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The Long-Term Effects Of Parental Military Deployment On Perceived Parent/child Relationship Quality

Timothy Patrick Pagano

THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF PARENTAL MILITARY DEPLOYMENT ON
PERCEIVED PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

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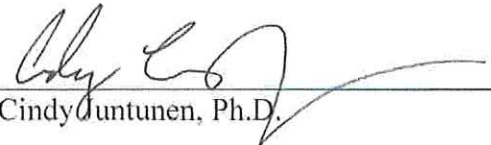
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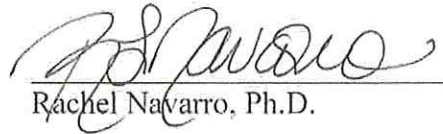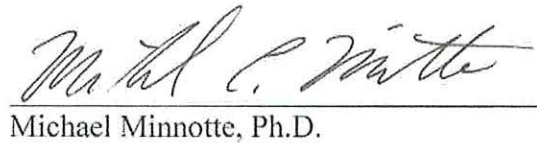
This dissertation, submitted by Timothy P. Pagano in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies of the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

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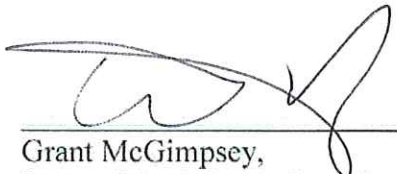   In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
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                                                        Timothy P. Pagano
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To my family, by whom I am well loved.

ABSTRACT

The lived experiences of children who experience the deployment of a parent into military conflict remains largely unexamined. Although the literature surrounding this population continues to expand, there remains a paucity of research surrounding the potential long-term effects of a parent's military deployment. The following study aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the possible long-term effects of parental deployment on the parent/child relationship. The study makes several noteworthy contributions to the knowledge base. Utilizing Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, this study provides insight regarding how this population views their past and current parental relationships, the factors impacting the relationship with their formerly deployed parents, perspectives on the deployment cycle, and the integral role military culture played in their childhoods. Implications stem from the study's results, including clinical applications of a feminist theoretical orientation. Results also indicate the value of studies examining acculturative stress for this population given the prominence of transience in their lives.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, more than 2.7 million American service members have deployed to support military operations in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and operations in Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) (Watson Institute, 2015). The numerous impacts of deployments on service members are well documented, with high rates of various physical ailments and a wide variety of mental health conditions such as major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), various psychiatric diagnoses, and increased rates of suicide (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). These and other issues carry into additional important areas of life, such as relationships with friends, colleagues, spouses and children (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008).

In the United States, there are approximately 2.1 million Active Duty and Selected Reserve personnel in all branches of the military. Additionally, three million individuals are family members of service members, of which approximately one million are children. (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2015). In addition to the impact on the service members themselves, the costs to their families are varied. Families of deployed service members face the understandable concern surrounding their loved one's safety and often agonize about the condition in which their loved one may return, both

physically and mentally (Duckworth, 2009). Additionally, many military families face financial difficulty, loss of an added caregiver, and loss of emotional support (Lester et al., 2010). Though some of these problems may be mitigated upon return from deployment, a host of new difficulties may emerge.

Reintegrating into family and/or civilian life may prove problematic for a host of reasons. Sandoz, Moyer, and Armelie (2015) define the process of reintegration as a, "multidimensional process of redefining and negotiating role within the family and broader community" (p. 495-96). The phase of reintegration warrants attention as routines that were familiar for the service member will most likely change during their deployment. During deployment, various family members likely assumed new roles to fill the gap left by the service member. Such changes have significant implications for individuals and families (Lester et al., 2010). Additionally, service members and their families may find they matured and developed in novel ways due to the differentiated experiences during the period of deployment (House, Christenson, & Adler, 2001). Given the large population of military families, understanding their lived experiences-specifically the one million children whose parents deployed as of 2012- warrants research and understanding.

Parental Deployment

The body of literature surrounding the impact of parental deployment on their children continues to grow. Present research clearly posits that children who experience the deployment of a parent are likely to experience a wide variety of negative impacts related to their well-being (RAND Corporation, 2011). Impacts on well-being are found in a myriad of crucial areas. One critical area of impact is psychological well-being

(RAND Corporation, 2011; RAND Corporation, 2008). Over the course of a deployment, children of service members are significantly more likely to visit outpatient services for mental health complaints than their non-deployed counterparts. Additionally, one report indicated pediatric stress disorders increased 19% during parental deployment (Gorman, Eide, & Hisle-Gorman, 2011). Such overt negative changes in psychological well-being demonstrate the severe toll deployment takes on the children of service members.

Children of service members often see a substantive impact on their academic performance (RAND Corporation, 2011). Members of this population often see lower rates of attendance, lower involvement in extracurricular activities, and an increase in problematic behaviors in school (Chandra et al., 2009). Reed, Bell, and Edwards (2011) published a study examining a variety of constructs regarding well-being among those with civilian parents, non-deployed parents in the military, and those currently experiencing parental deployment. Reed et al., (2011) revealed 8th grade adolescent males and females were significantly more likely than their civilian counterparts to have thoughts regarding suicide. These results carried over to 10th and 12th grade adolescent males (Reed et al., 2011).

Youth growing up in the context of military families report feeling less connected to peers and subsequently report lower rates of happiness and satisfaction regarding their school performance and school community (RAND, 2011). Overall, academic performance and happiness regarding academic performance serve as a central indicator regarding the impact of a deployment experience on the well-being of children in military families.

Children of deployed service members often see a substantive impact on relationships with family members during and following deployment. Researchers found that nearly 60% of youth reported challenges during parental reintegration. These problems include nearly 50% of children worrying about the next deployment, 40% of children dealing with the formerly deployed parent's mood, 30% reporting problems related to establishing a relationship with their deployed parent, and 28% reporting difficulty deciding which parent to turn to for advice (RAND Corporation, 2011).

Like the aforementioned experiences of the parent returning from deployment, children of service members often face difficulty in adjusting to shifting roles and responsibilities within the home with their deployed parent as well as other family members who remained on the home front (Lester et al., 2010; Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, & Grass, 2007). Understanding changes in dynamics with family members of all statuses (parents, siblings, etc.) is an area worthy of additional attention from the field, especially regarding relational changes with the previously deployed parent.

In summary, the body of literature surrounding the impacts of parental deployment on children reveals much about the experiences of this population and it continues to grow. Present research clearly posits that children who experience the deployment of a parent are likely to experience a wide variety of negative impacts related to their overall well-being (RAND Corporation, 2011). Such areas facing negative impact include: academic performance, psychological well-being, social functioning, and familial relationships (RAND Corporation, 2011). However, the unique impacts facing this population relating to changes in relationships with the deployed parent warrant

further attention as numerous studies indicate children also find post-deployment life to be difficult (Huebner, et al., 2007; Lester et al., 2010). Walsh et al. (2014) provides a grounded theory study from formerly deployed parents' perspectives. The study provided a number of themes emphasizing the problematic nature of parental reintegration. Thus, it is important to develop an understanding from the child's perspective regarding the shifting nature of the relationship with their formerly deployed parent.

The Present Study

The present body of literature surrounding this population indicates changes in family dynamics are a prominent effect of parental deployment but does not appropriately address the changing dynamics among family members in light of deployment. Specifically, research has yet to examine substantive changes experienced by children of deployed parents regarding their relationships with the deployed parent following his or her return to the home front. Because of the paucity of research, this study aimed to explore the shifts in relationships with previously deployed parents, following the return home.

Understanding the lived experiences of this population, specifically the long-term impacts on relationships with formerly deployed parents, necessitates the use of an appropriate developmental model. Ecological Systems Theory, a paradigm first introduced by Bronfenbrenner in the 1970's assists in promulgating a clear understanding of the lived experience of children of deployed service members (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ecological Systems theory promotes understanding human development through emphasizing interactions between the individual and changes in proximate settings as

well as broader community and societal shifts (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Through a specific emphasis on the initial three systems, the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem, the unique impact on this population's development begin to solidify.

As can be seen from this summary of the issues facing the children of deployed service members, a deeper understanding of their lived experience is needed. This study sought to shed light on the substantive changes and the long-term implications on the relationships between the formerly deployed service member and their children following deployment. This study utilized a qualitative approach and focused on the changing perceptions of relationships from the perspective of the child.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on the central components of the effect of family disruptions on parental relationships in civilian populations and impacts of parental military deployment on youth. These two constructs are discussed regarding the various aspects of their construct models and extant empirical support. These constructs are presented and explicated utilizing the foundation of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory.

Ecological Systems Theory

As individuals mature and grow, the relationships they form with their parents, siblings, and various networks expand and assume a more critical role in their lives. Thus, understanding maturation and shifts in these networks merits a keen understanding for both research and clinical purposes. Steeped in the early developmental work of Kurt Lewin (1917, 1931, 1935), Bronfenbrenner (1979) put forth a theory to better explain and conceptualize the lifelong progression and interaction between the individual and the various networks in which the individual is situated. Bronfenbrenner describes Ecological Systems Theory as an evolving interaction over the course a person's life amongst the individual and settings where the individual lives. It is critical to note these various factors and settings impact one another, and their interactions merit

understanding. Development is viewed as the outcome of the phenomenon at a point in time, rather than the phenomenon itself (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).
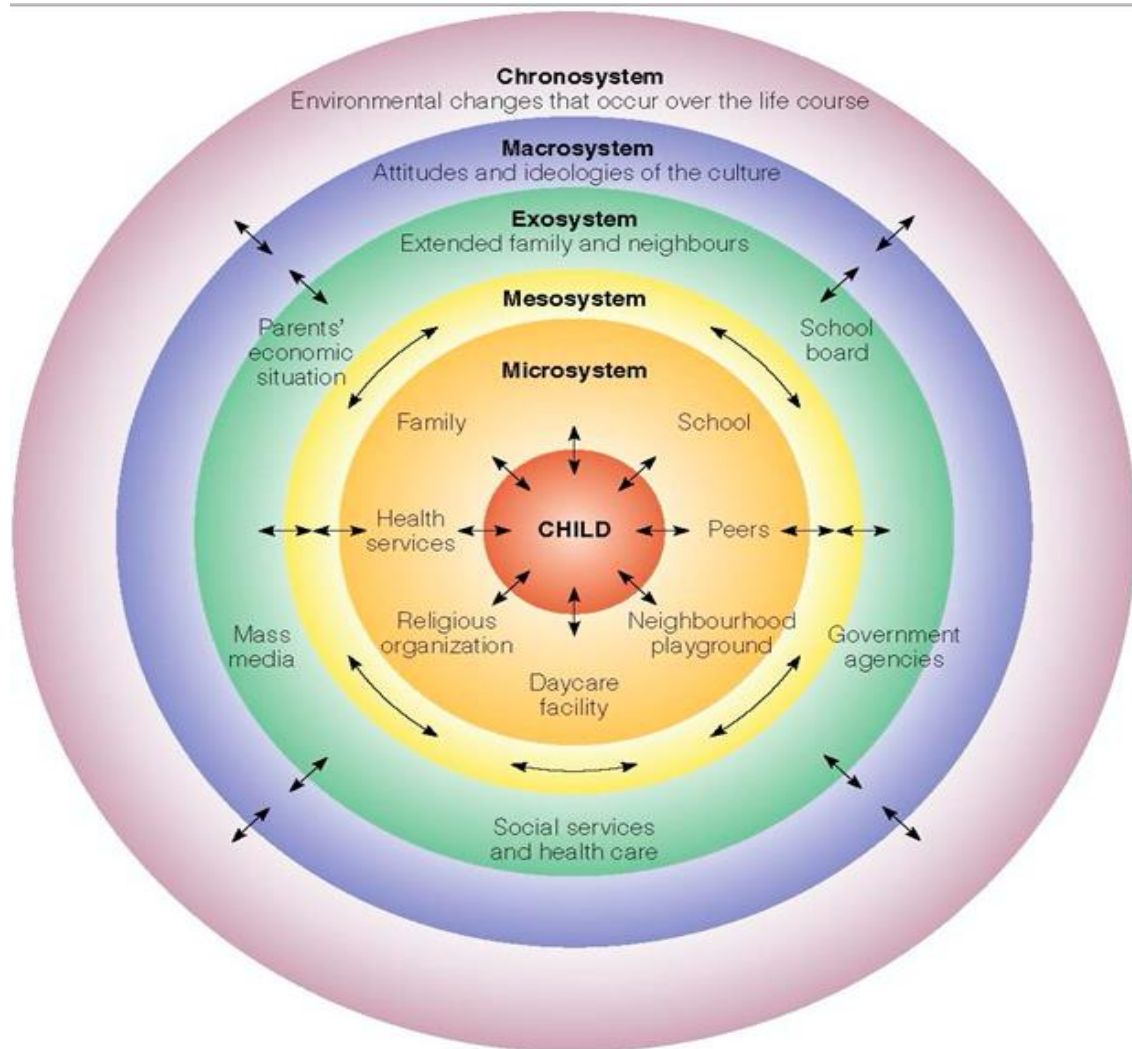
Figure 1. Ecological Systems Theory.

This succinct overview is fleshed out through the establishment of systems within the overall model. Initially, Bronfenbrenner posited four systems presented in a nested arrangement: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A fifth system, the chronosystem, would later be added to assist

in accounting for change in the system, not just the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

This study emphasized the initial two systems (microsystem and mesosystem) to better

understand changes in relationships with previously deployed parents. While the

subsequent systems (exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem) are worthy of further

investigation, they stand as outside of the purview of this study.

Microsystem

The innermost layer of the nested arrangement is the microsystem. The

microsystem may be defined as, "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations

experienced by the developing person in each setting with particular physical and

material characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). Bronfenbrenner (1994) later

stipulated that a key component of the microsystem is the activities and roles postulated

previously be face-to-face interactions. Examples of such interactions include: school,

family, friends, and vocational settings.

