

Patch Life: Army Wives Behind the Wire

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## **Dedication**

To the women of the Bears, thank you so much for allowing me into your homes and into your lives. Your experiences have been my constant companions since 2016 and I hope that I have provided you with the recognition that you so richly deserve.

For Grandma Manchester, I wish you were here to read this.

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Should be gentle as severe”.

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***Patch Life: Army Wives Behind the Wire***  
**Thesis Abstract**

In 2014, one hundred and eighty-four female civilian women moved overseas with the British Army for a tour lasting three years. Known by the collective 'Army Wives' and 'Dependents,' these women faced multiple dislocations as they sought to make a life for themselves, bounded by British military jurisdiction in a South-Eastern corner of the European Union.

Using a free association qualitative interview methodology, twenty-nine women married to serving soldiers and officers of the British Army were interviewed during a six-month fieldwork period at an overseas British military garrison. In addition to their individual narratives, this thesis draws on participant observation and field diary extracts and, based on a range of sociological and feminist theories, it reveals these women's negotiation of, and reflections upon, their time as incorporated overseas army wives.

Attuned to the wives' voices, *Patch Life, Army Wives Behind the Wire* accompanies them as they learn the complex unwritten rules of the overseas garrison, becoming physically and ontologically bounded into the hierarchical and patriarchal system of their husbands' employer. It explores how women become incorporated and institutionalised, investigating how they negotiate and experience their associated positioning within and parallel to the ranked boundaries of the overseas military garrison. It considers what shapes and governs and influences their incorporation (or not) into their military marriage.

This thesis probes how these women (re)create their identity within the socio-spaces of the garrison through the bonds of friendship and community living in a geographically remote location. Lying at the heart of this research is how these civilian women respond to their socially constructed appellation of

'army wife', whether they embraced its traditions and expectations or, if in their refutation, they were able to find an alternative sense of self located for three years overseas living a patch life behind the wire.

## Summary Statement

This research investigated how army wives in a British overseas garrison experienced their situation of living 'behind the wire'.

They experienced four primary impacts:

- Institutionalisation
  - Expected to live and perform under military jurisdiction.
- Militarisation
  - Accept that their daily lives were heavily influenced by the military.
  - Lives were governed by the privileging of their husband's military status.
  - Expected to perform in a rank-determined way.
  - Expectations and judgements of how they performed in their dominated state.
- Incorporation
  - Lives were largely defined, subsumed and curtailed by being a 'military wife'.
- Dispossession
  - Dispossessed of many aspects of their former civilian lives.
  - Moved as adjunctive to their husband, his company and battalion.
- But gained the opportunity to:
  - Return to education and gain qualifications.
  - Spend time raising their families.
  - Participate in community activities and volunteer with forces charities.

Their daily lives were characterised by:

- Loss and lack of former employment.
- Underemployment within garrison, local jobs were closed to them.
- Absence of social/community space away from military oversight.
- Loss of choice (agency) in:
  - Where they were moved/ where they were housed.
  - Being named in the tenancy agreement.
  - Holding a separate bank account.
  - Receiving post independent of their husband.
  - Choosing their children's education, and managing move disruptions.
  - Choice of non-militarised medical practitioner.
  - Subsuming of own identity into supporting husband's career and progression.
  - Limitations on those with whom they could socialise.
- Community Perception
  - Experiencing negative perception by the chain of the command.
  - Responding to this perceived negative view.
  - Their physical positioning in rank-related housing.
  - Rules regarding their inclusion in, and exclusion from, mess social events.
  - Unwritten rules regarding friendships being rank-related.
- Officer and enlisted wives' dichotomy
  - Enlisted families lives 'observed' with officer accommodation secluded.
  - Differing expectations over ranked performances. Officers' wives expected to play community roles versus negative expectations regarding enlisted wives. These performances were 'institutionalised' into both the community of wives and chain of command.

## Recommendations and Actions

### Direct impacts on the Army of wives' current status:

1. Influencing soldier's performance and performance of duties.
2. Soldier seeking a return to the UK and to transfer out of battalion.
3. Signing off from (leaving) the army.
4. Heightened incidents of Welfare cases (including repeat cases).
5. Growth of discontentment within the battalion community.
6. Questioning rationale for remaining a military family in the post Afghan/Iraq non-combat era.
7. Heightened risk of AWOL due to soldier being forced to deal with family issues.

### Policy Recommendations/statements:

1. Empower army wives by giving them back their own identity and improve infrastructure to support overseas wives:
  - Provide wives with own identification number – viewing spouses as individuals in their own right rather than adjunctive to serving soldier
  - Using own identification spouses to be able to make financial contracts and engage in financial transactions eg:
    - Open own bank account
    - Purchase their own car
  - Review Treaty of Establishment to allow all spouses to take local employment.
  - Provide access to their own purpose-built community centre outside military oversight.
  - Create spousal postal delivery rota conducted outside military structures.
  - Establish 'welcome buddy' system based on family circumstance and not rank.
2. Develop understanding within the CoC (at all levels) of issues relating to army wifeness in contemporary world to address the key detrimental impacts
  - Lack of employment.
  - Increased mental health challenges and anxiety linked to living within this community.
  - Reduction or loss of own identity.
  - Loss of choice.
  - Being subsumed into husband's career and identity directly related to the expected involvement and support of his progression and privileging of army's demands.
3. Investigate how family entitlement-based housing could be made to work given a housing estate designed for a rank-based approach.
4. Provide all housing with a solid back and side fence affording privacy within the private space of the MQ.
5. Provide adequate space and resources for families and children

## Glossary of Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
AFF	Army Families Federation
Bondu	Military Training Ground within the centre of Fimonue
Civvie Street	Colloquialism for outside the wire
CO	Commanding Officer
CoC	Chain of Command
Col	Colonel
CSM	Company Sergeant Major
HCSO	Housing and Community Support Officer
JNCO	Junior Non-Commissioned Officer
JPA	Joint Personnel Administration (personnel database)
LEC	Locally Employed Civilian
March In	Standard military term for taking over a married quarter
March Out	Standard military term for moving out of a quarter
MQ	Married Quarter
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Naafi	Navy, Army, Air Force Institute (small shop on base)
OC	Officer Commanding
PStatCat	Personal Status Category
SFA	Services Family Accommodation
SSFA	Substitute Service Family Accommodation
SNCO	Senior Non-Commissioned Officer
SSAFA	Sailor, Soldier, Air Force Association, a tri-services charity operating domestically and overseas
Tabbing	Running in full military kit (often with guns)
UWO	Unit Welfare Officer
WO	Welfare Office

## *Patch Life: Army Wives Behind the Wire*

### **Thesis Introduction**

Overseas British military garrisons are reminiscent of a by-gone era. The Union Jack flapping languidly in the haze of the afternoon sun stands sentinel over faded military buildings. Street names invoke former battle glories, Agincourt, Minden, Blenheim. The noise of the firing range provides the soundtrack to the domestic quarters, the prevailing language is (military) English. Visiting Fimonue<sup>1</sup>, perched on a rocky outcrop, one is struck by the unremitting heat, the clear blue skies and the Mediterranean lapping in the bay.



