between military and civilian culture-large disconnects due to information withholding, lack of understanding and interaction, and unequal distribution of power

On-post:

1. Immersion in military life
2. Establishment of social support networks
3. Lack of privacy
4. Close proximity for mothers during deployment to stores, medical services
5. Bills paid
6. Sometimes poor living conditions
7. Crime (evident in one interview and not in others)
8. Bickering among wives-negative consequences for soldiers

9. Walls-containment as well as protection
10. Less interaction with civilians/solidarity with military

Off-post:

1. Privacy
2. Escape from military life
3. More aware of bills
4. You get a housing stipend and can get bigger/better houses and extra money per month if the stipend is more than your monthly payment
5. Farther away from stores
6. Isolation from military wives, family, and friends
7. More interaction with civilians

*Special note: try to pay attention to the complexity of the “military wife,” be aware of the intersectionality of age, class, race, experience, and perspective from lived experiences before deployment/military activity. Military wives are a group of complex individuals with varying perspectives.

Kimberly Michelle Murray
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EDUCATION

M.A. in Sociology, University of Arkansas. May 2011.

B.A. in Sociology and Criminal Justice, University of Arkansas. May 2009. Minor in English.

WORK EXPERIENCE

March 2010 – May 2011

Research Assistant for The Terrorism Research Center. Currently working for the Terrorism Research Center and Department of Homeland Security's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) program's "Borders Project." Trained in SQL-Developer computer software, Adobe Acrobat 9.0, Microsoft Office skills, codebook drafting, coding court case files, and writing reports/presenting data at conferences.

August 2009-March 2010

Graduate Assistant for a small section (avg. 60 students) of Introduction to Criminal Justice (CMJS 2003). Proctored exams, entered data into Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) spreadsheets, presented films, gave student evaluations, and facilitated student-to-faculty communication.

AWARDS

2010 - Research assistantship in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Arkansas.

2009 - Teaching assistantship in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Arkansas.

2009- Summa Cum Laude

2009- Harold D. Hantz Four-Year Scholar's Award for the most outstanding honors graduate in Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences

2009-Jones Chair in Community Student Award (\$500)

2009 - Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Grant for Honors Thesis, "Red Dirt and Recklessness: The Juncture between Culture and Social Structure within the Alternative Country Music Subgenre"

2008- Honors College Research Grant for Honors Thesis, "Red Dirt and Recklessness: The Juncture between Culture and Social Structure within the Alternative Country Music Subgenre"

2008- Honors College Study Abroad Grant to study creative writing in Galway, Ireland

2007-2008 - Resident Assistant Scholarship to cover room and board and stipend

2005-2009- Chancellor's list & Dean's list

2005-2009 - Honors College Fellowship Scholarship to cover tuition, room and board, fees, and stipend (over \$50,000)

PRESENTATIONS

April 2011 – "Emotion Work on the Home-front: The Special Case of Military Wives," successfully defended thesis in the Sociology Library at the University of Arkansas main campus

November 2010 – "Border Crossings made by Terrorists Targeting the United States," presented at the American Society of Criminology (ASC) conference in San Francisco, CA

August 2010 - "Emotion Work on the Home-front: The Special Case of Military Wives," presented at the Annual Meeting for Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (SSSI) in Atlanta, GA

Spring 2010- Defended Master's thesis proposal, "Emotion Work on the Home-front: The Special Case of Military Wives"

Spring 2009- Presented undergraduate honors thesis: "Red Dirt and Recklessness: The Juncture between Culture and Social Structure within the Alternative Country Music Subgenre," at the Undergraduate Sociology and Anthropology Symposium in Conway, AR

Fall 2008-Presented undergraduate honors thesis "Red Dirt and Recklessness: The Juncture between Culture and Social Structure within the Alternative Country Music

Subgenre,” at the 38th Annual Conference of the Arkansas Sociological and Anthropological Association (ASAA) in Conway, AR

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

May 2010-May 2011- President of the University of Arkansas Alpha Kappa Delta

Winter 2011- Surveyed the homeless population in Springdale, AR, for the Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census

November 2010 - Attended the annual meeting for American Society of Criminology (ASC) held in San Francisco, CA

November 2010-Volunteered to help host prospective McNair graduate students

November 2010-Helped organize AKD’s “2010 Fall Lecture” featuring Dr. Jeffrey Nash of the University of Arkansas in Little Rock

October 2010- Participated in Hope 2010, an event to provide veterans and the homeless with various resources such as dental and eye care, legal advice, and food and clothing

August 2010 - Attended the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction held in Atlanta, Georgia.

Spring 2010- Paper submission for the Suzanne Langer Prize for Best Student Paper competition hosted by the American Sociological Association

Spring 2010- Science fair judge in the Behavioral and Social Sciences division at the 2010 Northwest Arkansas Regional Science Fair and Engineering Fair

Spring 2010- Helped organize AKD’s “2010 Spring Lecture” featuring Dr. Spencer D. Wood of Kansas State University

Spring 2010- Participated in the workshop, "Just for TAs: Managing Difficult Classroom Situations," hosted by the Teaching and Faculty Support Center

April 2010 - “Considering a Major in Sociology,” presented as a guest speaker at Fayetteville High School in Fayetteville, Arkansas

November 2009 -Participated in the “Responsible Conduct of Research Series,” hosted by the Graduate Student Professional Learning Series

Fall 2009-Helped organize AKD's "2009 Fall Lecture" featuring Dr. Capek of Hendrix College

Spring 2009-Inducted into Phi Beta Kappa academic honorary society

Spring 2009-Interviewed "Mama Dean," owner of a soul food restaurant in Fayetteville, AR, and who was later featured on CNN for her food donations to the homeless population, as part of the Arkansas Delta Oral History Project