Provided the examples of interactions comprising the innermost system, the

microsystem stands as the most prominent system within the theoretical model for the

present study. Much of the present literature regarding the impacts of parental

deployment focuses on the shifts in the microsystem, specifically changes within the

family system, school behavior, and academic performance (Flake, Davis, Johnson, &

Middleton, 2009; Chandra et al., 2010). Although numerous studies postulate important

information regarding prevalence rates of academic problems, psychological

maladjustment, and rates of physical abuse within the home, no studies utilized a

qualitative approach to better understanding this population's lived experiences following

parental deployment. Furthermore, no studies of any methodology examined the long-

term effects of parental deployment regarding perceptions of parent/child relationship quality.

Two studies revealed fathers specifically who returned from deployment perceived themselves as having difficulty readjusting to the role of parent and caregiver. The first study by Dayton, Walsh, Muzik, Erwin, and Rsenblum (2014) is a qualitative in nature. The authors posited that, from a parental perspective, there is a substantive shift in the most important microsystem in one's life: the family unit.

The second study conducted by Walsh et al. (2014) provided a grounded theory studying emphasizing how formerly deployed fathers perceive relationship problems with their children following deployment. The findings of these studies indicate deployment may substantially obfuscate the parent/child relationship during the reintegration period. Through gaining the child's (now young adult's) perspective, this study provided additional context to better understand the changes in the parent/child relationship purported by the formerly deployed parents (Dayton et al., 2014). Specifically, Walsh et al. (2014) highlighted the long-term implications on the parent/child relationship. This facet of the Walsh et al. (2014) study is particularly salient, given their study participants are young adults.

Mesosystem

The second layer of the nested arrangement is the mesosystem. The mesosystem may be aptly defined as the interactions among various microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992). For example, the mesosystem may entail how interactions within the differentiated microsystems of school and family interact to generate new phenomena within an individual's development. The interaction of school and home may be

particularly noteworthy. Two studies conducted by Epstein (1983a, 1983b) found that students' initiative, independence, and academic performance were greatly impacted by the amount of communication between caregivers and schools.

Reed, Bell, and Edwards (2011) noted an overt interaction between the two microsystems of school and home life, noting those students experiencing parental deployment are 10% more likely than their civilian counterparts to receive grades below a B. Richardson et al. (2011) noted the at-home caregiver will be less likely to attend school meetings, assist with homework, as well as fund and provide transportation to extracurricular activities, thus exacerbating the changes between the two mircrosystems due to parental deployment.

Exosystem

The third layer of the nested arrangement is the exosystem. The exosystem refers to any number of settings, "that do not involve the developing person as an active participant" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 25). Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that a parent's place of work (such as a branch of the military) and a parent's network of friends are exosystems that often impact an individual's development. For the purposes of this study, it is important to look specifically at a parent's deployment (work) as the chief exosystem at play. Given that the focus of this study rested on the lived experiences regarding the relationship between the deployed parent and child, focus on the exosystem was warranted.

Huebner et al. (2007) posited loss and uncertainty are recurrent and common themes for children growing up in military families. Uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the loss of a parent (to deployment) are a direct result of a child's interaction

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with the exosystem, specifically a parent's vocation or career. It is crucial to keep in mind the foci of the results presented later stem from the decisions of those in the exosystem and their subsequent interactions with the microsystem and mesosystem. For example, the decision by military leaders to deploy a parent to a particularly dangerous part of a war front may lead to exacerbating the worry and anxiety of a child as opposed to the deployment of a parent to an area of a war zone with more fortification and better security.

Macrosystem

The fourth layer of the nested arrangement is the macrosystem. The macrosystem refers to the interactions of lower level systems (micro-, meso-, exo-). Specifically, the macrosystem examines how traits and themes are prevalent within the inner three systems of the nested model (Bronfenbrenner 1979; 1994).

For the purposes of this study, it is important to note military culture and values (macrosystem) often trickle into the microsystem of the family. Military values such as stoicism, hypermasculinity, and restricted affect may impact the reintegration process of the service member and subsequently yield differentiated impacts on the parent/child relationship later in life (Brown, 2012). With the reintegration process impacted by military values, it may prove pertinent to better understand the child's perspective of reintegration and their relationship with their service member parent. Should the individual live in a community with a large military population, the cultural values and mores of the military may permeate into other microsystems such as values within a school and within one's friend group.

One unfortunate example of the interaction between the macrosystem of the

military and the microsystem of the family is an increase in child maltreatment. Gibbs,

Martin, Kupper, & Johnson (2007) noted that parents on the home front are more likely

to engage in neglect and abuse when their spouse is deployed compared to when the

spouse is not deployed.

The overall rate of substantiated reports of abuse in military families was twice as

high after the 1-year anniversary of the September 11th attacks (rate ratio ¼ 2.15, 95%

confidence interval: 1.85, 2.50). This same study found that for every 1% increase in the

number of service members departing to or returning from deployment, the likelihood of

childhood maltreatment increased 28% (Rentz et al., 2007). Parental neglect and

maltreatment infiltrate many facets of a child's life and compound the psychological and

emotional stressors that are already present in a family as a result of a parent's

deployment.

Chronosystem

The chronosystem is the 5th and final system of Bronfenbrenner's model. The

chronosystem incorporates shifts and changes over the course of the individual's life.

These changes may be within the individual or may be broader economic or sociocultural

trends (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For example, how might the overall impact on this

population differ in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom

(OIF) versus the Vietnam War as cultural perceptions of these military engagements

varied widely? Though the chronosystem is worthy of study regarding this population, it

is outside the expected scope of this study; however, emerging data may speak to the

impact of the passage of time on perceptions of child-parent relationships.

Significant Changes in Familial Relations

Although research pertaining to results of parental deployment on children remains in its nascent stages, there exists longitudinal historical research focused primarily on parental separation in other domains of life. Researchers in this area give credence to the impacts of parental separation on this population during childhood as well as long-term implications.

Parental Incarceration

To provide added background to the lived encounters of children experiencing parental deployment, research regarding children who experienced parental incarceration should be considered and perhaps paralleled. Literature pertaining to children experiencing parental incarceration serves as an appropriate body of research for this study because both separations are temporary and connote some degree of violence in each situation.

Children of incarcerated parents face problems in a variety of spheres. Researchers performing a meta-analysis of 45 studies found that children of incarcerated parents are at a significantly higher risk for engaging in antisocial behavior than their same age peers (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). Lee, Fang, and Luo (2013) found positive, significant associations for children experiencing parental incarceration and clinically significant mental health concerns for depression and PTSD.

Some of the problems faced by children with incarcerated parents carry into adulthood. Murray and Farrington (2005) conducted a study among males with incarcerated parents. The authors posit that 71% of males who experienced the incarceration of a parent during childhood had an anti-social personality disorder, while

19% of males who experienced no separation from a parent during childhood had an anti-social personality.

Parental incarceration causes a myriad of problems for a child during the period a parent is imprisoned; this continues into adulthood. The impact of this temporary separation on children provides additional context to the proposed study. Specifically, the impact of a temporary separation from one's parent leads to a variety of problems beyond the period of separation and the immediate reunification of the parent and child.

Divorce

One of the most common forms of parental separation from a child in the United States is divorce. Researchers have long posited that children experiencing parental divorce experience a variety of negative impacts, including negative changes in the relationship with one or both parents (Amato, 2001; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). As the literature regarding the impact of divorce on children grew, researchers moved toward the view of conceptualizing divorce as a process on a continuum, rather than as a singular event in a child's life (Sun & Li, 2002). This view of divorce as a process over time aligns well with the developmental model and continuum of Ecological Systems Theory.

Children experiencing the process of parental divorce often face many difficulties. Much research indicates this population struggles with mental health concerns during the process of divorce (Amato, 2001; Hoyt, Cowen, Pedro-Carroll, & Alpert-Gillis 1990; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). Children of divorced parents often experience poorer academic performance (Wadsby & Svedin, 1996). Potter (2010) found those students experiencing parental divorce experience negative effects on their psychosocial

well-being. Potter (2010) went on to state these negative impacts help explain the previously mentioned academic problems.

Impacts of parental divorce and subsequent separation from parents carry into young adulthood for this population. One study by Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kiernan (1995) presented a longitudinal study regarding the impacts of parental divorce on mental health of young adults. Participants and their mothers were assessed at ages 7, 11, 16, and 23. Results from the study indicate a moderate effect size of .19 regarding a negative impact on emotional adjustment for the sample when tested at age 23. The researchers attributed, a 3% rise in the likelihood of scoring in the clinical range on the assessment utilized, The Malaise Inventory, to divorce.

Strengths of the Chase-Lansdale, et al. (1995) include (1) a large sample size (N=17,414) at the conclusion, and (2) the longitudinal nature of the study. One shortcoming of the study included gathering data at only four times throughout the course of the study. Such infrequent data gathering may limit the gathering of nuance and miss important milestones in the lived experiences of participants. Additionally, the subjects the study were born in 1958. Bronfenbrenner's developmental model posits that changing cultural values and mores impact one's development; thus, the participants who were born in 1958 may see different shifts than those in the 21st Century.

Given the focus of the study on the relational changes due to the process of deployment and reintegration, long-term relational impacts due to divorce should be considered. Ahrons (2007) studied children of divorced parents 20 years following their separation. The author specifically examined the relationships between children and their fathers. Ahrons (2007) noted that one's relationship with his/her father had a direct

impact on the quality of the relationships with extended family members once the child became an adult. Ahrons (2007) also noted that a parent's remarriage during childhood impacted their relationship with that parent. Specifically, if the remarriage had a positive impact on his/her lives during childhood those surveyed were more likely to report a strong relationship with their parent as adults.

Ahrons (2007) work, although not related directly to children experiencing deployment, demonstrated that significant processes that occur during childhood regarding parental relationships continue to impact the parent/child relationship for years to come. With this understanding, it is beneficial to the population at hand to examine the substantive shifts in parental relationship following deployment as the reverberations of these shifts may be felt well into adulthood.

Understanding the process of parental incarceration and divorce as well as their consequences on children provide insight regarding the population specific to this study. Researchers examining the impact of parental incarceration and divorce purport a variety of negative shifts during childhood as well as potential long-term consequences for this population. Given the paucity of research regarding the long-term impact of deployment on children of service members, the literature may provide a partial lens through which to examine the phenomena investigated in this study.

Parental Deployment

Children of deployed service members are confronted with a variety of changes in their lives during and following a parent's deployment (Chandra et al., 2009; Lester et al., 2010). Impacts on this population are seen in three central domains: familial, academic, and psychological. By developing an understanding of these results during and

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immediately following deployment, the need for this study will be evident: to address the paucity of research pertaining to shifts in the relationship between the deployed parent and child.

Familial Impacts

Perhaps the entity most impacted by a parent's deployment is the family unit. During deployment, the at-home caregiver (often the spouse of the deployed servicemember) faces a myriad of additional stressors and responsibilities (Chandra et al., 2009). Such high levels of stress lead to higher risks child endangerment in the form of neglect or abuse by the at-home caregiver. Furthermore, during the reintegration phase of the deployment cycle, children cite numerous areas of difficulty pertaining to the relationship with their formerly deployed parents, specifically citing parental affective lability (RAND Corporation, 2011). Finally, qualitative studies lend a voice to service members and their children regarding the toll familial separation takes on several aspects of life (Walsh et al., 2014; Dayton et al., 2014).

The homefront & the at-home caregiver. One of the central areas of impact on a child during a parent's deployment is the relational shift that takes places with family members (Chandra et al., 2009, Flake et al., 2009; Huebner et al., 2007). Military families face numerous unique stressors not encountered by civilian families. Additionally, deployment adds additional stress and potentially negative impacts for children when compared with other military children not experiencing a parent's deployment (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003).

The changes that take place in a military family because of a parent's deployment are numerous (Chandra et al., 2009; Lester et al., 2010; RAND Corporation 2008). Such

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deviations go beyond missing the deployed parent and worrying about their safety, to include financial stressors, and changes in roles and responsibilities within the family unit due to deployment (Richardson et al., 2011).

The difficult experiences of the at-home caregiver have been well chronicled over time and subsequently corroborate the findings of Huebner et al., (2007). Wexler & McGrath (1991) were the first to sample 180 at-home caregivers during a deployment. Reactions to deployment included: loneliness (78%), worry (74%), sadness (65%), anxiety (56%), anger (37%), headaches (43%), insomnia, (48%), and concentration problems (38%). Given the multiple negative affective impacts of a deployment on the at-home caregiver, and the strong link between at-home caregiver wellness and child wellness, it is prudent to further examine the affective experiences of children regarding a parent's deployment.

The authors addressed the difficulties relating to family members and shifting roles and responsibilities. This adjustment in roles, responsibilities, and family mores may be defined as "boundary ambiguity" (Huebner et al., 2007). The concept of "boundary ambiguity" supports the idea that a conflict in familial relationships and mores may develop due to the need for children and adolescents to assume dual roles e.g. (sibling, secondary breadwinner, caregiver, and emotional support) for the at-home caregiver, generally the remaining parent. One consequence of an increase in boundary ambiguity is "lashing out" to toward the at-home care giver. Generally, this "lashing out" is directed toward one's mother, as a child's father is more likely to be in the military and subsequently deploy.

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The shifting roles and responsibilities lead to increased tension with the at-home parent (Flake et al., 2009) and siblings (Huebner et al., 2007). Participants reported difficulty relating to their formerly deployed parent during reintegration. This difficulty was attributed to the formerly deployed parent not appreciating the changes the participant underwent due to the deployment, and not understanding the change in roles/routines at home. Participants also stated they felt much closer to their at-home caregiver, usually their mother (Huebner et al., 2007). A closer relationship with the at-home caregiver compared to the deployed parent highlights the need to understand the potential long-term effects of deployment on the deployed parent/child relationship.

Physical manifestations of deployment stress. Conflict within the family may also take a tragic turn during the deployment and reintegration period as evidenced by increased rates of child maltreatment and abuse (Campbell, Brown, & Okwara, 2011). The rate of substantiated child maltreatment cases in military families doubled in the 2-year period following the September 11th terror attacks. During this same period, substantiated cases of child maltreatment remained stagnant for civilian families. It was reported that most instances of child maltreatment and abuse take place during the highly stressful, transitional periods at the beginning of a deployment and during the reintegration period following a deployment (Rentz et al., 2007).