*Figure 1 - Fimonue Bay<sup>2</sup>*

Life superficially is ideal, living on a holiday island with the beach on offer for nearly eight months of the year. Yet, underneath this idyllic-seeming surface, life is defined and dominated by the institution and it is within this bounded and hierarchical socio-space that civilian women, married to the army, must live

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<sup>1</sup> To protect anonymity this is a made-up name for the British overseas base under review

<sup>2</sup> Personal Collection

for the duration of their overseas tour. The British infantry regularly move *en-masse*. This move is, for serving personnel, non-negotiable, and, regardless of how the tour is 'sold' to the families, expectations differ greatly from reality. For service personnel of the British Tri-Services<sup>3</sup>, such postings are part of serving life, for trailing wives (Trustram, 1984; Venning, 2005) a duty to be undertaken. Falling in love and marrying one's soldier boyfriend is in no way a training ground for becoming adjunctive to a soldier husband during one's time behind the wire.

My arrival into Fimonue occurred in February 2015 with my husband deployed in the Middle East. He had been overseas since the previous December; we married in October 2014 and in between marriage and deployment, had seen each other for two weeks as he had already relocated to Fimonue. We had to fund my relocation ourselves as the public purse only pays for relocation overseas if the marriage, and spousal move, happen within a three-month window either side of the battalion moving (MoD, 2018). With my husband away, I had to negotiate these restrictions as the Chain of Command (CoC) and associated support services only deal with the serving soldier known within the military as the 'head of the household', organise the packing of our London home, find storage for our belongings before flying out to Fimonue to tie in with his return (date unconfirmed) from the Middle East. This introduction to the military world was, unbeknownst to me at the time, indicative of what life and labour would be like once I made the move behind the wire, living as an overseas 'army wife'.

A military garrison is, to many, an enclosed world, hidden away behind barbed wired fences. However, within the garrison environs is a community of army wives. As a collective, they were made publicly visible during the British army's long-term deployment in Afghanistan, either lining the streets of Wootton Bassett, "totemic figures dressed in black and pinned with poppies" (Hyde, 2015, p. 13) receiving home their fallen loved ones, or as members of the Military Wives Choir that shot to fame during 2012. However, outside of these very public displays, they are predominantly hidden from view,

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<sup>3</sup> The British Army, Navy and Royal Air Force

living within military garrisons experiencing a peripatetic lifestyle, moving regularly both within and outside of the UK. Especially whilst located overseas, army wifehood is an all-consuming way of life, directed by the panopticon (Foucault, 1975) of the military jurisdiction. This introduction offers an overview of life behind the wire, for, as will be demonstrated, this is a uniquely nuanced socio-space incorporating the militarised environs of the military barracks and the domestic zones of the military quarters (MQs) housing the soldiers and their families, surrounded by a ten-kilometre long, twelve-foot fence that whilst protecting its inhabitants from potential threats, stands as a physical barrier and divide from civilian living and the civilian community.

### **Critical Military Studies and Incorporated Wifehood**

Critical Military Studies, is a multidisciplinary research “community of scholars and activists raising questions about, and seeking to challenge, military power” (Critical Military Studies, 2019) and within this wide discipline scholars tackle questions surrounding “militaries, militarism and militarisation” (Rech, et al., 2016). Foregrounded within both this thesis and others who focus on responses to militaries, militarism and militarisation by those married to the services rather than those serving within them, is the impact that the very construction of such totalling institutions has upon those who are (in this case through marriage) aligned to the forces. At the heart of a research undertaking examining wives’ responses to their overseas location must be an acknowledgement that “as gendered institutions, militaries shape the daily lives and lived experiences of those within or alongside them, and of those living with a military presence or military effect” (Woodward & Duncanson, 2017, p. 2). Thus, as with other feminist scholars focusing on army wives within Critical Military Studies (CMS), I must be alert to how the complexity of the relationship between army wives as interviewees and the army itself is not “not necessarily obvious or straightforward (though it might be) but is moulded by a plethora of contexts, activities, people, social processes and practices” (Woodward & Duncanson, 2017, p. 1). The contexts and social processes and practices impacting onto the undertaking of CMS qualitative research

will be examined in the Methodology and Analysis Chapter. However, the following section briefly considers the work hitherto conducted within CMS investigating army wives' experiences.

Since Enloe's *Does Khaki Become You* (1988) a small scholarship has explored women's militarisation, including the impact of militaries on associated women and not just those dressed in khaki. Through looking beyond the role of women within the military, her examination was, and remains, groundbreaking setting the tone of the discussion for subsequent CMS. She examined those adjunctive to the military through their relationship with the serving male, predominantly wives and sex workers for as she argues "many men will not stay in the military if they cannot marry and/or have ready sexual access to women. Women, therefore must somehow be brought under sufficient military control so as to enlist thousands of raw male recruits and keep seasoned veterans" (1988, p. 4). To locate the work conducted in Fimonue within the scholarship of CMS, this section reviews Enloe's work on the militarisation before moving into a consideration of the relevance of military masculinities, militarism and their direct impact on military marriage. It returns to Enloe's and other more recent investigations of military wives, providing an entry point into the subsequent discussion of incorporated army wives.

Enloe's work investigating wives, nurses, sex workers alongside female soldiers troubled the supposition that the armed forces were established as "*male* preserves, run by men and for men according to masculine ideas and relying solely on *man* power" (1988, p. 7) rendering them "immune to feminist investigation" (1988, p. 7). Looking widely at women (as opposed to the specificity of wives') militarisation she examined how this is achieved via the privileging of masculinity created by "ideological structures of patriarchy" (1988, p. 13) and the emphasis this places on combat.

"[C]ombat plays such a central role in the construction of concepts of 'manhood' and justifications of the superiority of maleness in the social order. In reality, of course, to be a soldier of the state means to be subservient, obedient and totally dependent. But that mundane reality is hidden behind a potent myth: to be a soldier means possibly to experience 'combat', and only in combat lies the ultimate test of a man's masculinity" (1988, p. 13).