Winter 2009- Surveyed the homeless population in Springdale, AR, for the Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census

Spring 2008-Created and coordinated with Sigma Nu Fraternity as VP of APS to host a self-defense session for all students at the University of Arkansas

2007-2008-Elected Vice President and founding member of Alpha Phi Sigma (APS) Criminal Justice Honors Society chapter at the University of Arkansas

Spring 2007-Hall Senate Elections Coordinator in Northwest Quadrant (NWQ) Resident Hall

2006-2008-Hall Senator in NWQ Resident Hall: authored and evaluated legislation during weekly meetings to improve quality of life in the NWQ residence hall, participated in homecoming and Annual Block Party committees, recruited volunteers for events, designed homecoming t-shirt

2006-2009-Worked with Dr. Steven Worden to collect donations for the Salvation Army

2005-2007-Honors College Ambassador in Pomfret & NWQ Resident Halls and mentor during "Fellowship Finalist Weekend"

WORK IN PROGRESS

Master's Thesis - "Emotion Work on the Home-front: The Special Case of Military Wives." This research examines the emotion work/management strategies of military wives in the context of the United States' masculine military institution. Specifically, it focuses upon everyday life of the military wife within the military, her life during deployment, and the ways in which military wives negotiate their feelings according to

pressure to adhere to military feeling and framing rules and gender roles. It draws upon Arlie R. Hochschild's book, *The Managed Heart*, and also upon symbolic interactionism. This paper will add to the field of literature on emotion work strategies and military life in general, as well as giving insight into the ways in which traditional gender roles affect women today. To conduct my research, I interviewed twelve military wives via telephone and transcribed and coded interviews in order to write my findings section. Findings reveal a considerable amount of emotion management of military wives in the context of a masculine institution and within traditional gender boundaries, thus validating previous research and providing a micro-level insight in to the specific ways in which wives negotiate their feelings on an everyday basis.

Holyfield, Lori, Maggie Cobb, Ashleigh McKinzie, and Kimberly Murray. "Red Dirt Roadies, Rainbow Peaceniks, and Picker's Paradise: A Collaborative Study of Identity Work and Alternative Music Scenes." Working Paper to be presented at the Annual Couch Stone Conference 2011, expected journal submission - June 2011.

"Mama Dean's Soul Food" segment featured in a book as a part of the Arkansas Delta Oral History Project (forthcoming 2011)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Qualitative Research
- Mixed Methods
- Symbolic Interaction
- Sociology of Emotions
- Terrorism

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction
- Alpha Kappa Delta Honors Society-Current University of Arkansas Chapter President
- Sociological Inquiry

REFERENCES

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Dr. Anna Zajicek
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Dr. Steven Worden
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Dr. Brent Smith
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Distinguished Professor and Chair; Director, Terrorism Research Center (TRC) in
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Coding Comments Supplement to pg. 79

Line-by-line Coding, Memoing, and List of Codes

Example of initial line-by-line coding from Amber's interview:

A: So it's not um-you know-you don't get the puppy dog look when you say, "Oh my husband's deployed." (laughs). So you all-know what each other's going through and you uh, ban together I guess. And you always, uh, there's always something going on at somebody's house or kid's birthday party or whatever. I tend to make friends a lot quicker on post. I like it. So, everybody's out.

Comment [k1]: Doesn't like outside sympathy. She wants to be around people who understand and she also uses humor to counteract bad feelings.

Comment [k2]: Community, solidarity

Comment [k3]: On post-sense of solidarity & community and interaction is encouraged? Bowling Alone reversed in military communities?

K: OK, and what are some of the disadvantages of being on post if there are any?

Um, you live next to say somebody your-your husband works for.

Comment [k4]: Negative parts of living on post: everyone knows your business, no privacy, and bad conduct can harm your husband's career.

Example of initial line-by-line coding from Courtney's interview:

K: So you-that's kind of more of a perk for you? Like being able to relocate?

C: Yeah, I mean, I've think I try-I guess I try to look everything half full, um. Relocating, of course, it sucks. I mean, you uproot everything. You leave people, but you-I mean you-you're not anywhere for very long-the people you just finally got close to and have to do it all over again, but I mean, on the upside, who gets to travel, you know, all these places? I've been to Florida now, Georgia, I'm going to New York soon. I've lived in California my whole entire life and I've never been out of it before now.

Comment [MD5]: Half full-inducing positive emotion. Relocation signifies losing ties, starting over and making new friends, adjusting to a place that isn't familiar. Traveling is also fun, exciting, and allows military wives who may not have had the funding to travel before can travel now. Contradictory feelings about emotion.

K: Okay, are there any other problems that you and your husband face that we haven't talked about, whether they be financial, emotional, social?

C: Um, not really, it's-I mean, not really, just deployment's really the only thing that is a pain in the butt, really.

Comment [MD6]: Making larger issue smaller through the phrase, "pain in the butt"

K: Okay, and do you-have you ever felt conflicted about your role as military wife?

C: Um, no. Um, I honestly sometimes feel like I don't do enough as being just a wife. Before we enlisted, we both worked full-time jobs and went to school. Now, he's the only one working and I sit at home with the kids.

Comment [MD7]: Even though she has admitted to holding negative feelings about the military/war, she says she isn't conflicted about her role. She experiences guilt for not doing enough, even though she has four children and is 21 years old living like a single parent at the moment. She compares her life before the military (both couples working & going to school)-doesn't acknowledge her unpaid labor. "Sit at home with the kids" is a hard job, not giving herself credit. Self-sacrifice evident here. Confliction with traditional gender roles.