Rentz et al., (2007) report that between January 1, 2000 and September 30, 2002, the rate of substantiated child maltreatment was 37 percent lower among military families than their civilian counterparts (RR= 0.67, 95 percent CI: 0.62, 0.72). This changed drastically once OEF and OIF increased in scope. From October 1, 2002, to June 30, 2003, the rate of substantiated child maltreatment was 22 percent higher among children

in military families than their civilian counterparts (RR=1.22, 95 percent CI: 1.10, 1.36). Such a drastic shift in child maltreatment among military families during periods of increased deployments is troubling. Furthermore, demonstrates the value of examining the long-term impacts of such a stressful period.

An additional study found that rates of child maltreatment and abuse were higher during times of deployment than non-deployment (Gibbs, Martin, Kupper, & Johnson, 2007). This same study found that during deployment the severity of the maltreatment and abuse also increased when compared to times of non-deployment. Additionally, it was found the rates of child neglect almost doubled during times of deployment when compared to periods of non-deployment (Gibbs, et al., 2007). Such tragic outcomes emphasize the need for supportive services for these families. Additionally, these tragic results create an imperative to better understand the lived experiences of military families, specifically children of deployed soldiers.

Later research confirmed Gibbs et al., (2007) results. McCarthy et al., (2015) examined Air Force families and substantiated instances of child maltreatment committed by the civilian parent before, during, and after deployment. Incidents of child maltreatment committed by the civilian parent were 52% higher during deployment when compared to predeployment levels. Maltreatment rates regarding the civilian parent range from 127% to 182% (p< .01) (McCarthy et al., 2015). Maltreatment rates following deployment were 56% (p<.01) of the rate during deployment, indicating high levels of resilience in military families.

Although this study by McCarthy et al., (2015) confirms the need to better understand the lived experiences of children during deployment and their subsequent

long-term impacts it has several shortcomings. The study utilizes archival data of substantiated child maltreatment cases and thus likely does not consider the many unreported cases of maltreatment. The child maltreatment prevalence emphasizes the high amount of stress placed on children during parental deployment. The study conducted by the author aims to shed light on the long-term impact of such stressors on the deployed parent/child relationship.

Difficulty during reintegration. RAND Corporation (2011) produced a five-chapter technical report focusing on the impacts of deployment on all members of the impacted family. This comprehensive report included quantitative data on emotional adjustment, family relations, and academic implications of deployment. RAND Corporation (2011) found nearly 60% of youth reported challenges during parental reintegration. Additionally, 54% of study participants endorsed fitting the formerly deployed parent back into home routines (i.e. role negotiation) as problematic. Researchers found older teens ($F(1, 1453)=9.4$, $p<.01$) and girls ($F(1,1453)=23.2$, $p<.01$) experience the most difficulty during the reintegration process.

Results also indicated that the cumulative length of deployment plays a critical role in the difficulties experienced during reintegration. Over half of the caregivers surveyed (52%) report that getting to know the deployed parent again was a critical problem during the reintegration period. There was a statistically significant difference between participants who experienced high cumulative deployment (13 months or more) and low cumulative deployment (12 months or less).

This study by RAND Corporation (2011) has numerous strengths. Researchers garnered a large sample size (N=1507). Additionally, the authors surveyed both the child

and the non-deployed parent providing two data points for each participant's experience during deployment. There are also several limitations. One limitation is the lack of context for the data presented; while it is important to know relational problems with the formerly deployed parent exist, clarification is needed to understand what aspects of the parent/child relationship prove problematic and if they are temporal in nature. Parent/child relationships may have trouble for a myriad of reasons and it is important to understand from the child's perspective what they perceive as inhibiting a positive reintegration process.

The statistics provide much needed definition to the problems military children and their families face upon reintegrating the deployed soldier. However, the study by RAND Corporation (2011) provides little information regarding the specific lived experiences of children of deployed soldiers. While 40% of children's problems relate to their returning parent's mood changes, no detail was provided as to how this problem impacts the child's perception of self (1) in relation to their deployed parent, (2) as a member of the broader familial unit.

Lived experiences of returning servicemembers & children. These stressors that may be deemed normative for a military family compounded with the greater likelihood of deployment since the attacks of September 11th, 2001, led to an increase in the number of service members stating separation from family as the primary reason for leaving the military. In 2001, 15% of officers gave familial separation as the primary reason for their leaving the military. By 2004, this number doubled to 30% (U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2006). For enlisted service members, this number increase from 11%-18% in the same time frame (U.S. Army

Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2006). Such a stark increase

indicates that the deployed parent views deployment as a negative impact on relationships

with their spouse and children. Thus, it is important to develop a deeper understanding of

shifts in parent/child relationships due to deployment, specifically from the perspective of

the child.

Walsh et al. (2014) provide additional insight to the statistics through a qualitative

study, specifically grounded theory, examining fathers' perceptions of parenting

challenges during the reintegration period of the deployment cycle. The first category of

themes to emerge was motivation. It was revealed being a good father was important to

the participants. Participants in this study emphasized a desire to develop new parenting

skills, specifically regarding how to better express their own emotions and how to

provide their children with emotional support. A desire for assistance with emotion

carried into another theme of motivation to better manage temper (Walsh et al., 2014).

The second category purported by participants entailed challenges. Specifically,

participants highlighted the themes of 1) reconnecting with their children during

reintegration, 2) adapting to expectations from military life to family life, and 3) regret

about missing important developmental milestones in their children's lives (Walsh et al.,

2014). Participants' lived experiences emphasize the period of reintegration presents

numerous difficulties from the deployed parents' perspective. Developing a similar

understanding from the perspective of the children, now young adults, may provide

valuable insight regarding how to effectively address the issues conveyed in this study's

themes and categories.

Dayton et al. (2014) provide some qualitative data on the experiences of deployed fathers on their perceptions of themselves as fathers considering their deployment. Many soldiers reported negative effects on their ability to father their young children. Such valuable information regarding the experiences of the soldiers lends credence to the need for qualitative information from children regarding their shifting perceptions on family due to parental deployment.

Huebner et al. (2007) provides a qualitative study examining the lived experiences of children during parental deployment. This study provides context to several fundamental areas, including mental health concerns including anxiety. Participants in this study reported increased levels of anxiety due to ruminating about the safety and well-being of their deployed parent. Participants reported feelings of depression due to their at-home caregiver experiencing symptoms consistent with a depressive episode.

The study by Huebner et al. (2007) is limited in several critical ways. Regarding demographics, this study did not gather information pertaining the deployed parent's rank. Rank is a useful demographic measure with this population; since rank is a determinant of a service member's take-home pay, it may serve as a proxy for socioeconomic status (Chartrand, Frank, White, & Shope, 2008). The study by Huebner et al (2007) has a large sample size (N=107), the responses were gathered during large focus groups. Such a format may yield less in-depth responses regarding the lived experiences of this population than if more in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample size that is more common in qualitative research. This study does not lend adequate attention to the potential shifts in relationships with the deployed parent during the reintegration period. The researchers acknowledged and gathered data confirming

reintegration is a stressful time for this population because familial roles and responsibilities shift during parental deployment. However, the researchers did not examine how the parent/child relationship had changed immediately following reintegration.

A lack of understanding of the shifts in the deployed parent/child and broader familial relationships is evident. Both parties (along with the at-home caregiver and potentially other family members) have, according to Huebner et al. (2007), undergone a highly difficult situation and must now forge a differentiated relationship due to the deployment experience. Understanding the long-term effects of deployment on this relationship may forge a better understanding of the deployment experience for both parties.

Conclusion. The waves made within the family unit by a parent's military deployment are numerous. The at-home caregiver often bears the brunt of the added responsibility and increased stress in the home during deployment (Flake et al., 2009). Sadly, such additional pressures may lead to severe outcomes such as child abuse and neglect (Gibbs et al., 2007). Such added stressors lead to difficulty in deployed parent/child during the reintegration phase of the deployment cycle (RAND Corporation, 2011). These difficult aspects of a family experiencing a parent's military deployment lead to parents and children reporting higher levels of anxiety and stress when discussing their loved one as they recall their experience of deployment (Huebner et al., 2007; Dayton et al., 2014; Walsh et al., 2014).

Academic Impacts

Changes in academic performance serve as a central indicator of the impacts of parental deployment on children (RAND Corporation, 2008; RAND Corporation, 2011; Richardson et al., 2011). A child's academic performance provides quantifiable evidence outside of the subject and their immediate family regarding well-being. Such measures indicate parental deployment negatively impacts academic performance (RAND Corporation, 2011). Schools also serve a positive role for this population, as an academic setting may prove more stable and secure then home during deployment. Finally school officials and healthcare employees within the school provide valuable insight into the overall well-being of a child during a parent's deployment.

Academic performance shifts. Lyle (2006) reported that academic concerns have been a long-standing issue for military families as these families tend to move to new communities at far higher rates than their civilian counterparts. Reed, Bell, and Edwards (2011), using a sample of 8th grade adolescents, found that those with parents in the military were 10 % (p< .05) more likely to earn a majority of Cs, Ds, and Fs than those with civilian parents. Among 10th and 12th grade students, those with deployed parents were significantly more likely, 9% (p<.05), to receive a majority of Cs, Ds, and Fs than those students in military families not experiencing deployment (Reed et al., 2011). Such a statistically significant difference emphasizes the negative implications of parental deployment on children. Differences also exist when comparing military vs civilian, and deployed vs. civilian. Additionally, RAND Corporation (2011) reported significant results for military youth compared to their civilian counterparts indicating this population felt less connected to peers and less happy to be at school.

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Parental deployment appears to exacerbate the academic problems already faced by children growing up in military families. Richardson et al. (2011) addressed changes in academic performance of children with deployed parents by gathering quantitative data from school officials, including teachers, principals, and school counselors. School counselors, often the only mental health professionals to which many children and adolescents have access, report that they see a myriad of problems in children with deployed parents; the problems included lowered academic performance and psychosocial well-being within the school setting as compared to their civilian counterparts (Richardson et al., 2011).

Rationale for academic performance shifts. The evidence from professionals who work closely with students, coupled with high depression rates in this population (Reed et al., 2011), provide an invaluable understanding of this population's lived experience with regard their academic performance and psychosocial development in school. Huebner et al. (2007) and RAND Corporation (2011) reported this population is often concerned about their deployed parent's well-being. The proposed study aims to develop deeper understanding of the shifting relationship between the child and the deployed parent. This deeper understanding may prove beneficial in mitigating some of the anxiety experienced during deployment and lead to more positive experiences in school.

Benefits of academic setting. Surprisingly, this same population reported feeling safer in an academic setting and that teachers treated students fairly when compared to those with civilian parents (RAND Corporation 2011). This sense of security and belief that teachers are fair in their treatment of students may be indicative of the fact that the

at-home parent's well-being is decreasing (Flake et al., 2009) leading to added familial stress and higher rates of abuse and neglect (Gibbs et al., 2007). As a result, children of deployed soldiers may have a more favorable opinion of their teachers and school, as it is a comparatively more nurturing environment. Deteriorating well-being for the at-home parent may facilitate these students viewing their teachers in a more positive light than they did prior to their parent's deployment and the accompanying adverse impacts.

      Academic and childcare professionals' view. An added benefit of the school setting is the School Liaison Program (SLP). The SLP was developed by the military to develop strong partnerships with schools to better support the academic and social development of children in military families. The United States Marine Corps (USMC) commissioned Aronson and Perkins (2013) to survey all employed Marine school liasons (N= 20). These 20 school liasons were located at 17 marine bases throughout the United States and Japan. School liasons were surveyed regarding the types of problems most commonly addressed as well as each problem's severity. Frequency is described as the school liasons dealing with the issues "fairly" to "very" often and severity as "moderately" to "very problematic."

      "Multiple" and "Long deployments" frequency rates were each 80% while severity rates were 50% each. Anxiety/worry about a deployment also received a frequency rate of 80%, but had a severity rate of 30% (Aronson & Perkins, 2013). Weaknesses of this study include a small population, a single branch of the military, and only survey results. Strengths include the unique perspective of SL's as they are the only military employees dedicated to addressing military children within the schools. SL's frequency rates of 80% for 3 deployment related categories emphasize the impact

deployment and even the possibility of deployment may have children's academic performance and wellbeing (Aronson & Perkins, 2013). Given such negative effects of parents' deployment, the proposed study aims to shed light on how the lived experiences may impact the long-term quality of the relationship with the deployed parent.

In addition to school counselors, school nurses increasingly understand the many unique issues faced by children of deployed soldiers. These healthcare professionals typically recognize the impact of deployment on soldiers' children, specifically the unique problems posed to them while in an academic setting. Recognition of such substantive problems by mental health care and medical healthcare professionals within the school further emphasize the need for additional research regarding these issues in the long-term (Fitzsimmons & Krause-Parello, 2009).

Conclusion. The critical role schools play in a child's life must be considered when assessing the variety of changes in a child's life due their parent's military deployment. Negative shifts in academic performance as well as beneficial aspects of an academic setting must be better understood to understand a child's lived experience. Furthermore, school officials, liasons, and healthcare professionals within an academic setting provide rich data and information regarding changes in a child's mental health during and after a deployment.

Psychological Impacts

Perhaps the area receiving the most attention by researchers regarding children experiencing parental deployment is psychological impacts and their subsequent manifestations. To develop a well-defined understanding of the current literature for this

population, it is critical to focus on the increased reports of mental health concerns, illicit substance use, and suicidal ideation.