Several modern British scholars have examined the construction of military masculinities. The army as an institution is trained and authorised to commit violence, on behalf of the state (Woodward, 2003; Woodward & Winter, 2007; Gray, 2014). This violent work still enacted mostly by men<sup>4</sup>, facilitates the creation of a hypermasculine world. In her work on gendering the soldier, Woodward states that “gender identities are central to the construction of the soldier” (2003, p. 43). The training centres that turn these men into soldiers inculcate them with “a set of values of sufficient potency and tenacity” (2003, p. 43) to carry out the very tasks of being a soldier, be that engaging in battle or peacekeeping. For Woodward, “these attributes are gendered” (2003, p. 44); this gendering is pertinent to this thesis. Klein suggests that “military service can be described as a rite of passage to *male* adulthood teaching toughness and trying to eliminate what is regarded to be effeminate”<sup>5</sup> (1999, p. 47; Hale, 2012, p. 700). Furthermore, according to Hockey’s work on the British infantry<sup>6</sup> during basic training recruits displaying any lack of physical inadequacy are “portrayed as being weak and womanly and cause for derogatory comment from instructors” (2003, p. 17). For the specifically male infantry<sup>7</sup>, this toughness is instilled from initial training and maintained throughout their service. The conception of male military masculinities is identifiable as

“pride in physical prowess, particularly the ability to withstand physical hardships; aggressive heterosexuality and homophobia, combined with a celebration of homo-sociability within the team, the ability to deploy controlled physical aggression and a commitment to the completion of assigned tasks with minimal complaint” (Woodward, 2003, p. 44; Hockey, 2003, p. 24; Atherton, 2009, p. 826).

As Woodward indicates, these attributes highlight and heighten ‘maleness’, encouraging a performance of hyper-masculinity through which they are judged and included as ‘one of the lads’.

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<sup>4</sup> At the time of the investigation, all close-combat fighting roles within the British Army were undertaken by male servicemen. Despite there being an increase of female soldiers within the army, they constitute roughly 9.3% of the total service. As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, the army had a total strength of 87,253 (Dempsey, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> My emphasis

<sup>6</sup> The Bears are one of the oldest amalgamated infantry regiments of the British Army.

<sup>7</sup> At the time of the fieldwork the infantry was still an all-male corp. In October 2018, the then Defence Minister Gavin Williamson announced that all roles in the army would be open to both male and female recruits with the first wave of women eligible to commence training in April 2019 (MoD, 2018).

As Atherton states “all soldiers are provided with guns and other weapons and are trained how to kill” (2009, p. 824) in “a complex mix of empowerment and disempowerment” (2009, p. 825), created “within a strict military hierarchy of power and subordination, maintained on a daily basis through the willingness of one individual to be obedient to another” (2009, p. 824). For the British Army to work effectively during both peace and combat operations, it employs a *formal command structure*<sup>8</sup> (Kirke, 2009, p. 747) which is “represented and expressed in the hierarchy of rank [...]. It contains the mechanisms for the enforcement of discipline, for the downward issue of orders [...] provid[ing] the framework for official responsibility” (Kirke, 2009, p. 747). Rank places soldiers in a position of authority or subservience, knowing their place in the formal hierarchy of order, day to day duties, discipline and expected behaviours. Enshrined in law through the Army Act 1955 (British Government, 1955) and its subsequent additions and amendments, these have “the status of lawful orders prescribing what is to be done, setting limits to the behaviour of soldiers of all ranks (Kirke, 2010, p. 360). It is incumbent on *all* serving personnel “to obey lawful orders given to them in any form by a superior officer” (Kirke, 2010, p. 360). Each soldier is aware of his positionality within the military hierarchy through this “formal structure of orders” (Kirke, 2010, p. 361) knowing how they are obliged to behave and perform according to the institution’s dictate.

Soldiers’ perception of maleness is, according to Atherton, state-sanctioned, “[w]hile the military may be said to provide a ‘service’ to the state and public alike, they are also accorded special privileges in regard to their use of violence and coercion” (2009, p. 825). This privileging of the warrior position resonates with Enloe (2000, p. 47) who contends that it is this very privileging that allows deep penetration into women’s (and by extension wives’) lives. This ‘privilege’ positions the male soldier into a warrior status and for Dowler (2001) this positionality has historically required the support and home-making skills of a wife, achieved through tying men’s identities to the battlefield and women’s to the

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<sup>8</sup> Original emphasis

home (2001, p. 54; Atherton, 2009, p. 826). The militarised world encourages hypermasculinity in the male soldier whilst creating the protected woman at home, the 'home' for which he is fighting and putting himself in the line of fire.

This masculinity according to Enloe "only makes sense if supported by the complementary concept of 'femininity'" (1988, p. 7). For her, this creation and control of the militarised feminine identity is achieved by the military's reliance on "particular idea[s] of sexuality to mould women and men" (1988, p. 7) for in so doing the military can rely on women to "provide a 'reserve army of labour' for military men" (1988, p. 5) and by being "kept on the margins of the civilian waged labour force, [women] can serve as a pool of underused, readily available labour" (1988, p. 5). This femininity constructed by the military elite's "control" (Enloe, 1988, p. 6) over women is established through the marginalisation of women to the "military's core identity, no matter how crucial in reality are the services they perform (and symbolism they provide) to the smooth operations of the military" (1988, p. 6). Militarisation for women is not a privileging of a superior conferred status, rather as Enloe suggests it "takes such humdrum forms" (2000, p. 3) such as "clothes washed, wounds bandaged, spirits mended" (1988, p. 5) insinuating itself as it does "into ordinarily daily routines where it is rarely heralded or deemed noteworthy" (2000, p. 3).

Enloe probes the militarisation of military wives, arguing that wives exists under "two patriarchal authorities: her husband's and the military commander's" (1988, p. 48); she is "subject to direct state control by the very fact of being officially categorised as appendages of the state's soldiers" (1988, p. 50). This designation of appendage or dependent as used in Fimonue and across the wider British Army, intimates the language of difference between the privileged serving soldier and his following trailing wife (Venning, 2005; Trustram, 1984; Enloe, 1988; Hyde, 2015).

Hyde, a 2015 PhD candidate, develops Enloe's theory on the militarisation of British army wives more than any scholar in the past thirty years setting "out to explore the agency of women married to servicemen and what this might tell us about militarisation" (2015, p. 11). Studying a regiment based in Germany, she investigated "the implications of military wives' complex and ambiguous relationship to military power for scholarly understandings of militarisation [...] posit[ing] a conceptualisation of military power as more fluid, multiplex and contingent in the ways in which it is experienced in everyday life" (2015, p. 13). Significantly for CMS, she probed the agency women demonstrated through their participation or refutation of the overt militarisation in place within this location.

Hyde investigated how transcending national borders through interaction with (at least for the officer cohort) their German female equivalent allowed these women to "negotiate the militarisation of their mobilities" (2015, p. 69). She examined the alternative role of motherhood, not from the perspective of an alternative identity, instead investigating how her interviewees used "their maternal labour as a rationale for their role within military mobilities" (2015, p. 58). This, Hyde argues, was a "co-optation of their productive labour and sets up a rather limited formula for wives' agency" (2015, p. 59). She argues that providing this maternal labour is done so at "the ironic cost of increased exposure to, and the direct incorporation, of their labour into the military institution" (2015, p. 59). Agency thus becomes entangled within the bounds of the women's militarisation and that despite attempts to assert their agentic self, army wives occupy an uneasy status "actively participating and resisting [militarisation], [...] sometimes its agents and sometimes its victims" (2015, p. 11). Ultimately her research's purpose was not simply to explore "the military institution as the 'source' of militarisation" (2015, p. 147) rather she sought to investigate "some of the more circuitous, contested and cooperative ways in which militarisation might be argued to function, the question not being where militarisation starts or where it ends, but how it circulates" (2015, p. 147). Like Enloe she argues that a "gendered analysis that is connected to women through marriage and the family, the domestic space and the sexual division of labour however, reveals the feminised sexual relations on which those masculinities depend, and which

[traditional CMS] research therefore takes for granted, leaves out and thus helps to reproduce” (Hyde, 2015, p. 148).