One important study examining various facets of psychological well-being during deployment was conducted by Reed et al. (2011). There were three outcomes: sample sizes were N=9565 (quality of life), N= 9986 (depressed mood), and N=9964 (thoughts about suicide). This study was conducted utilizing the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS), a survey given to all public-school students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in Washington. The results of this study and other pertinent studies regarding the psychological impacts of parental deployment are discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Mental health concerns. Children of deployed soldiers face many implications on their mental health. Numerous reports indicated that this population is subject to higher rates of depression and anxiety (Lester et al., 2010; RAND Corporation, 2011; Reed et al., 2011). Jensen, Martin, and Watanabe (1996) reported that during the first Iraq War (e.g. Operation Desert Storm) children with deployed parents reported modestly higher levels of childhood depression, as evidenced by elevated scores on the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI). The researchers posited that at-home caregivers self-reported higher rates of depressive symptoms during deployment. Increases in depressive symptoms reported by the at-home caregiver are critical, as those symptoms may exacerbate the depressive symptoms experienced by the child under their care (Richardson et al., 2011). Research regarding the psychological effects of parental deployment has greatly increased since the beginning of OEF and OIF.

Reed et al. (2011) measured "low quality of life." This was assessed through a set

of five questions on the survey provided, specifically the Youth Quality of Life

Instrument Surveillance Version (YQOL-S). Significant differences for this construct

were reported across all three grade levels when compared to peers in military families

without a deployed parent. These significant differences were only found in males.

Reed et al. (2011) found adolescent males and females in 8th, 10, and 12th grades

with deployed parents reported higher rates of depressed mood than those with civilian

parents or those with military parents who were not deployed. These differences were

significant when compared to their peers in civilian families. For 10th and 12th grade

boys these differences were significant when compared to their peers in military families

not going through deployment. Since parents and family often serve as a protective

factor or a risk factor, it is critical to understand how relationships with the deployed

service member are impacted by their deployment. It was also found that children of all

ages experience worsening depressive symptoms as the length of the deployment

increased (Lester et al., 2010).

Suicidal ideation. Reed et al. (2011) found such depressive symptoms put this

population at a significant risk for suicidal ideations. Parental deployment is associated

with higher odds of reporting suicidal thoughts among 8th grade girls (odds ration

[OR]=1.66; 95% CI=1.43, 3.10) and 8th grade boys (OR=1.75; 95% CI= 1.79, 4.20).

Results for both genders were significant when compared with their civilian counterparts.

Results for 8th grade girls were significant when compared with participants in military

families not experiencing parental deployment, thus emphasizing many of the

maladjustments seen are a function of the deployment versus being wholly attributable to being in a military family.

Reed et al. (2011) discovered 10th and 12th grades, adolescent boys experiencing parental deployment also reported thoughts of suicide (OR= 1.64; 95% CI= 1.13, 2.38). These results were significant when compared to those participants living in civilian households. Those 10th and 12th grade males in military households not experiencing deployment reported suicidal thoughts compared to their civilian counterparts.

A later study conducted by Gilreath et al. (2015) corroborated the results purported by Reed et al., (2011) regarding this population's risk for suicidal ideations. Gilreath et al. (2015) found adolescents with connections to the military had statistically significantly higher prevalence for each of the suicide measures utilized in the analysis. In the study, 24% of youth connected to the military seriously considered suicide compared to 18.1 % of their civilian counterparts (Rao-Scott $\chi2 = 45.97$, $p < 0.0001$). Additionally, when Gilreath et al. (2015) controlled for factors including grade, sex, and race/ethnicity, those adolescents connected to the military were again significantly more likely to seriously consider suicide than their civilian peers. Significant increases in suicidal ideation stemming from a parent's deployment emphasize the importance of better understanding aspects of that relationship both before and after the deployment. Understanding the substantive changes that may arise in this relationship, both in the immediate aftermath and long-term, could provide clarity for future research and clinical interventions.

Although the study by Gilreath et al. (2015) has many strengths including a substantial sample size (N=311,500) and heterogeneous demographics, several

shortcomings and questions surface upon closer examination. It will be important to better understand how thoughts of depression and protective factors (such as a relationship with a parent) impact psychological maladjustment. Additionally, it is important to consider that in gathering participants, the authors did not control for a parent's current or past deployment status. Due to the numerous problems regarding familial relationships, academic performance, and other aspects of psychological maladjustment resulting from parental deployment, results may become further significant if such analyses were run.

Substance use. Reed et al. (2011) examined binge drinking in the past two weeks. Among 8th grade girls, those experiencing parental deployment were significantly more likely, 8% (p< .05) than their civilian peers and those with a military parent not experiencing deployment to engage in binge drinking. In 10th and 12th grade girls, binge drinking rates for those in military families not experiencing deployment and those who did experience deployment were both 29% and thus significantly different (p< .05) when compared to the civilian population rate of 18%.

Among male participants at all 3 grade levels, significant differences in binge drinking behaviors (p< .05) emerged comparing military and deployed populations with civilian populations. However, no significant differences emerged when comparing those with a deployed parent to those in military families not experiencing deployment. This may indicate growing up in a military family is the most salient factor for binge drinking behaviors, rather than if a child experiences a military parent's deployment.

A more recent study corroborates the results published by Reed et al. (2011) regarding drinking behaviors, and expands to include any alcohol use as well as illegal

substance use (Acion, Ramirez, Jorge, & Arndt, 2013). Acion et al. (2013) utilized the Iowa Youth Survey (IYS), a voluntary survey given to all public-school students in the state of Iowa in the 6th, 8th, and 11th grades. Sample sizes were split accordingly: currently deployed/recently returned from deployment parents (N=1758) and non-military parents (NM, N= 57,637).

Acion et al. (2013) posited having a currently deployed parent or a parent who has recently returned from deployment has a wide variety of harmful outcomes. The following are the results: rates of alcohol use (e.g. drunk more than a few sips of alcohol at any point in one's life), [risk difference (RD) = 7.85, 99.91% confidence interval (CI) = 4.44–11.26], binge drinking (e.g. having more than 5 alcoholic drinks in one sitting in the last 30 days) (RD = 8.02, 99.91% CI = 4.91–11.13), marijuana use (i.e. at any point in the past 30 days) (RD = 5.30, 99.91% CI = 2.83–7.77), other illegal drug use (i.e. at any point in the past 30 days) (RD = 7.10, 99.91% CI = 4.63–9.56), and prescription drug misuse (e.g. taking prescription drugs not prescribed to the participant or intentionally misusing prescription drugs that were prescribed to them) (RD = 8.58, 99.91% CI = 5.64–11.51).

The rates for all four outcomes were greater for those children currently experiencing parental deployment or those going through the reintegration process. The extent of the effects is constant across all three grade levels surveyed in the IYS (Acion et al., 2013). Thus, it may be deduced from this study that increases in risk taking behaviors, specifically drug and alcohol consumption, are a serious concern for the population at hand.

There are several important strengths and shortcomings to the study by Acion and colleagues (2013). The large sample size (N= 1758) stands as an asset. The differentiation between prior drinking behavior and binge drinking provides a more nuanced understanding of the alcohol consumption habits of participants. Additionally, the inclusion of marijuana, illicit drugs, and prescription drug abuse provides wide-ranging data on the myriad of drugs utilized by adolescents throughout the country.

With regard to shortcomings by Acion et al. (2013), the cross-sectional nature of the study makes it difficult to discern any causal conclusions. Data was gathered via a self-report survey; thus, participants may be more likely to underreport the illicit behaviors, which may lead to inaccurate results. Finally, the study does not differentiate between survey participants experiencing parental deployment or reintegration and those living in a military family without a deployment.

Overall, the study by Acion et al. (2013) emphasizes that children experiencing parental deployment are more likely to engage in risky behaviors than their civilian counterparts. Results from this study corroborate many of the findings purported by Reed et al. (2011). Both studies firmly indicate children experiencing parental deployment are at a significantly greater risk than their peers in military families not experiencing parental deployment to experience adverse outcomes. These adverse experiences included engaging in risk taking behaviors such as binge drinking and using illicit drugs.

Critique of Reed et al., (2011). Given the depth of the study conducted by Reed et al. (2011), it is critical develop a deep understanding of its strengths and weaknesses as it relates to understanding the lived experiences of children who experienced parental

deployment. The study by Reed et al. (2011) has many strengths. The sample size of the study, which consists of nearly 10,000 participants per outcome lends credence to the analyses run. Additionally, the authors distinguished between participants with a parent in the military families, those experiencing parental deployment, and those with civilian parents. The study by Reed at al. (2011) also has three central limitations worthy of further exploration: (1) data comes from a self-reported survey administered while participants were in school, and (2) due to this fact, the underreporting of outcomes is more likely (3) the study was cross sectional in nature. As a result, no inferences regarding causation may be made.

Reed et al. (2011) provides further evidence that children experiencing parental deployment are highly susceptible to both internalized and externalized problems related to their psychological well-being. Significant differences on several outcomes between this population and those children in military families not experiencing deployment indicate these problems are based in deployment rather than the experience of living in a military family. Given the significance of the problems discovered by Reed et al. (2011), the conducted study aims to shed light on how the stressors leading to such problems or even the problems themselves may impact the long-term quality of the relationship with the formerly deployed parent.

Conclusion. The psychological impacts of experiencing a parent's military deployment are numerous. The population at hand finds itself at significantly higher rates for depressive and anxiety related symptoms. Additionally, children of deployed servicemembers are significantly more likely than their peers to engage risk-taking behaviors such as alcohol and illegal drug use. Finally, and most concerning, children of

deployed servicemembers are significantly more likely to have suicidal ideation than their peers whose parents are not deployed or who are employed in the civilian sector.

Considering the seminal studies examined above, it is important to continue developing a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of this population. Specifically, how does being in a military family and experiencing the deployment of a parent substantively impact relationships with their formerly deployed parent as they enter early adulthood? By allowing this population to speak for themselves, further insights may be developed regarding the long-term effects of deployment. These insights may subsequently lead to beneficial changes in clinical approaches to treating psychological, familial, and social maladjustments, improving predeployment and postdeployment services for military families, and other issues for children of deployed service members.

Purpose of the Present Study

Though the body of literature regarding the impact of parental deployment on children continues to grow, several questions warrant further investigation. Dolgin (1996) posited children adjust to shifting roles due to parental divorce, and Moyer & Armelie (2015) posited that children of deployed servicemembers often face difficulty adjusting to new and often obfuscated familial norms and mores during the reintegration phase.

Long-term negative impacts- specifically externalized behavior- may be attributed to temporary parental separation (Murray & Farrington, 2005). Additionally, long-term impacts were found on the quality of relationships with a parent and other family members following parental separation due to divorce have been found (Ahrons, 2007).

Huebner et al. (2007) revealed in their study, children who experienced parental deployment could identify relational shifts with their formerly deployed parent. Researchers also found that 54% of participants endorsed reintegrating the formerly deployed parent as problematic (RAND Corporation, 2011).

Walsh et al. (2014) performed a grounded theory study through interviewing formerly deployed fathers. Their results indicate formerly deployed fathers have a strong desire to be high-quality fathers. Walsh et al. (2014) purported an entire category and subsequent themes highlighting the various difficult aspects of deployed fathers reconnecting with their children. Given the paternal perspective posits difficulty during the reintegration period, understanding the possible evolution or dissolution of such difficulties, from the child's perspective, is an appropriate next step for this line of research.

Based on the clear negative impacts parental deployment has on this population, specifically regarding difficulty developing a positive, healthy relationship with their formerly deployed parent during the reintegration phase, I examined how members of this population view relationships with their formerly deployed parent during the period of young adulthood.

To expand upon current literature surrounding the reintegration period and begin understanding the long-term effect of deployment on these relationships, it was prudent to utilize a qualitative methodology. Specifically, consensual qualitative research (CQR) provided the best means to better understand this phenomenon (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997).

Rationale for Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR)

As can be ascertained from the breadth and depth of the literature presented in this chapter, quantitative paradigms are widely utilized to understand the impact of parental deployment on children. Though much valuable information is discerned from quantitative work, qualitative methodologies allow for the phenomena of changing parent child relationships due to deployment to be studied at greater depth. The long-term impacts of deployment on the parent/child relationship are the subject of an even smaller quantity of research. A qualitative approach will assist in defining that phenomenon and, ideally, a framework on which further studies may rest (Gough & Deatrick, 2015). Additionally, the utilization of a qualitative methodology in this study will allow the population to provide an in-depth description, in their own language, of how a parent's deployment effects their relationship, thus not limiting the definition of an unknown phenomenon to preexisting constructs steeped in the understandings of the reintegration period of the deployment cycle.

Given the highly complex nature of parental deployment and the nascent stages of its understanding, qualitative methodologies are better apt to describe such events and relationships rather than explain or manipulate them. The relatively early stages of studying these relationships lend itself well to a qualitative methodology as qualitative work seeks to provide tentative ideas as opposed to strict facts (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Stiles, 1993).

Furthermore, it is critical to consider that qualitative work does not exist in a vacuum. Strong quantitative studies are an integral aspect of researching the population at hand. Qualitative methodologies are merely one facet of understanding and better

defining this phenomenon. Furthermore, qualitative methodologies may prove beneficial in providing parameters that quantitative studies may utilize to better justify their own research questions.

Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) stands as an appropriate methodology with which to gain a greater understanding of lived experiences of this population. Through CQR this study will allow the population to describe and define the phenomena rather than seek to augment the phenomena through quantitative instruments. This will prove beneficial as those who were children during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are now just becoming adults. Given this phenomenon is in its nascent stages, describing it and giving it depth in this study, through CQR, will better inform future quantitative studies. Given the lack of depth on the phenomena at hand, CQR's emphasis on utilizing multiple judges will help ensure the lived experiences of this population is clearly conveyed.

One benefit of CQR is the attention to culture and subsequent avoidance of bias. Built into the process are several methods to ensure the team considers potential biases (Hill, 2012). Specifically, the team discusses and addresses potential biases before examining the data. Additionally, the auditor is separated from the analysis team, and thus, may be able to see additional biases that may have emerged during analysis. Additionally, CQR does not allow for the creation of hypotheses, given that establishing such hypotheses may bias the analytic process. This is especially important given the unique culture of a military family and the primary researchers long history with the population at hand.

An additional benefit of CQR is the feasibility. The straightforward nature of CQR allows for a team to be easily trained in the analytic process. Given CQR is an iterative process, it is likely that team members will become well-versed in the CQR model as they will repeat the same analytic process throughout. Additionally, the auditing process built in to CQR ensures fidelity to the process should any team members inadvertently veer from the model (Hill, 2012).

One common critique of qualitative methodologies is the likelihood of discrepancies that develop when individuals examine the same stimulus. One strength of CQR is the means with which it addresses this critique of qualitative work. CQR utilizes a consensus process among the team to address discrepancies in understanding phenomena (Hill, 2012). Hill (1997) stipulates that the myriad of perspectives brought by each team member may be adequately challenged and refined by other team members. This ensures that, over time, consensus and appropriate extraction of meaning takes places.

The consensus process allows for the judges to work through their reactions so that differing perspectives can be examined. The team then decides together about the interpretation of the data. The process with which the analysis team examines the data during all phases of CQR is iterative in nature, thus ensuring all interviews receive the same examination and analysis. The auditing process provides an additional level of evaluation outside of the team's process to ensure fidelity to the data and the model of CQR (Hill, 2012).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Participants in the study included a total of 10 young adults who were 19-25 years-old, which was within the required age range (18-25). Hill et al. (2005) recommends garnering 8-15 participants for a study utilizing CQR, an expectation met by this sample. Participants were asked to identify their gender, resulting in 3 males and 7 females. Information regarding participants' ages while their parents were deployed was also gathered, with ages ranging from 2 to 18 years-old. Regarding ethnicity, 9 participants identified as Caucasian while 1 participant identified as Latino/Hispanic.

All 10 participants reported that their father was the parent who deployed. This aspect of the participants' experience was not intentional. The number of parental deployments experienced by participants ranged from 2 to 7. The length of individual deployments was a range of 1 month to 18 months. Participants' deployed parents were members of the Air Force (8 participants) and the Army (2 participants). Regarding duty status, 9 participants reported their parents deployed as active duty members of their branches, while 1 participant stated their parent deployed as a reservist. Pertaining to rank, 7 participants reported their parents were enlisted members of their respective branches, while 3 participants stated their parents were commissioned officers.

Participants reported living both on and off-base during their parents' multiple deployments.

There were 5 participants in the study who reported living strictly on-base during their parents' various deployments, while there were 2 participants who reported living strictly off-base during their parents' deployments. Finally, 3 participants reported a combination of living both on and off-base during their parents' multiple deployments.

Table 1. Participant Demographics.

Participant	1	2	3	4	5
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Age(s) while deployed	2, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, 10	13, 14, 15, 16, 18	12, 13, 17	7, 8, 10 12	8, 12
Current age	25	23	24	24	24
Ethnicity	Caucasian	Latino	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Gender of deployed parent	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Length of deployment(s) (months)	2, 2, 1, 1, 6, 6, 1	9, 12, 10, 10, 9	6, 6, 4	2, 6, 1, 6	12, 6
Branch	Air Force	Air Force	Air Force	Air Force	Air Force
Active duty or Reservist	Active	Active	Active	Active	Reserve
Rank of parent	Enlisted	Officer	Officer	Enlisted	Enlisted
On (1)/Off (2) base housing while deployed	1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2	2, 2, 1, 1, 1	2, 2, 2	2, 1, 1, 1	2, 2

Table 1. cont.

Participant	6	7	8	9	10
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Age(s) while deployed	5, 9, 11, 13	6, 12, 16	7, 9	3, 8, 10, 13	3, 15
Current age	23	25	19	24	25
Ethnicity	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Gender of deployed parent	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Length of deployment(s) (months)	4, 4, 4, 2	6, 9, 6	6, 8	6, 6, 8 4	18, 12
Branch	Air Force	Army	Air Force	Army	Air Force
Active duty or Reservist	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active
Rank of parent	Enlisted	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Enlisted
On (1)/Off (2) base housing while deployed	1, 1, 1, 1	1, 1, 1	1, 1	1, 1, 1, 1	1, 1

Procedures

The procedures utilized in this study follow the guidelines of Consensual

Qualitative Research (Hill et al., 1997). This study received formal approval from the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota and was conducted

in Fall, 2016.

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Participant Recruitment

Hill et al. (2005) notes that the 10 participants garnered for the study is a respectable range of participants, as it will allow researchers to see consistency in experiences across participants or discern if a finding is isolated to 1 or 2 participants. This consistency across participants in referred to as "saturation." Participants were recruited for this study through a variety of mediums including: various social media platforms (Facebook & Twitter), and paper flyers distributed at 2 state university campuses located in Northern Plains states. One participant was referred to the study by an earlier participant.

The first individual who met the criteria and agreed to participate, served as the subject of a pilot study. Results from the pilot were shared with the PI's advisor, Dr. Cindy Juntunen, Ph.D., LP. Upon analysis of the pilot study it was determined that no changes were needed to the interview questions. The subsequent 9 individuals who met the criteria and agreed to participate were members of the subsequent study. Given the lack of a need to modify the initial protocol, the data garnered from the pilot study participant was included for analysis. Participants' demographic information is provided in Table 1.

Prospective participants who contacted the primary investigator were sent an overview of the study, consent form, and a demographics and background form to be filled out and returned at their earliest convenience. This form contained the requisite information to determine if they qualified for the study. Specifically, the form presented information on their current age, age during their parent's deployment(s), and cumulative length of their parent's deployment(s). Once it was determined that the prospective

participants met the requirements to participate in the study, a time for an interview was arranged.

To participate in the study, participants must have experienced a minimum of 13 cumulative months of parental deployment before the age of 18. This is based on the RAND (2011) study purporting children who experience 13 months or more of parental deployment experience significantly worse effects than their peers whose parents are deployed 13 months or less. Additionally, participants must presently be 18 to 25 years of age. Lastly, participants' formerly deployed parent must currently be living.

Instrument Development

The interview protocol resulted from the guidance of Hill et al. (1997; 2005), consultation with the researcher's advisor, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The instrument was developed surrounding the goal of understanding if or how the common relational difficulties that occur due to a parent's deployment manifest during early adulthood.

A pilot interview was conducted to determine the efficacy of the protocol initially developed. After the researcher consulted with his advisor, it was determined that the initial questions were appropriate for the research questions and the remaining 9 interviews proceeded without any changes to the protocol. The interview consisted of 5 formal questions, and 3 follow-up prompts to ensure consistency across all participants. The initial question served the purpose of building rapport with the participant and garnering an overall picture of their lived experience. Hill et al. (1997) refers to this as the, "grand tour" question.

The primary interview questions were as follows:

1. What does it mean to you to grow up in a military family?

2. What was your relationship like with your parent prior to their deployment(s)?

3. What was your relationship like with your formerly deployed parent right after his or her return?

4. What is your relationship like with that parent now?

5. What, if any, impact does deployment have on a parent's relationship with their child?

Interview Protocol

The protocol included a semi-structured interview which facilitated collecting information regarding participants' lived experiences pertaining to growing up in a military family, parental deployment, and relationships with their formerly deployed parent. All participants were interviewed by the principal investigator, via an audiotaped telephone interview. The interview protocol may be reviewed in Appendix B.

Prior to and following the semi-structured interview, the participant could ask additional questions regarding the nature of the study and the consent form. Additionally, at the onset of the conversation, informed consent was reviewed with participants. Per Hill's (1997; 2012) guidelines, space was provided for the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on the unique experiences and insight provided by each participant.

The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 45 minutes. After the interview, participants were immediately sent their compensation as well as a debriefing form,

which provided more information on the study and additional resources participants may utilize should they experience distress.

Interviews were transcribed by the principal investigator (not including minimal encouragers). Although few and far between, inaudible portions of recordings were not included in the transcripts and thus were not utilized during the analysis phase of CQR. All identifying information was deleted from the transcripts and was not made available to the analysis team.

Analysis Team

The analysis team was comprised of 5 members (2 females and 3 males) as well as one auditor. Timothy P. Pagano, M.Ed., N.C.C., a doctoral candidate in counseling psychology, lead the team. Two team members had MA's in counseling, while the remaining 2 team members were graduate students in counseling. Three of the team members had experiences working with other qualitative methodologies, while 1 member worked on previous studies incorporating CQR. All team members self-identified as Caucasian. Members ranged in age from 23 to 35 years-old. At the onset of the analysis process, team members were instructed in general qualitative analytic skills, such as coding. Subsequently team members learned about the general principles and processes of CQR via seminal articles and PowerPoint presentation prepared by the Principal Investigator.

The auditor for this study was Cindy Juntunen, Ph.D., L.P. Dr. Juntunen has extensive experience utilizing CQR and served in the capacity of an auditor on prior CQR studies. Additionally, Dr. Juntunen serves as the Principal Investigator's dissertation chairperson. Throughout the analytic process, Dr. Juntunen provided objective feedback

to ensure the analysis team maintained fidelity to the raw data in addition to the process

of CQR. In order to ensure objective review, the auditor and the Principal Investigator did

not discuss any of the analyses or data emerging from the themes prior to conducting the

audit.

To begin the process of consensus, team members first read and coded 4

transcripts. This allowed for each transcript to be coded and read by multiple team

members, thus ensuring multiple perspectives examining the raw data. Following this,

the team assembled to present and share their perspectives. Throughout this process,

tentative domains were created so the coded data could be organized. As more coded data

was discussed these tentative domains evolved and changed to better reflect the lived

experiences of the participants. Following feedback from the auditor, the team

reexamined their perspectives of the transcripts and made changes to the domains and

core ideas.

Addressing Biases

Before examining transcripts, Hill et al. (1997, 2005) emphasizes the importance

of all team members exploring their biases regarding the study to mitigate their influence

on the analytic process. The goal of this process is to ensure fidelity to the model of

CQR and maintain objectivity.

Team members quickly built a strong rapport with one another, facilitating an

open dialogue about their biases. Much attention was given to the perception of

hypermasculine norms in the military as well as the belief PTSD is common in members

of the military. Two members of the analysis team grew up in military families and

experienced life in base housing and parental deployments. These disclosures spurred a

fruitful discussion regarding their experiences with their fathers. Other group members later disclosed their own parental experiences and how they may impact their perceptions of the participants lived experiences.

The following are some of the most prominent biases revealed and discussed by the analysis team with regard to the military: 1) Hypermasculine norms in the military are common and thus, emotions may not be commonly discussed, 2) Military culture is viewed as supportive 3) Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom were handled poorly by government leadership 4) Two members viewed their military family experiences as positive 5) A parent's deployment has some effect on the parent/child relationship into young adulthood. 6) The Air Force was regarded as less militaristic in culture than the Army. This difference may impact a child's experience in a military family and more specifically during the deployment cycle 7) A team member reported a negative view of the military power structure.

The analysis team identified the following biases regarding parent/child relationships: 1) Relationships with fathers entail fewer emotions than those with mothers 2) Daughters would report a closer relationship with their fathers than their male counterparts.

Domain Identification

The first step of the process is to identify domains. Domains are the significant and unique areas that arise from the interviews (Hill, 2012). Thompson, Vivino, & Hill (2012) purport two methodologies a team may utilize to develop a domain list. The first method involves creating a tentative list of domains based on a thorough literature review. This analysis team utilized the second method. The second method of

developing a domain list best served our purposes as no literature presently exists on the

long-term impacts of a parent's military deployment. The method is inductive in nature.

This process requires the analysis team, to develop the domain list by reviewing the

transcripts, and allowing the domains to emerge from the data. This method also asks

team members to separate the raw data from the interview protocol.

Each team member examined several transcripts individually and developed their

own tentative domain lists. Over the course of 5 meetings, the team compared codes and

tentative domain ideas to consensually establish a domain list that was representative of

the participants lived experiences. An exhaustive list was shortened as some domains

were merged as they were representative of a unimodal domain. Numerous discussions

centered around different participants describing similar experiences, similar perceptions

of those experiences, and consequently if such experiences and perceptions belong in the

same domain.

After all 10 transcripts went through the consensus process, a meeting was held to

compare our original, exhaustive list, to the final domain list. The group again ensured

that the domains were representative of the transcripts. Additionally, the group revisited

the potential for bias entering the consensus process.

<div align="center">**Core Ideas Identification**</div>

Following the establishment of a domain list, the analysis team moved into

discerning appropriate core ideas. Thompson et al. (2012) postulate the formation of core

ideas serves to take participants' words and parse them down in to smaller, clearer

segments. These clarified segments will better foster the comparison of data between

cases.

To begin the process of constructing core ideas, each team member read all the data for a domain on their own. While doing this, team members summarized their assigned data into tentative core ideas. These tentative core ideas were then brought back to the entire analysis team. The team reviewed the first domain together, to ensure team members understood the process of summarizing narratives.

Following individual team members reviewing domains, the analysis team met to begin the consensus process. During the consensus process team members challenged one another's potential biases and discussed how certain core ideas were more appropriate for different domains. One strength of the development of core ideas was the regularity with which the team discussed the need to stay close to the meaning and intention of study participants. This facilitated a great deal of care regarding the exact phrasing of each core idea. The team also determined that some core ideas were better combined into a singular entity rather than separate core ideas.

After core ideas were established, both the domains and core ideas were sent to the auditor for review. The auditor provided constructive feedback to the principal investigator, which was subsequently shared with the entire team. Feedback from the auditor focused on the lack of affect illustrated in both domains and core ideas, despite several prominent discussions of affect in transcripts. This feedback was reviewed and incorporated into the analytic process before the stage of cross analysis began.

<div align="center">**Cross-Analysis**</div>

The final phase of CQR is cross-analysis, which entails identifying ideas across participants and discerning the frequency with which they occur (Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2012). To accomplish the task of cross-analysis, tables were created for each

domain (i.e. Domain 2, with core ideas from each transcript, Domain 3, with core ideas from each transcript).

Following Hill et al. (1997) guidelines, each team member generated category ideas on their own and then brought those ideas to the larger group. Over the course of several meetings, the group came to a consensus regarding the placement of core ideas and categories.