Hyde acknowledges that within CMS more nuanced research is required “on the lived experiences of women in relation to the military institution as well as the multiple femininities [...] they encounter, perform and negotiate” (2015, p. 149). Accepting this need for more nuanced research, *Patch Life* examines in detail the following three research questions based on Fimonue’s army wife community – a group of women, aged between nineteen and fifty, married to serving soldiers, located remotely on an overseas garrison<sup>9</sup>.

- How do women experience military marriage overseas?
- What shapes and governs their incorporation into, and negotiation of, military life?
- What does the analysis of their experiences contribute to Critical Military Studies and sociologies of Incorporated Wifehood?

To consider the contributions this research makes to CMS and incorporated wifehood, a working hypothesis of wifely incorporation, a term which lies at the heart of this research undertaking, must be established.

Investigating women’s incorporation into their husband’s profession is a discipline that found resonance in the 1970s as feminists analysed women’s oppression across wider society (Finch, 1983, p. 6). Finch states that “that when a woman marries, she marries not only a man [...] she marries his job, and from that point onwards will live out her life in the context of the job which she has married” (1983, p. 1).

She furthermore argues that her husband’s work “both structures her life and elicits her contributions to

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<sup>9</sup> Across the wider garrison there were three men (that I was aware of in either a research or work-based capacity) married to serving women (all three serving personnel [two officers and one SNCO] working in the Medical Centre), two permanently based in Fimonue, the other flying in and out based on his work commitments. It is worth noting that same-sex marriage and civil partnership is recognised by the military and within the Bears there were two same-sex marriages, one male and one female. The female serving soldier was an attached soldier and thus part of the battalion for her two-year attachment. Her wife was not part of the interview cohort due to the specific nature of the regular collective relocation of the battalion that I was keen to capture. The husband of the male serving soldier was in Fimonue briefly (eight to nine months) but was unwilling to participate.

it" (1983, p. 2). Finch's "use of the concept of 'structuring' is intended to underline the externality of constraints as wives experience them. That is, largely they are 'givens' (or at least are accepted as givens) to be accommodated and worked around, and the patterns which they impose form fundamental organising themes for wives' lives" (1983, p. 2). She argues that wifely incorporation consists both of "her incorporation into the structures around which that work is organised, and the incorporation of her labour into the work done" (1983, p. 3).

Papanek looks specifically at "vicarious achievement" of the "two-person single career family" (1973) and, like Finch, suggests that there are structural implications for the women incorporated into their husband's career. Such "structural ambivalence[s]" (1973, p. 857) of the husband's employer "proceeds on the assumption that the alternative uses of the wife's time are neither important nor productive in the economics sense of the term, and that her 'opportunity costs' are therefore low" (1973, p. 856). This assumption, as Papanek highlights, is "consistent with the general view of housework and women's work, in general, as a low status non-productive activity" (1973, p. 856). For Papanek these assumptions placed "certain expectations" (1973, p. 858) on employees' wives, serving "the dual function of reinforcing the husband's commitment to the institution and of demanding certain types of role performance from the wife which benefit the institution" (1973, p. 858). These expectations place "patterns of pressure" (1973, p. 858) on the wife as the husband's social mobility within the institution is directly linked to her conformity.

Wifely incorporation has, according to Callan, been taken for granted, "a folk theory of marriage [which] easily allowed incorporation to be seen as a 'natural' and inevitable condition" (1975, p. 4). These expectations are arguably "institutional boundaries, mechanisms of inclusions and exclusion" (1984, p. 2) and it is on marriage that wives become contained within certain limitations. Callan contends that subordination into the bounded position of incorporated wives occurs "through a system of definitions which sustains an intact and unchallengeable world view" (1984, p. 5). This world view, according to

Jervis, is one that “perpetuate[s] the privileging of men and subordinating of women” (2011, p. 22) permitting “certain traditionally male British professional institutions, such as the military, [to] retain their long-held power to incorporate and define the wives of their employees” (2011, pp. 22-23). Allowing patriarchal systems to maintain their control, enables men to “retain their positions of power” and through such stereotyping and acceptance of “particular societies expect[ing] married women to support their husbands’ careers, approving that role, then the incorporation of wives will persist” (2011, p. 23).

Finch suggests that through marriage, a woman is directly incorporated into her husband’s work through the overt structuring of her life due to the requirement of her husband’s work and through the incorporation of *her* labour into *his* work. Papanek’s arguments are based on the expectation of the employer that wives will provide an additional service to the institution and that their commitments away from the institution, in the home or elsewhere are of such lowly import that its demands will supersede them. Callan contends that it is the ongoing world view, or inevitability of women’s subordination by men through the system of definitions placing women in subordinated roles that perpetuates their incorporation (1975). Jervis argues that it is the patriarchal or “hegemonic masculinity” or “male hegemony” (2011, p. 22) still in place within certain British institutions that defines the institutional expectation of the wives of their employees. These theorists suggests that there is a “vicarious contamination” (Finch, 1983, pp. 37-38; Jervis, 2011, pp. 24-27) or achievement (Papanek, 1973) where “wives become identified with their husbands’ job and rank” (Jervis, 2011, p. 25) yet although there is the possibility that wives can refute this identity or incorporation this comes at a cost. Finch suggests that due to “patterns of incorporation appearing quite naturally because they are in step with other features of the marriage relationship” (1983, p. 154) that to be seen to not “support one’s husband [...] is quite likely to be interpreted as a sign that the health of the marriage is suspect” (Finch, 1983, pp. 154-155). Callan (1984) acknowledges the possibility of refuting the label of incorporated wife and that there is an underlying choice available to all such women. Arguably this is a

choice a wife makes on marriage, yet not to perform this vicarious labour calls into question the health of their marriage and arguably her obeisance to (her husband as well as) the incorporating institution.

We must however proceed with caution in seeking a definition of incorporation on which to base this thesis and be alert to the traditional binarism of linking incorporated wifedom onto the professional or bureaucratic careers (Finch, 1983, p. 125). Papanek focuses specifically on American middle-class wifely incorporation (1973, p. 856) where she suggests that “[t]here appear to be class distinctions in the extent to which the occupational worlds of men affect the lives of women” (1973, p. 857). She develops this argument stating that “[i]n the *middle-class* two-person career pattern, the wife is neither formally employed nor remunerated in any direct sense”<sup>10</sup> (1973, p. 857). Finch explores this historic supposition and though acknowledging that middle-class wives’ incorporation “can actually mean professional work” (1983, p. 126), in the case of officers’ wives who “traditionally and voluntarily supports [their] husband[s]” (MoD, 1976, p. para.56), she suggests that soldiers’<sup>11</sup> wives experience the worst of incorporation through their geographic mobility “entirely outside their own control” (1983, p. 125). The term ‘incorporated wife’ has hitherto been used to examine middle-class wives. This thesis’ purpose is predominantly to examine the experiences and incorporation of enlisted men’s wives upon whom ‘working-class’ status has, irrespective of her own background, been assigned by the military through her marriage. The definition of incorporation is thus appropriate and can be used to focus on all incorporated women as opposed to exclusively on those for whom, by virtue of their husbands’ rank, the term has historically sat.