The final aspect of the cross-analysis phase indicates the frequency with which the categories appear across cases (Hill et al., 2005). For the purposes of this study (N=10), "general" indicates appearance in 9-10 cases, "typical" indicates appearance in 5-8 cases, and "variant" indicates appearance in 2-4 cases.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Following the analysis of the raw data provided by the 10 participants, several domains and categories emerged. These domains and categories provided valuable insight into the lived experiences of this population and valuable information regarding the relationship with their formerly deployed parent. These domains and categories are examined in this chapter. There were 4 domains that emerged from the data, including: (a) Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad, (b) Deployment Cycle, (c) Military Culture, and (d) Changes in Perspective. These domains and their accompanying categories are illustrated in Table 2.

Descriptions for each category signify the representativeness or regularity with which these categories emerged. The descriptors utilized are in conjunction with the recommendations of Hill et al. (2005). Categories comprised of 1 participant were not included in the results. Categories were described as "variant" if 2-5 participants were represented. Categories comprised of 6-8 participants were described as "typical." Finally, categories consisting of 9-10 participants were considered "general."

The domains and categories presented in Table 2 are discussed in-depth throughout this chapter. Overviews of participants' lived experiences as well as direct quotations (other than um's, minimal encouragers, and periods of silence) are included to maintain fidelity to the subjects' reports. accompanying

Table 2. Domains and Categories that Emerged during Data Analysis.

Domain	Category	Frequency of Response
Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad	Communication	Typical
	Dad's Personality	Typical
	Dad's Involvement with Children	General
	Dad as a "friend"	Variant
Deployment Cycle	Shifting Family Events	Typical
	Deployment is Hard for the Family	Typical
	Deployment Shifted Routine of the Family	General
	Experience of Distress/Anxiety	Typical
Military Culture	Transience in Personal Relationships	Typical
	Dad's Absence Became Routine	General
	Sacrifices	Typical
	Military Values	Typical
Changes in Perspective	Reflecting on the Past	General
	Understanding the Present	Typical

Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad

The first domain that emerged from the data pertained to the various factors impacting the participants' relationships with their fathers. Following the first question of the interview, the subsequent questions aimed to elicit information regarding the parent/child relationship. Questions were not structured in a way to elicit either positive or negative aspects of the parent/child relationship prior to, during, or following the parent's deployment.

The domain of *Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad* is comprised of four categories. The categories are: (a) communication, (b) dad's personality, (c) dad's involvement with children, and (d) dad as a "friend." These 4 categories are explained in detail below.

Communication

Participants in this study typically (eight out of ten) reported communication with their father was a critical factor regarding their relationship. Participant 3 stated the following:

Yeah, he was hearing things from my mom, and you know, our co-communication was very, very bad, and we just, you know, it was mostly just a lot of him getting mad about what he was hearing and so, it just wasn't a very comfortable environment during that time.

Participant 4 reported the following regarding aspects of communicating with their father:

I'm not saying I'm at odds with my dad at all, um, but it's all stuff that we talk about, right, is you know, he and I think very differently about politics, and that, and it impacts the way we talk. Um, but he's let me know. He's my go to, man. You know, I call him all the time, I go see him all the time. Uh, we're really tight.

Dad's Personality

Study participants typically (six out of ten) indicated their father's personality played an important role regarding the perceived quality of the parent/child relationship. Participant 2 noted the following related to their father's personality impacting the relationship, "Like the way in which, like discipline, etc. was done. Like, he was very like, conservative, very strict. Like, uh, you know. That kind of thing."

Participant 7 reported that his father's personality stood in contrast to their own means of connecting to others:

I mean, my dad was always very stern and straightforward kind of, military man. That's how I would describe him. Honestly, he, he tried real hard, is what I'll say about him. But he had a lot of difficulty emotionally connecting with people, and I'm a relatively sensitive individual, who I've been told I got that from my mother (laughs).

Participant 9 recalled a specific instance of their father's personality yielding conflict:

I remember one time I think I'd like lost my shoes in the living room somewhere and maybe I didn't put them up and he just kind of threw open my door and like tossed the shoes in there. It didn't even come close to hitting me or anything. It wasn't like he was throwing the shoes at me, but for some reason that stuck out in my head, because it was just kind of like sudden. I was like in my bean bag chair and reading and he just kind of like threw the shoes in there. I think I said something like, "What the hell?" Or something like that and he was just really mad about the shoes. There would just be stuff like that, where ... Just stuff that you wouldn't think would irritate someone that much. He would just get really, really irritated by it.

Dad's Involvement with Children

Participants generally (ten out of ten) reported their father's involvement with them stood as an important factor impacting the relationship. Participant 1 noted, "I was very into sports when I was growing up, and he would always be the one that would be out back with me and helping me, I guess, get better."

Participant 10 reported that today, an overall positive relationship exists with their

father:

> I do keep up with him a lot more but we have a lot of shared interests. We talk on
>
> a regular basis, we get together on a regular basis. He lives within about an hour
>
> and a half of me.

Participant 9 contrasted participant 1 and 10's positive descriptions of paternal

involvement with one whose father's involvement was viewed in a less than positive

light:

> Especially in my dad's case, because he was kind of the ... I don't know the word
>
> for it but like, when I got in trouble, he was the one I guess that determined what
>
> my punishment was, how long I was grounded or whatever. My relationship with
>
> my dad then, it almost seemed like he was around for me when I got in trouble,
>
> but not necessarily for the cool things that I did.

Dad as a "friend"

A variant number of participants (four out of ten) posited viewing their father as a

"friend" was an important factor in the parent/child relationship. Participant 8 stated,

"It's kind of like he can be a dad, but he can also be a friend as well."

Participant 2 reported a distant relationship with his father as a child but now

describes their relationships as a friendship or collegial, stating:

> Yeah. Like some of the times I've visited, like he'll be gone some of it. He'll come
>
> back for like a day or two where like he'll take me out to the bar. We'll have like a
>
> drink and play some pool and just like shoot the shit about whatever's going on,
>
> you know?

<center>**Deployment Cycle**</center>

The second domain that emerged from the iterative analytic process is comprised of several categories related to the deployment cycle. These categories relate to how the deployment experience itself impacted their perceptions of the relationship with their fathers.

The domain *Deployment Cycle* is composed of four categories: (a) shifting family events, (b) deployment is hard for the family, (c) deployment shifted routine of the family, and (d) experience of distress/anxiety. These 4 categories and accompanying exemplar quotes are below.

Shifting Family Events

Participants typically (5 out of 10) endorsed the shifting of family significant events (i.e. major holidays and birthdays) as significant aspects of the deployment cycle experience. Participant 7 noted:

> So, he deployed my ninth-grade year of high school, and um, I was trying to like, get my driver's license and stuff, and, my dad didn't get to teach me how to drive a car, and stuff like that. And, all those experiences, would have been nice to have.

Participant 10 noted a similar sentiment of missing important events in life, "You just have to carry on. It was you get in what you can by way of conversation or holidays even. There were Christmases not there, birthdays not there."

Participant 8 reported the additional effort put forth by their father for significant events was especially meaningful:

> And like my dad would also like, on birthdays and holidays, he would try to make an effort to call as well. And part of my best memories was, you know, on my

birthday even though I wouldn't, maybe I wouldn't get to talk to my dad or see him but I'd always have like a card there or something, so it wasn't like he was completely out of the picture. He was always very intentional about doing what he could from a distance.

Deployment is Hard for the Family

Study participants typically (eight out of ten) reported that the deployment cycle was hard on the family. This category describing familial focused on the negative impacts on the family regarding relationships with all family members, including the deployed parent. Some examples of these negative impacts are increasing discord or distance in relationships. Participant 4 reported the following regarding the difficulty of deployment:

> I mean, if I had to draw a general trend line, uh, I would probably say that it was, you know, we really missed dad or mom or whoever is gone, and um, it's really tough. He did a lot, right, I mean, he kind of worked the system as much as he could to kind of avoid big deployments, um and just because my mom couldn't take it.

Participant 9 reported the following regarding their parent's marriage as a result of deployments:

> I guess he (father) was talking to her (mother) fairly recently and she talked about how kind of the same thing about how he'd always be different after deployments and she expressed at one point, she wasn't sure if he would ever go back to being normal.

Participant 5 corroborated participant 9's experience. Specifically noting the worry and distress experienced by the at home caregiver which in this instance was the participant's mother:

A lot more hectic just because where my dad would step in and help with certain things with my mom. She didn't have that anymore. She was just a little bit more stressed. I think my sister and I felt that tension from her and like rolled over into our lives even though we weren't greatly affected because my mom worked so hard not to let us be but just knowing that she was so stressed made us on edge.

Deployment Shifted Routine of the Family

Study participants generally (9 out of 10) endorsed the shifting of familial routines as a pertinent aspect of their deployment cycle experiences. Participant 2 noted a striking difference in the daily, morning routine following their father's return from deployment:

Like me and my sister we always like did everything for ourselves, like when to get ready like, you know, like how to like, get prepared for school or whatever. And he was just yelling. His first day back he was like, "Do this and do that, and you're going to miss the bus and stuff." And finally I just, I looked at him and I was like, 'Look, every single day for a year, like I've done this without you. Do you really think I need your help today?

Participant 3 contrasted Participant 2's description of the return from deployment noting, "And um, you know, kind of returned to normal, for the first couple months at least." While the experiences following their fathers', returns were different, both

participants endorsed shifts in what constituted normality while their fathers were deployed.

Experience of Distress/Anxiety

Participants typically (6 out of 10) discussed distress and anxiety as salient aspects of their deployment cycle experiences. Participant 10 discussed the lead-up to a deployment as especially stress inducing, "Well, it's just a feeling of impending doom so-to-speak. You know that it's getting ready to happen, there's absolutely nothing you could do about it."

Participant 1 reported the following pertaining to maintaining a relationship with their father:

> I guess, my dad would call sometimes if he was able to and being on the phone with him, I then got anxiety about when he was going to hang up. Like, I needed to make sure that I talked to him before he hung up.

Participant 8 presented the experience of negative emotion during deployment, as well as a means of coping with it:

> I guess that was just my way of coping. Just like shoving, shove it aside ... Act like there's nothing going on and then occasionally it would hit me a few times like I remember that morning I got to school pretty early and I was pretty sad that he was gone, but like when I said goodbye and all of that not ... It was just like, "Okay, bye. See you in six months." Yeah, so I think my kind of way is it's like avoid the problem 'til it goes away and that's still how I am I guess ...

Military Culture

A domain pertaining to the impact of military culture on the participants' lived experiences emerged. This domain covered a myriad of cultural norms and mores specific to all military families as well as those experiencing the deployment of a parent. This domain is comprised of four categories: (a) transience in personal relationships, (b) dad's absence became routine, (c) sacrifices, (d) military values.

Transience in Personal Relationships

Study participants typically reported (8 out of 10) regular changes and shifts in relationships were an important aspect of their experience. The most common report from participants was the regularity with which new friends had to be made due to the participants' moving, or their friends going to a new base. Participant 4 stated the following, "When you move around so often, you know, the friendships and whatnot you kind of develop are almost temporary, whereas the familial relationships are, you know, that's what you have for life."

Participant 10 shared a similar sentiment regarding the brevity of platonic relationships:

> Honestly those relationships they still are very difficult for me. My dad always had a saying about know the difference between friends and acquaintances. I have very few friends but I have a lot of acquaintances. When you're moving around a lot you're really careful with building relationships because you know they're not going to last very long.

Participant 8 endorsed a changing response in the transient nature of friendships and peer groups as they matured:

Like, of course when I was like really little it really had no effect. It was just like, "Oh yeah, let's go to a new school and make new school friends." I was like little, little. Then once I had gotten older, like maybe eight or nine a lot of my friends were military, so it wasn't out of the ordinary but I think the biggest one was when I moved to, um, Texas.... And for me the biggest thing for that was I was older at that point and it was a little bit more difficult to make the friends as when you were like really young. And so it was kind of like a gradual, as I got older, it got a little bit more difficult.

Dad's Absence Became Routine

The next aspect of military culture, especially during the high points of OEF and OIF, was the normalcy of parents' deployment for friends, classmates, and peers. Participants generally (10 out of 10) endorsed this category as a salient aspect of their experiences. Participant 9 reported, "I just think that growing up military kind of means recognizing your dad might not come home. If he does, you might not really know who he is."

Sacrifices

An additional component of the culture of military families are the sacrifices made. This category was typically endorsed (5 out of 10) by participants. While the participants did not make the decision to make the sacrifices inherent with a parent's military service, they were certainly subjected to them. Participant 8 noted a lack of a "home" was one of the major sacrifices made by military families. "For me I think the biggest thing was you were never, like you really didn't have like a 100% place to call home. I think that's the thing that resonated with me the most."

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Participant 1 answered the "grand tour" question in such a way that her experience of growing up in a military family was summarized in the following way. "Oh, man. I would say it means sacrifices. Like you're always giving something up. Like time with my dad or living in a not so cool of a town. I don't know, it's always something."

Military Values

Study participants typically (5 out of 10) posited military values were a noteworthy aspect of their lived experiences. Participant 8 noted the value of military community:

Just how wherever you went it was like you were instantly part of a community. Like everyone just kind of like took you in, whereas like opposed to like the non-military where you have to go out and it's a little bit more of a slower process than with the military. Um, you have to go out and make friends and all of that.

Participant 10 noted positive aspects to the life and culture of growing up in a military family. The participant also noted an area of difficulty by growing up in such a unique culture with specific values and norms:

On a military base, most military bases are consistent with their rules and they enforce them. No, I think that it was ... I love it. I love the fact that I have that background and it's helped me in so many other ways. Sometimes I do struggle with understanding things even as an adult when someone will say something I'm like, "I just don't get that at all." I know what it's from now so that makes it better.

<center>**Changes in Perspective**</center>

The final domain that emerged from the participants dealt with changes in perspective. Data pertaining to the categories of (a) reflecting on the past and (b) understanding the present emerged.

Reflecting on the Past

Participants generally (9 out of 10) reflected on the past, acknowledging a deeper understanding for their childhoods. Participant 7 reported a deeper understanding for their deployed parent. "I would say that despite all the times he was cold, and military-like, and demanded perfection, and stuff, I knew that he only did those things because he wanted the best for all of us."

Participant 9 also endorsed a better understanding for what their father went through as a member of the military and specifically, during deployments:

My dad was gone a lot growing up, for various reasons, and I didn't really get it. I knew that he was doing work and I knew that he was serving his country and especially because my dad worked in security and he was a military police officer and a sniper, I knew that a lot of the stuff that he was doing was dangerous. There kind of wasn't a guarantee when your dad is gone, you don't necessarily know if he's coming back, but I don't think I still quite understood that as a kid.

Participant 9 later reflected on a present day understanding of their father's behavior following his return from deployment.

It was just frustrating, I think. To me, it came off as being childish. Now that I'm older, I think that we're learning a little bit more about PTSD and stuff like that. I think that might've been part of what was going on. I don't think he would admit

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to that and I don't know if he's ever been diagnosed with that but I think that might've ... Because it was, you know he's shooting and people and people are shooting at you and you don't know ... I can only imagine what that's like, I guess.

Understanding the Present

Study participants typically (7 out of 10) postulated that a better understanding of the present is a salient aspect of their experience. Participant 5 noted her childhood allows her to have a clearer perspective in their own marriage:

My husband is military. I think knowing the back side of that and knowing how it operates and how it's very political in the sense that you've got to schmooze this guy and you've got to be respectful here and you've got to play this role and how stressful it can be on the active duty member.

Participant 4 presented his understanding of what it means to relate to their father as a fellow adult:

Um, it's weird, you know, as you get older, I guess this is probably everyone's experience with their dad right, when you start seeing them less as an authority figure and more a human being. Um, but that's, you know, you have different views on the world, you have different opinions about, you know, what to do with, you know your money. You've got different thoughts about what life is supposed to be about and all this kind of stuff.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

These domains and categories represent the collective experiences of the participants. Their lived experiences emanate from the wide variety of factors impacting the relationship with their fathers, the deployment cycle, the role of military culture, and

shifts in perspective that come from maturation. The impacts of these results will be

discussed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The objective of this qualitative study was to explore and better understand the lived experiences of young adults who, as children, experienced the deployment of a parent in the United States Armed Forces. To accomplish this, information was gathered surrounding participants' broad perceptions of growing up in a military family, their relationship with their military parent before and immediately following the deployment(s), their current relationship with that parent, and, more broadly, the role a military deployment may play in the parent/child relationship. This study is important as there is little empirical data examining the long-term impacts of military deployments on the relationships between formerly deployed parents and their now adult children. Developing an understanding of this, through a qualitative methodology, will allow the field of counseling psychology to continue to better understand this phenomenon and eventually provide more meaningful interventions, before, during, and after a parent's deployment.

The results of the study suggest members of this population perceive their prior experiences and current parental relationships similarly, as study outcomes indicate similarities across the participants. However, there are numerous important differences that emerged across participants' experiences. Two other known qualitative studies have explored the experiences of military deployments on the parent/child relationship. One study (Walsh et al., 2014) examined the parent's experience while the second study

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(Huebner et al., 2007) examined the deployment from the perspective of the child. Although both studies provided important information pertaining to the phenomenon at hand, this is the first known study to examine the long-term implications of a deployment. Given the significant differences between the two aforementioned studies and the one at hand, the results will be examined in the context of the broader body of literature. Specifically, the discussion of this study will occur through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (ETS).

Emerging Domains

As previously described, four domains emerged from the analysis process. All four domains provide an invaluable component of the broader lived experience of this population. These four domains (Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad, Deployment Cycle, Military Culture, and Changes in Perspective) will be expounded upon in greater detail.

The domain "Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad" provides valuable insight into the lived experiences of this population. Via this domain, patterns begin to emerge regarding the development of the parent/child relationship. One pattern that emerged was that of quality communication and subsequently, the father's involvement with his children. These salient categories influence the domain of "Changes in Perspective." Specifically, those participants who endorsed an ability to reflect on the past and make meaning of their present situations, reported communication with their formerly deployed fathers as an important component of that process. This domain clearly illustrates these domains do not act as singular players in the lived experiences of this population, but rather work in concert to produce the phenomenon at hand.

The domain of "Deployment Cycle" plays an integral role in understanding the lived experiences of this population. Within this domain, four salient components or categories emerged: (a) shifting family events, (b) deployment is hard for the family, (c) deployment shifted routine of the family, and (d) experience of distress/anxiety. These four categories are important to understand as they interact in several nuanced ways. Specifically, the categories within this domain are found within three layers of the nested arrangement of ecological systems theory (EST, Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The category of "deployment is hard for the family" occurs in the first layer of EST, the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner,1979). Specifically, the interpersonal nature of the difficulties within the family due to deployment are evident in the reflections of the participants. The second layer in the nested arrangement is the "mesosystem" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The interactions of the various aspects of the microsystem occur within this domain. The intrapersonal experiences (distress/anxiety) resulting from the deployed parent/child relationship, further impact relationships with other family members such as the at-home parent and siblings. The third layer at play is the "Exosystem" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The aspect of the Exosystem clearly at play in this domain is the career of the parent. The "Deployment Cycle" domain and its subsequent categories are a direct result of the career of the deployed parent. The Mesosystem and Microsystem impacts examined in this domain occur under the umbrella of this aspect of the Exosystem.

It is important to note the domain of "Deployment Cycle" impacts all other domains, further corroborating the notion the various layers of EST are constantly interacting to produce the phenomenon that was the focus of this study. Specifically, the

deployment cycle and its subordinate categories maintain an interdependent relationship with the domain of "Military Culture." Experiencing the totality of the deployment cycle stands as a unique experience for those who grow up in the military and its accompanying culture.

The domain of "Military Culture" assumes an important position in developing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon examined in this study. Four categories emerged within this domain. Building on the two previously discussed domains, "Military Culture" encompasses four layers of Bronfenbrenner's ETS nested arrangement. As with the previous domains, the microsystem plays an integral role. Specifically, this domain includes rich data regarding the regular changes in personal relationships with friends and peers.

The Mesosystem is prominent within this domain as various players within the microsystem interact. For instance, the difficulties facing a family had a substantive impact on the participants' relationships with peers. These types of peer relationships were twofold, as participants noted changes in friendships as well as relationships with peers in the school setting.

The Exosystem is prominent as a common factor for changes within the microsystem and mesosystem is the participants' fathers' careers. The umbrella experience of the military led to unique experiences, such as living and attending school on a military base. The military also impacted the previously mentioned friendships, as participants described making new friends in military communities was easier because their peers understood the military lifestyle.

The "Macrosystem" plays an important role in this domain. The Macrosystem, in part, is defined as the attitudes and ideologies of a culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). One of the most prominent aspects of this domain is "Military Values." Participants regularly referenced military norms and mores that facilitated their personal development as well as the development of familial and platonic relationships.

The substantive impact these military norms and mores are not found solely within this domain. The category referencing the regularity of a father's absence plays an important role in the domain illustrating the various factors impacting one's relationship with their father. The normality of losses in relationships illustrated in the military culture domain (whether in platonic or paternal relationships) impacts the categories within the factors impacting paternal relationships domain. Specifically, regular absence in relationships plays a critical role regarding how a child views their father as a "friend" and, overtly, the extent to which a father can be involved in their child's life, as illustrated in the domain, "Dad's involvement with Children."

The final domain that emerged from the participants' lived experiences involved their "Changes in Perspective." Expanding upon the previous three domains, this domain includes all 5 nested layers of Bronfenbrenner's ETS. What is most surprising in this is the inclusion of the "Chronosystem." In the initial literature review, it was not expected that the Chronosystem would play a role in the study. However, participants often referenced how changes in their lives, over time, impacted their understanding of their childhood. Additionally, participants often described how perceptions of their experiences during deployment and, more broadly, as children in military families impact

current relationships with their formerly deployed parents as well as relationships with their own spouses and in some cases, their own children.

Ecological Understanding of Emerging Themes

The domains and categories emerging from these findings can be understood to impact the development of young adults whose parents have been deployed using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model. The presentation of these themes utilizes multiple levels of the EST nested model: Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem. It is important to note these themes illustrate the richness of the data among participants as well as across the various nested layers of the EST model.

Chronosystem
Changing Perspectives Over Time

Macrosystem
Military Culture
Military Values

Exosystem
Deployment Cycle
Frequent Moves and School Changes

Mesosystem
Deployment Experience
Shifting Routines
Changing Relationships

Microsystem
Relationship with Dad
At Home Caregiver

Young Adult
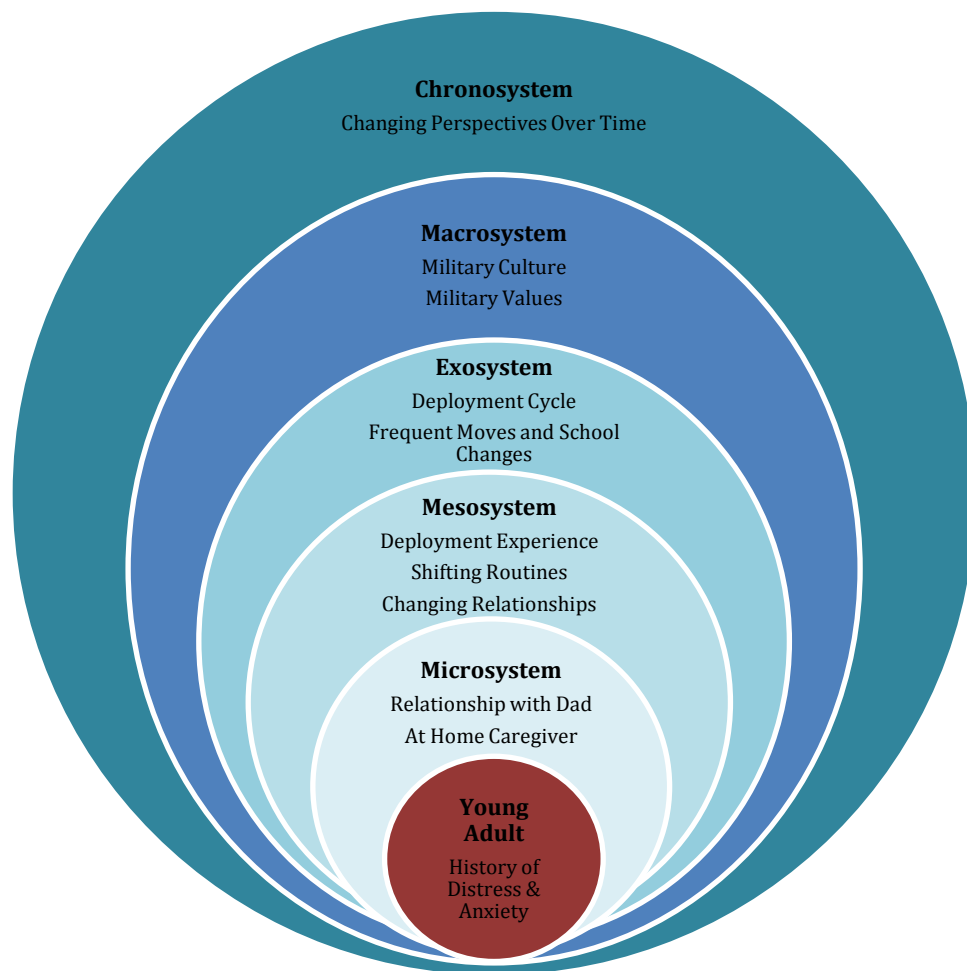History of Distress & Anxiety

Figure 2. Emergent Themes within an Ecological Systems Theory Model.

Utilizing the EST model to understand the emerging themes provides the benefit of understanding the confluence of the various themes and domains. Additionally, the nested EST model provides a succinct framework to understand the reciprocal relationship between the themes. Figure 2 provides an illustrative overview of the lived experiences of this population utilizing the EST nested model.

Individual

Before examining the 5 layers of the nested EST arrangement, it is critical to examine the inner experience of the individual. Participants endorsed internal distress stemming from the deployment cycle. This distress manifested as anxiety regarding the well-being of their deployed parent during the deployment. This anxiety corroborates the existing body of literature positing internal distress in this population during the deployment (Reed et al., 2011). The results also indicate distress during the reintegration period, corroborating current literature (RAND, 2011).

Participants did not report these internal anxieties continue their manifestation into early adulthood. This indicates such negative outcomes for this population dissipate over time.

Microsystem

Within the Microsystem there were several important notions that emerged across the four domains. The first was the critical impact of the participants' fathers. The domain "Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad" covers several of the core components leading to the quality of relationship with one's father. The participants' relationships with their respective fathers was also a critical component of participants making meaning of their childhood as well as discerning how to approach their own lives

regarding their formerly deployed father. Additionally, participants also endorsed their relationship with their father as impacting how they make meaning of their current status as a spouse and even parent.

The theme of the Microsystem connected several domains in other ways. Outside of the father/child relationship, other relationships within the family unit emerged. Within the domain of "Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad" participants often referenced themselves in relation to being a part of a cohesive family unit rather than a singular entity in relation to their military parent. In the domain, "Deployment Cycle" participants noted the strains of the deployment and subsequent reintegration phase on their at-home caregiver as well as their siblings.

An additional component of the theme of the Microsystem are peers. Participants shared a common notion of "sacrifice" in the domain "Military Culture." Participants noted it was commonplace to move regularly and that friendships with peers were often lost as a result.

Mesosystem

The mesosystem stands as the second theme that emerged across all four domains. The mesosystem stands as the interactions between the various microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992). One critical example of such an interaction comes from the domain "Military Culture." The transience in personal relationships, often peers and friendships, represents interactions of the microsystems of the school friendships, and immediate families. This aspect of the theme of the Mesosystem was typically endorsed by participants.

Another important example of the theme of the mesosystem was found within the "Deployment Cycle" domain. Participants often discussed how the deployment itself led to changes in routines regarding the family unit and participation in extracurricular activities (with one participant noting driver's education). Participants also endorsed negative affective impacts during and immediately following their parent's deployment. These affective concerns, while primarily a mental health concern, had an impact on participants' families. Those stressors within the family unit may impact interactions with peers, performance at school, and interactions with community members.