Through establishing a working hypothesis for ‘incorporation’, it has become evident that this occurs through marriage to a man employed within a patriarchal institution that assumes the labour of his wife. Unlike cognate studies that examine more middle-class wifely incorporation such as diplomatic wives

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<sup>10</sup> My emphasis

<sup>11</sup> Through her explicit use of both soldier and officer through this chapter I have interpreted this as meaning that ‘soldier’ refers to an enlisted man.

(1975; McCarthy, 2014) or armed forces officers' wives (Harrison and Laliberte, 1994; Weinstein & Mederer, 1997; White & Weinstein, 1997) the definition of incorporation employed within this thesis includes cross-rank overseas army wives who have demonstrably been nominally incorporated through their international relocation and the suspension (Hyde, 2015) of their own pursuits. Whilst I acknowledge that women have the nominal choice not to be incorporated, what this thesis explores, through the life-stories of the interviewed women, is how their terms of incorporation are established, their acknowledgement of their incorporation and how they respond to their positioning within their marriage and against the wider military establishment.

Turning to the third research question and the thesis' contribution to CMS, it has been established that whilst wives' militarisation is acknowledged within CMS, a gap exists within the corpus as to how this militarisation is experienced. Building on Hyde's important work, I examined overseas British army wives' responses to their incorporation acknowledging this militarised dependent status. Their responses were varied. The women probed their incorporation, reflecting on the militarised status conferred on them through their marriage and the militarised expectations placed both implicitly and explicitly upon them. Enmeshed within wifely incorporation is the contribution this thesis makes to the sociology of motherhood. As subsequent chapters show, many of the women interviewed were, or became, mothers during their posting to Fimonue. For these women, their status as mothers often provided a way of facilitating, even accepting, incorporation as army wives and absorption into the wifely community. In light of this, the thesis seeks to understand the direct implications that the construction of expected motherhood places on young women newly married and living overseas behind the wire. Through its investigation of incorporated wifehood, the thesis makes a related contribution to sociologies of emotional work/labour. Whilst military wives' labour is acknowledged within CMS and other examinations of incorporated wifehood, this thesis articulates how women's performance of such work is still experienced as intimately bound to their demonstration of incorporation and overt performance of army wifehood. It contributes to the examination of the

“suspended” (Hyde, 2015) careers of the “gainfully unemployed” (Papanek, 1973, p. 863) incorporated overseas wives. The dearth of employment opportunities ostensibly furthers their militarisation locating them into and responsible for the domestic space of the MQs and married patches. This thesis intimately explores the direct ramifications of this lack of gainful employment hitherto unexplored in any detail in previous theses on army wifehood. Whilst Jervis (2011) acknowledges and considers the psychological impacts of loss of employment, this thesis considers the sociological implications on wives’ positioning against the military institution and, building on Jervis, raises awareness of the very real mental health issues some women subsequently developed.

The thesis seeks to extend CMS in a further specific way by confronting the impacts of rank within the feminised world of the army wife. It explores the lived experiences of the ‘geography of rank’, showing how this influences friendships and communities within the public spaces of the garrison but also extends into the private spaces of its domestic homes. Within Fimonue and other overseas British garrisons, housing is allocated by rank. This aspect of the thesis builds on, and develops, Hyde’s work in examining the implications of military power and how this power “lies expressly between what might be called the ‘military’ and ‘civilian’ spheres” (2015, p. 10). Despite cognate work within CMS acknowledging the dominating power of the militarised institution no comprehensive examination of the geography of an enclosed overseas garrison and its implications on overseas army wives has been undertaken. Therefore, this thesis’ examination of the impact of the ‘geography of rank’ contributes to CMS not only in its examination of the micro-politics of wives’ physical usage of the military garrison but in revealing the impacts of the intimate dominated socio-spaces of military marriage, army wives’ friendships and the wider community.

### **Army Wives and Fimonue’s Ranked Housing**

Having outlined key work within CMS and incorporated wifehood and the contribution the thesis aims to make to these fields, this section provides an overview of Fimonue as the research location with a

brief introduction to British military overseas postings before examining the ranked and hierarchical nature of a garrison and its patches. Initially it will provide a brief introduction to army housing provision.

Whether in the UK or overseas married personnel are housed in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) (also known as Married Quarters [MQ]) or Substitute Service Family Accommodation (SSFA)<sup>12</sup>. This housing can be located either behind the wire and to access the housing soldiers and their families will need to drive through manned front gates showing the military or dependent's pass. SFA can also be found outside the wire, amongst civilian housing and socio-spaces but still maintained and managed by Amey<sup>13</sup> and under military jurisdiction. SSFA is provided for service families where there is no suitable SFA within a ten-mile radius to the duty station. A service family cannot source SSFA themselves, Amey's Occupancy Services Team, as if it were an SFA, would source the property on their behalf and families will be offered a choice of two properties to choose from (AFF, 2019). SSFA are located outside of the wire and in the wider community however as with SFA outside of the wire it is still under military jurisdiction. An FOIR<sup>14</sup> was submitted in August 2019 requesting a breakdown of numbers of occupancy of both UK SFA properties and overseas occupants however at the date of submission this FOIR had not been returned.

For service families of the British Army there are several overseas locations, stretching from Canada to Brunei, Kenya and across Europe. These postings are predominately individual postings with only British Forces Germany (BFG)<sup>15</sup> and British Forces Cyprus (BFC) hosting battalion or regiments. The individual postings are Brunei (2 potential postings, one with the Gurkhas and the other a 'Loan Service' where British army personnel work on loan with the Brunei forces), Canada (there are four postings here, one

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<sup>12</sup> SFA and MQ are used interchangeably throughout this thesis

<sup>13</sup> Amey looks after 45,000 military SFA units in the UK. It is contracted by the MoD to maintain, refurbish and construct new housing for military families (Amey, 2019)

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix One, page 330

<sup>15</sup> BFG is in the process of being withdrawn, completed by 2020, and thus Cyprus will be the only overseas battalion posting for the British Army with small units remaining in country to retain strategic ties (MoD, 2019).