Exosystem

The exosystem incorporates entities or systems in which the individual is not an active participant (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The most overt example of an exosystem at play in this study is the military itself. The domain of "Deployment Cycle" abundantly illustrated the role of the exosystem. This domain clearly demonstrates the functional impact of the exosystem, in this case the deployment, on the individual as well as several critical microsystems at play in the participants' development. The military also played a critical role in determining where these participants lived. This determination is with regard to the communities in which participants lived as well as the specific homes, as a majority (8 out of 10) reported living in base housing for at least one of the deployments.

When deployed overseas, the military directly lead to the education systems (i.e. Department of Defense schools) as well as determined when participants had to change schools. The all-encompassing nature of the military and subsequently the exosystem cannot be understated as it relates to participants' childhoods and more specifically their parents' deployment(s).

Macrosystem

The next theme to emerge across the domains was the macrosystem. The macrosystem consists of attitudes, ideologies, and culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Throughout the domains, the culture of the military is woven into the experiences of the population at hand. The culture of the military normalized the transience in relationships with friends and peers. Participants spoke about moving regularly and having friends move regularly was normalized. Additionally, participants endorsed the infrequency with which their fathers were present (as well as their peers' parents) due to military deployment was a norm and more during OEF and OIF.

Junger (2016) articulates the culture found in the military. He posits that for the servicemembers, military deployments are a unique experience that often lead to strong feelings about war and American society that are often more extreme than those of their civilian counterparts or fellow servicemembers who did not deploy. This othering from greater society may in fact permeate to the family unit. The members of the population at hand clearly identify the idiosyncrasies of military culture as a formative aspect of their development.

It is important to note the culture of the military significantly impacted the domain "Deployment Cycle." Participants endorsed in this domain that often upon their father's return from deployment, the parent/child relationship could be difficult due to their father having been steeped in military culture without their family for a deployment. Additionally, the unique cultural norms of a deployment, as opposed to those present when on base in the United States, also impacted the participants' perception of their relationship with their formerly deployed parent.

Finally, the theme of the macrosystem became present in the "Changes in Perspective" domain. Participants reported a greater understanding and appreciation for what their fathers did as members of the military. As young adults, the participants indicated an increased ability to delineate between their fathers as individuals, as men, as opposed to as members of the military. This shift in perspective taking appears to lead to improved relationships. One participant noted that while his father holds more traditional, conservative views that were in part shaped by the military, the two of them enjoy a good relationship despite philosophical differences.

Chronosystem

The final theme to emerge in across the domains is the theme of the chronosystem. The chronosystem incorporates changes over the course of the individual's lifespan, whether the changes be within the individual or environment. The relevance of the chronosystem theme proved surprising as it was not anticipated that it would prove germane to the study.

Participants' ability to take perspective on their childhoods and more specifically their experience of parental deployment proved salient. Participants revealed that the difficulties that existed during the deployment cycle were often mitigated to an extent and in some cases, fully resolved. Such an ability to better understand this was revealed in the domain "Changes in Perspective."

One specific aspect of this pertains to communication with their formerly deployed parent. Participants reported an overall improvement in communication with their formerly deployed parent. Ranging from a détente to disclosing their parent was a close confidant, communication patterns appeared to improve.

Study participants also spoke about how their experiences of a military upbringing and deployment informed their own understanding of the world. From uncertainty about paying utility bills to fostering a deeper understanding of their military spouse, the cultural norms, mores, and unique experiences of childhood evolved and manifest in new behaviors.

Conclusion

Ecological Systems Theory facilitates a nuanced and clear understanding of this population's lived experiences. What clearly emerges from the results of this study is that the deployment cycle and more broadly the experience of growing up in the context of a military family affects every aspect of the EST. At the innermost layer of the nested arrangement, the individual often experiences anxiety and distress due to experiencing the deployment cycle. The microsystem indicates shifts in relationships with the deployed father and the at home caregiver. The mesosystem specifically highlights the deployment experience. The exosystem highlights the, at times, transient nature of growing up in a military family. The macrosystem highlights the crucial impact of military culture. Finally, the Chronosystem emphasizes the role the deployment cycle and military family experience impact perspective taking and meaning making.

EST provides the necessary framework to understand roles and subsequent impacts the numerous players in this population's lives make. The fact the results of this study emphasize the context of a military upbringing in addition to the anticipated role the deployment cycle plays further emphasizes the critical role EST plays in parsing out nuance. Without the structured, nested arrangement afforded by EST, much of the detail

about the intersectionality of the deployment cycle and broader military context would be lost.

Limitations

Though this study garnered much valuable information regarding this population, there are several important limitations that are worthy of additional comment. The sample gathered for this study included individuals who exclusively experienced the deployment of their fathers. The lived experiences for members of this population who experienced the deployment of their mother may yield significantly different problems during the deployment cycle as well as during early adulthood.

An additional limitation is the racial/ethnic representation within the sample. Nine of the ten participants in the study self-identified as Caucasian, while only one participant self-identified as Latino. This stands as a noteworthy limitation as this sample does not accurately represent the racial diversity within the armed forces. According to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (2015) 68% of active duty service members identify as Caucasian, 17% identify as Black or African-American, 4% identify as Asian, 2% identify as Native or Indigenous, 3% identify as multi-racial, and 4% identify as Other/Unknown.

The range of the length of cumulative parental deployments experienced by the participants stands as an additional limitation of the study. While all participants in the study met the criterion of a minimum of 13 cumulative months of deployment (per RAND Corporation, 2011) the range of experience beyond that marker was significant, with participants reporting 14-50 months of cumulative parental deployment during their childhood.

An additional potential limitation is the bias the analysis team revealed prior to coding the data. The potential influence of bias is regularly cited as a shortcoming of CQR and qualitative research. One prominent bias identified by the group was that two of the analysis team members grew up in military families. Even though regular checks to ensure fidelity to the CQR process were conducted, it is not possible to ensure their own lived experiences did not influence their approach.

A final shortcoming worth identifying is the transferability of the results. These findings were very much shaped by the specific focus of the interviews with the participants. Although the resulting data is directly relevant to these questions for this sample, that does not translate cross the population of children experiencing parental deployment.

Implications for Further Research

Results from this study have implications for research moving forward. It would prove beneficial to conduct an additional study examining the lived experiences of those who went through the deployment of a mother, as this study examined only those whose fathers deployed.

Given that the participants in this study were disproportionately Caucasian compared to the demographics of active duty service members of all branches, it would prove beneficial to understand the lived experiences of minority young adults. This may prove beneficial to understand as racial and ethnic minorities in the United States are significantly likely to experience chronic stress stemming from discrimination (Bahls, 2011). Understanding the lived experiences of minority young adults who experienced parental military deployment will provide a more accurate representation of the military

as a whole, as well as provide the military and clinical providers more nuanced approaches to appropriately mitigate negative outcomes stemming from a parent's military deployment.

Given the prominence of transience in personal relationships (i.e. peers, friends, and the parent/child relationship) that arose during this study, it may prove beneficial to examine friendship maintenance within this population. Understanding this may provide keen insight into resilience later in life.

This study assisted in defining the phenomenon of the long-term effects of deployment on the parent/child relationship. Utilizing quantitative methodologies to examine this phenomenon will provide additional depth to this population's lived experiences.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study provide numerous insights into working with members of this population in a clinical setting. One noteworthy clinical implication stemming from this study is the importance of understanding the role military culture plays in the development of this population. The normality of long periods of absence in critical relationships, whether a parent's deployment or the sudden loss of a friend due to moving, are salient to the understanding of relationships among young adults who have grown up in military families impacted by deployment. Accompanying these significant relationally based changes are the shifting of routines and significant milestones such as birthdays and graduations. Making sense of the normality of loss and transience may prove beneficial in settings where attachment and adjustment concerns are clinically prominent.

An additional area of clinical application may be found in the lack of power the participants enjoyed when discussing their experiences. Participants often referenced parental deployments, friends moving away, their own moves due to parental base reassignments, and the struggles associated with those unchosen experiences. It is noteworthy to remember that this perceived lack of power and control occurred throughout childhood, not simply during the deployment cycle. Therefore, attending to power dynamics when this population presents in a clinical setting is critical at all times, not only when a deployment is an aspect of clinical attention. Utilizing a feminist approach to discern the impact of social power may prove beneficial in improving this populations' self-efficacy. Subsequently, improving self-efficacy and subsequently, one's belief of impacting change may only further enhance the efficacy of behaviorally based interventions.

The unique role the culture of the military plays in the lived experiences of this population is a salient aspect of clinical considerations. Utilizing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) may prove beneficial for this population (Hayes, 2004). ACT stands as an appropriate clinical approach as it allows the client to bring in their own values, often stemming from culture, to serve as a part of the foundation for clinical change.

Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) serves as a strong supplementary theoretical lens for this population (Jordan, 2010). RCT should not operate as a stand-alone theoretical orientation, but lends itself well to examining relationships in a clinical context. RCT is developmental in nature and posits that individuals grow through and ultimately, toward connections with other people. RCT asserts the development of

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relationships occurs in part, within the context of cultural factors. Jordan (2010) asserts RCT may ameliorate some prominence of unhelpful relational patterns.

There are also strengths of this population that emerged. These strengths are worthy of note as they may serve as assets in clinical settings. One noteworthy strength of this population is resilience. This population experienced a myriad of substantial changes throughout the course of their development. As a result of these numerous shifts, specifically through role renegotiation within the family unit and making new friends due to regular moves, this population appears able to adjust to novel and potentially difficult settings. An additional strength of this population is their ability to develop a nuanced perspective of their lived experiences. This strength may prove especially beneficial in a clinical setting when utilizing the aforementioned theoretical orientations.

Conclusion

The young adults who experienced the deployment of a parent during OEF and OIF experienced a unique childhood marked by many difficulties as well as opportunities for immense growth and subsequent success. Utilizing Bronfenbrenner's EST as a framework to better understand the potential long-term effects of their lived experiences, several critical components of this population were revealed.

Their parents' deployments as well as growing up in the context of a military family played an important role in the participants' upbringings. Participants identified four domains that best encompass their lived experiences: a) Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad, b) Deployment Cycle, c) Military Culture, d) Changes in Perspective. These four domains define the most salient aspects of the deployment

experience as well as important relational factors that stand as critical during childhood. These domains also serve as a lens to better understand the current parent/child relationship and the impact of the military on their present-day lives. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this study provided a deeper understanding of a population whose childhoods were largely shaped by the military interventions of the beginning of the 21st century.

APPENDICES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE: *The Long-Term Effects of Parental Military Deployment on Perceived Parent/Child Relationship Quality*

PROJECT DIRECTOR: *Timothy Pagano, M.Ed., N.C.C.*

PHONE # *(317) 903-0003*

DEPARTMENT: *Counseling Psychology and Community Service*

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

A person who is to participate in the research must give his or her informed consent to such participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research projects include only subjects who choose to take part. Please take your time in making your decision as to whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are invited to be in a research study about the possible effects a parent's military deployment(s) on the parent/child relationship as the child enters adulthood. You are being invited because you identified you experienced a parent's military deployment(s) during childhood.

The purpose of this research study is gain a better understanding of the role a parent's military deployment(s) has on that relationship as the child becomes an adult.

 HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

Approximately *10-15* people will take part in this study through interviews.

Demographic Questionnaire

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study. To the best of your ability, please fill out the following questions. You are under no obligation to answer any questions and may end your participation in this study at any time.

1) What is your gender? (please circle)   A) Male   B) Female   C) Other

2) How old were you during your parent's deployment(s)? (list all ages if multiple deployments)

    Deployment #1_____

    Deployment #2_____

    Deployment #3_____

    Deployment #4_____

    Deployment #5_____

3) What is your current age? _____

4) What is your ethnicity?
    A) Hispanic/Latino B) Asian/Pacific Islander C) Native American D) African American E) Caucasian F) Other_____

5) What is the gender of your parent who deployed? (please circle)

    A) Male   B) Female

6) For how many months was your parent deployed? If your parent was deployed multiple times, please list the length of each deployment in months.

    Deployment #1_____

    Deployment #2_____

    Deployment #3_____

    Deployment #4_____

    Deployment #5_____

7) Of which branch in the military was your deployed parent a member (circle all that apply)?

   A) Army   B) Navy   C) Air Force D) Marine Corps E) Coast Guard F) National Guard

8) During the deployment(s) was your parent a member of the reserves?   A)Yes   B)No

9) Which of the following best describes your parent's military status at the time of the deployment(s)? (please circle)
   A) Enlisted
   B) Warrant Officer
   C) Commissioned Officer

10) Did you live in military housing/ on base or off base/ non-military housing during deployment(s):

Deployment #1_____

Deployment #2_____

Deployment #3_____

Deployment #4_____

Deployment #5_____

APPENDIX C

LIST OF CORE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. "What does it mean to grow up in a military family?"

2. "What was your relationship like with your parent prior to their deployment(s)?"

3. "What was your relationship like with your formerly deployed parent right after his or her return?"

4. "What is your relationship like with that parent now?"

5. "What, if any, impact does deployment have on a parent's relationship with their child?"

APPENDIX D

DATA ANALYSIS TABLE

Table 2. Domains and Categories That Emerged During Data Analysis
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Domain	Category	Frequency of Response
Factors Impacting Relationship with Dad	Communication	Typical
	Dad's Personality	Typical
	Dad's Involvement with Children	General
	Dad as a "friend"	Variant
Deployment Cycle	Shifting Family Events	Typical
	Deployment is Hard for the Family	Typical
	Deployment Shifted Routine of the Family	General
	Experience of Distress/Anxiety	Typical
Military Culture	Transience in Personal Relationships	Typical
	Dad's Absence Became Routine	General
	Sacrifices	Typical
	Military Values	Typical
Changes in Perspective	Reflecting on the Past	General
	Understanding the Present	Typical

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