in Calgary, the others are remote small postings), Kenya (Nairobi or Nanyuki a remote posting a 200km or three hour plus drive to the north of Nairobi) and with EJSU (European Joint Support Union with families posted across fourteen different sites within Europe)<sup>16</sup>. The Army Families Federation website has an 'overseas section' (AFF, 2019) where information on each posting is broken down for families 'considering' an overseas posting outlining the conditions of everyday living for families deployed to these far flung corners. In Kenya for example, the local hospital is over two-hundred kilometres away and as a result the MoD operates a Non-Confinement Policy (AFF, 2019) resulting in pregnant women being unable to accompany their serving soldier husband until after their baby has been born. There is also no night driving between the two bases in Kenya, Nanyuki and Nairobi, due to safety concerns and the poor quality of the roads. Housing is provided for all army personnel and their families in each overseas location however this can range from patches<sup>17</sup> and MoD owned Service Family Accommodation behind the wire, as in BFC or BFG or living in SSFA within secure compounds with night and day security as in Kenya. Universally across the various pages outlining preparation for overseas living is the cautionary warning of the limited availability of spousal employment with the advice being for accompanying spouses to consider how they will fill their day during their time abroad. Schooling is another area of focus with battalion and regimental postings locations having a good provision of MOD schools whereas other postings can cater for primary aged children following the national curriculum with advice for certain postings being to consider sending children back to boarding schools in the UK.

Having examined the general nature of overseas military living, it is necessary to train the lens specifically on Fimonue. The research examined women married to an infantry battalion, the Bears<sup>18</sup>, based in Fimonue, with a manning strength of nearly five-hundred enlisted soldiers and over thirty

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<sup>16</sup> There are also additional international postings for example in Washington DC however these are varied and role specific and I am unaware of total numbers or actual locations for every single potential overseas location.

<sup>17</sup> 'Patch' is a colloquialism for the married quarters of the garrison.

<sup>18</sup> All army regiments/battalions have nicknames, this one is made up

officers<sup>19</sup>. Various additional soldiers are attached to an infantry battalion, serving with the unit for (approximately) two years. These clerks, medics and engineers are included on the 'strength' of the battalion's roll call. These so-called 'attached arms' can be male or female, however, due to their time with the battalion being limited plus the lack of accompanying spouses<sup>20</sup>, the decision was made early on to investigate the experiences of wives married to Bears as it is the uniqueness of their experience, regularly moving *en-masse* within the same collective of women that was appealing. In total, 180 families lived behind the wire with a further 26 families<sup>21</sup> living off patch. For overseas postings, the unit moves with accompanying 'dependents', an inclusive term used not only for children but also wives, locating them immediately in a subordinate position to their soldier husband. Dependent terminology is a mechanism of control as "[c]ontrol can be...effectively gained, and discipline exercised" (Callan, 1984, p. 5) through the language and definitions used.

Whether based in the UK or overseas, soldiers' wives are frequently referred to as 'army wives'<sup>22</sup> a compound definition of "two heteronormative institutions" (Hyde, 2015, p. 32), marriage and military. In this specific environment where wives' positionality, role and definition are constructed and conditioned by institutional discourse, their identity becomes mutated and affected. It is the very nature of these enacted identities and performances that this research probes<sup>23</sup>. Army wifehood carries particular challenges, "a woman married to a soldier has to cope with the demands peculiar to being a

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<sup>19</sup> Numbers are accurate as of the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – NB: the battalion numbers ebbed and flowed due to postings in and out of Battalion over any given month.

<sup>20</sup> Many of the clerks were unaccompanied junior ranking female. As noted throughout this thesis, there was one male accompanying spouse, married to a female clerk. In addition, there was one female officer (2015-2016) who was divorced and one medic (doctor) attached who was unmarried. During the actual time of the field work (2016-2017) there were no female officers attached to the Bears.

<sup>21</sup> As I understand it, these families were both married and cohabiting couples, with and without children. As the families were living outside of the wire, I had no access to them and thus unable to identify any women who would agree to interview. I was aware of one cohabiting couple, the soldier in a relationship with a local woman. Due to their non-marital status she was only entitled to an Accompanied/Escorted Pass for access on base and had no entitlement to use the medical facilities (Mitchenson, 2016). Further study could consider and compare the differences between those living behind the wire and those living off patch and their experiences as overseas army wives.

<sup>22</sup> Throughout this thesis both army wife/wives and military/army marriage will be used interchangeably however unless specified I will be referring explicitly to women married to serving soldiers of the British Army.

<sup>23</sup> Despite there being male and female army spouses, the research focuses on wives' experiences.

military wife: she is defined by society not only by her relationship to a particular man, but by her membership in a powerful state institution” (Enloe, 2000, p. 156). Categorisation as military or army wife positions women as subsumed into the soldier’s needs and ultimately those of the institution. As this thesis demonstrates, this change in identity, arguably particularly apparent overseas due to isolation, dislocation from wider kinship and friendship support, affects wives; for some it leads to personal frustration, lethargy, atrophy, unhappiness, depression and resentment. Contrastingly, for others, an overseas posting provides development and previously unattainable personal mobility opportunities.

Within the British army, rank is classed with the officer ranks fulfilling the role of the dominant class or upper-middle class and enlisted ranks, below Staff/Colour Sergeant, that of the working class; across all ranks, the serving soldier is deemed the “head of the house”, the family’s class linked to their rank. Infanteers being a male-only corps, they are male-headed houses, the family’s classed status is thus assigned via the “class location through the medium of the [male-headed] family” according to Goldthorpe’s schema (Stanworth, 1984, p. 160; Crompton, 1989; Goldthorpe, 1980). Officers and their wives will be posted, with a few exceptions, into a battalion for a two-year tour. These women, even though insiders within the cohort of army wives, are also marked as outsiders within the battalion with whom they briefly live. Enlisted wives are those married to men ranked from Privates to Warrant Offices and for most of their military marriage (within the infantry) they will move with the battalion. In the enlisted ranks, there are nuanced sub-divisions and categories influencing wives’ positionality and identity due to being typecast at a specific ranked level. As already stated, of crucial interest to this thesis is its exploration of enlisted men’s wives, a significantly under-represented cohort within cognate work on incorporated wives.

Five of the interviewed group (of twenty-nine wives) were married to officers, the rest were from the enlisted ranks. Whilst acknowledging that using the term ‘enlisted wives’ could be considered to be

continuing the subjugation of women married to the army, locating them purely through their husband's rank and placing his associative classed status upon them, this is a commonly used term both within the military ranks and, significantly, within the community of wives. Nonetheless, I employ it with caution. At the time of the fieldwork, I was an enlisted wife married to a senior ranking soldier, a Bear through and through. Throughout my time in Fimonue, I resisted the appellation of both army and enlisted wife, struggling to find my way within this unfamiliar world where I was denoted through who I was married to, what *his* job was rather than through any of my own previous markers of self-validation. I initially found myself lost, adrift and unable to locate myself, feeling as if all my own personal achievements had become de-valued and consumed by the marital positionality imposed upon me. The term 'enlisted wife' is therefore used empathetically and as part of a wider aim of thesis to provide a window into the obfuscated and hidden world that these women occupy incorporated into the patriarchal, class-conscious, ranked world of the overseas military garrison.

To understand the full implications of living within the militarised environment of an overseas military garrison, it is essential to comprehend the structure of the British army. The intricacies of the army rank structure and the responsibilities of each rank infiltrate onto wives through the ranked housing entitlement and the formal social space of the garrison. Table 1 outlines the British army's rank structures with average years served at each rank prior to eligibility for promotion.

<b>Enlisted Men</b>	<b>Direct Entry (DE) Officer</b>	<b>Late Entry (LE) Officer</b>
Private Three years	Second Lieutenant One year (graduate) Two years (non-graduate)	
Lance Corporal Five years	Lieutenant Two – three years	
Corporal Four years	Captain Six years	Captain Six years
Sergeant – Four years	Major Eight years	Major Six years
Staff/Colour Sergeant Three years	Lieutenant-Colonel <sup>24</sup>	Lieutenant-Colonel
Warrant Officer Two Three years		
Warrant Officer One <sup>25</sup>		

*Table 1- British Army Rank Structure*

All enlisted soldiers enter the army as privates, entry requirements demand no formal qualifications – educational or otherwise (MoD, 2018). Unmarried privates live in the ‘Block’, Single Living Accommodation (SLA), within the militarised barracks of the garrisons. They have no social space of their own apart from the Junior Ranks Dining room, the WRVS<sup>26</sup> facility or the coffee shops on base. In Fimonue, there was also the beach bar and a ‘pub’ that opened in the evening however being located at the top of the hill, a good forty-minute walk away from the SLA, was demonstrably underused. Married privates and their wives were entitled to SFA, housed amongst other privates and Lance Corporals. Privates’ wives have no designated social space apart from their own or friends’ MQ, the coffee shops and, during the day, the children’s areas such as the soft playroom ‘Bouncing Bears’, when it was open; it shut halfway through the tour due to health and safety concerns.

<sup>24</sup> The officer rank structure goes beyond Lieutenant Colonel, however the most senior officer for this battalion as the Commanding Officer holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

<sup>25</sup> Most senior rank of the enlisted structure so an indefinite number of years unless taking a commission

<sup>26</sup> The Women’s Royal Volunteer Service is a volunteer run organisation which provides a tea, coffee and a chat to single soldiers living away from home.

Lance Corporal is the first promotion, resulting in a marginally higher wage packet combined with more responsibility at work<sup>27</sup>, the soldier is known as Corporal rather than purely by their last name. Importantly on promotion, Lance Corporals gain entry to the Corporals' mess<sup>28</sup>, a dedicated room within the garrison for social events. These events could be 'stag' – soldiers only, or, periodically during the year, open to wives by invitation. As with their soldier husbands, wives move up the social scale, deemed responsible (respectable) enough to attend formal events. The "unwritten conventions of behaviour" (Kirke, 2009, p. 747), the dress code dictating that wives must wear knee length dresses comes into force, meaning that even though they are invited to attend the event as a civilian, they are bounded by the "informal command structure" (Kirke, 2009, p. 747) and expectations of the military. Despite there being nominally little change between private and lance corporal, wives become incorporated into their soldier husbands' world through attending formal mess events, ensuring her ongoing militarisation and domination by the establishment.

Following promotion to Corporal, in Fimonue, the family becomes entitled to a bigger house on a different 'patch' alongside other corporals and some junior sergeants. Relocating to a bigger house on a different estate, the corporal's family are viewed as moving up the military's classed stratigraphy, living with more senior soldiers and their families in houses with car ports, in landscaped cul-de-sacs rather than on the main drag up the hill. Through the house alone they have become 'upper-working class', living in houses set back from the road with a front garden rather than occupying the terraced houses opening straight onto the road of the lower ranks.

Once promoted to Sergeant, the soldier and his family have broken into the lower-middle classes of the army structure. For the unmarried or unaccompanied<sup>29</sup> sergeant there is now living accommodation in the Sergeants' and Warrant Officers' Mess, which, rather than just being a room in the garrison, is a

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<sup>27</sup> Please see Appendix Two for an indicative pay scale, page 331

<sup>28</sup> Single Corporals are still housed in the same block as their private counterparts

<sup>29</sup> Married Unaccompanied is the term used for a soldier who is married but not accompanied by his wife/family on a posting either in the UK or overseas.

dedicated building with bedrooms, a bar, a dining room, antechambers for pool and snooker, housing some of the battalion's silverware and memorabilia. The Mess resembles a members' club and is considered a social step up. Wives, if they so desired, could socialise in the mess with other wives of a similar rank, however, during the time of the fieldwork, I was unaware of any choosing to do so as perceived as it as the soldier's preserve. Sergeants' family days were hosted during the year with children playing in the pool and a family BBQ would be served for the sergeants' and warrant officers' (the most senior enlisted rank) families. On promotion to sergeant, overseas, the soldier and his wife were entitled to move to the top of the hill to the newest houses in Fimonue.

At the higher end of the military's class system is the officer class. The junior level entry is Second Lieutenant and the minimum academic requirement is seven GCSE at C grade or above and two A-Levels or equivalent and even though not mandatory, most officers hold degrees (UCAS, 2018). Women married to officers are, like enlisted wives, instilled with their officer husbands' social standing, deemed to possess the same level of academic ability and personal responsibility, placed with their husbands on the other side of the divide to enlisted wives. There is only one Mess, for which all officers (and their wives) are deemed eligible for entry. As with the Sergeants' and Warrant Officers' Mess, accommodation is available for single or unaccompanied officers, meals are provided and the atmosphere of a dignified members' club permeates. Wives are again invited to social events throughout the year, bounded by the same conventions of behaviour and codes of dress that in the other messes. Housing for the officers in Fimonue is hidden away in a different part of camp, living within and amongst themselves. Unless invited to an officer's house, wives of other ranks would have no reason to visit this part of camp, resulting in a physical (and social) divide between those married to officers and those married to enlisted soldiers.

Kirke's statement that the army's informal structure consists of "unwritten conventions of behaviour in the absence of the formal constraints, including behaviour off duty [...] and complementary conventions

associated with the structure and exercise of informal personal relationships both vertically and horizontally” (2009, p. 747) is relevant for this thesis’ consideration of wives’ inhabitation of a militarised environment. Wives’ everyday living was informed by ‘complementary conventions associated with the structure’ of the army. As with soldiers, wives’ cross-rank friendships were permissible; however, even though wives did not wear the rank of their husbands, they were viscerally conscious of rank silently sitting within the ties of friendship. Whilst ranked groupings are undeniably a pre-requisite for military cohesiveness and effectiveness, the subsequent enforcement of these groupings onto wives warrants further examination. It is the social inclusions and exclusions that the wives face combined with how they experience both the removal of their own validity and the impact of being imbued with the ranked positioning of their soldier husband, which this research seeks to understand.

Entitlement to live behind the wire and occupy SFA (Service Family Accommodation) is derived *only* through marriage or civil partnership<sup>30</sup>. Both male and female serving soldiers are entitled to occupy SFA with their dependent family, however, for the Bears, as with the wider army, the majority are male serving soldiers with female wives. According to a FOIR<sup>31</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> March 2019, Table 2) the percentage of serving males who are married is forty-three percent of male personnel, whereas the total of number of married female personnel is only thirty percent.

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Regular Army Personnel</b>	79,640	72,120	7,520
<b>Of Whom are Married or in a Civil Partnership<sup>3</sup></b>	34,180	31,390	2,250

*Table 2 - Total Regular Army Personnel Who Are Married Split by Gender Using Marital Stats<sup>32</sup>*

<sup>30</sup> Please refer to Analysis Chapter One of this thesis for further clarification

<sup>31</sup> Please see Appendix Three, page 332 for the breakdown of the FOIR in full

<sup>32</sup> Whilst outside the scope of this research project, a fascinating piece of post-doctoral studies would be to investigate as to why the percentage of female personnel married is significantly lower than of male personnel. However, for the purposes of this research piece the presumption is that for this battalion the head of the household was male and the spouse occupying the SFA was the dependent wife.

In a thesis examining incorporated wives' responses not only to their incorporation but to the incorporating institution, it is necessary to recognise the important changes taking place within the military, just prior to and during the time of the research. The military was undertaking nascent steps to respond to acknowledged issues experienced by wives regarding mobility and its detrimental impacts on their employment prospects. In 2016 the British Tri-Services were in a period of flux. After fourteen years of constant deployment, the army had pulled out of combat operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Due to the period of austerity, significant cuts had been made to the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) budget; resulting in the year preceding the Bears' deployment to Fimouze redundancies occurring across all ranks. As part of wide sweeping changes, the Strategic Defence Review 2010 had "recommended that a comprehensive analysis of military terms and conditions of service occurred; this review became the New Employment Model Programme (NEM)" (MoD, 2018). The NEM instructed the Tri-Services to introduce "better balance [for] the demands placed on our people and their families, providing greater domestic stability while continuing to support mobility where essential to defence requirements" (MoD, 2015). Furthermore, to "provide conditions for regular service personnel that support their domestic stability and support partners' employment" (MoD, 2015).

One key initiative introduced in 2015 holding direct relevance for the interviewed group was an initiative providing "employment readiness training for spouses and civil partners was established through the new Career Transition Partnership (CTP) contract" (MoD, 2018). This was initiated "to help spouses optimise access to employment and to help them find better employment at a level that is commensurate with their skills, knowledge and experience and/or in accord with their aspirations and ability" (Caddick, et al., 2018, p. 15). The CTP trial was conducted in Fimouze with thirty-three women participating including approximately seven women married to the Bears.<sup>33</sup> This initiative, whilst unique (and small scale – there were a total of four hundred and thirty five wives both in the UK and overseas

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<sup>33</sup> In the interest of full disclosure, I was in receipt of the training grant which contributed towards the tuition fees (one term) of this research project.

who completed the trial<sup>34</sup>), demonstrates growing awareness within the MOD of the implications that continuous mobility places on trailing spouses with specific reference to their employment opportunities – an theme explored in the final analysis chapter.

### **Thesis Structure**

To answer the above stated research questions, this introduction has summarised existing cognate research on militarised and incorporated wives in particular and providing an understanding of military overseas living with a breakdown of the conditions of Fimonue and the regiment under examination. It also provided a brief insight into the ranked command structure and its impact on patch living overseas in Fimonue. The full literature review that follows in the next chapter will engage with a wider range of sociological literature.

To examine how women experienced military marriage, studies within the broader sociology of marriage are drawn upon. The thesis reviews work on historic expectations of the position of women within the marriage, initially leveraging Oakley's (1970; 1985) seminal work on housewives before an exploration of marriage in the latter quarter of the twentieth century through Smart's (2011; 1984) consideration of the social and cultural factors impacting on marriage and Lauer and Yodanis' (2010) reflections on the construction of women's role in marriage. It considers Tichenor's work on the hidden and institutional powers at play within marriage before contrasting these investigations of marriage against Giddens (1991; 1992), and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2004) work on the changing emphasis of marriage and relationships in a late modern society (Plummer, 2003). The final section on marriage considers the changing space of intimacy to probe whether military marriages are adapting to modern expectations of intimate relationships.

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<sup>34</sup> This was broken down to 240 overseas from the tri-services and 195 from the Royal Air Force in the UK (Caddick, et al., 2018).

By examining literature relevant to the first research question, the changing role of women in society and the nature of 'doing in gender' for twenty-first century army wives is probed. West and Zimmerman's (1987) work is used as a springboard before turning to an examination of the neo-liberal concept of gendered choice as investigated by Walkerdine et al (2001) and Chen (2013). This discussion includes a consideration of the ongoing expectations placed upon incorporated expatriate wives through the work conducted by Fechter (2008) before turning to Fowlkes' work on the relevance and importance of employment for women regardless, or despite, of their incorporation. Underemployment is examined from the perspective of overseas mobility leveraging Morrison and Lichters' (1988) work before moving onto a review of Hochschild's (1979; 1990; 2012) work on emotional labour. The final consideration for the first research question is the role of motherhood alongside their incorporation, here drawing extensively on McMahon's (1995) work.

The literature review turns its attention to the second research questions initially drawing on Goffman's (1961) work to understand what shapes and governs wives' incorporation into and negotiation of military life. The focus then shifts to the implications of rank on incorporation, again utilising Goffman's work whilst acknowledging Foucault's (1975) panopticon. This moves the discussion on to consider the impact of performance of identity within an enclosed garrison environment. The garrison environment is explored using the work of McDowell (1983; 1999), Bondi (1998), Pateman (1989), Hanson (1992), Bowlby et al (1989), Moran et al (2001) and Skeggs (1999) in their contributions to feminist geography as it is the wives' physical positioning within and their uses of the socio-spaces of the garrison which holds significant importance for the answering of this research question. The concept of socio-spaces and their dominating impact on wives facilitates an examination of Bourdieu's opus (1977a; 1977b; 1977c; 1986; 1989; 1990; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1999; 2000) with specific consideration of his work on fields, doxa and habitus. Bourdieu's work has hitherto not been used in understanding women's incorporation as overseas army wives and thus significantly contributes to revealing their multifaceted negotiations and responses to their positioning overseas. This thesis, grounded as it is in a Bourdieusian

theoretical approach, differs substantially in Hyde's examination of the use of the barracks gymnasium and the garrison's school bus stops and their contested use *vis-à-vis* wives' militarisation. It is worth noting that both theses are alert, and respond, to the various uses and meanings embedded within the physical geography and the feminine uses of the garrison however there is clear theoretical space between our approaches and ultimate conclusions as will be made clear through the analysis chapters. Ostensibly there are initial similarities in that there is an examination of uses of military spaces however our objectives are distinctive and separate.

An examination of female friendship is then undertaken revealing the unique context of overseas army wives' not only as female friendships but located as they are within the geography of rank of the garrison environment, another hitherto unexamined but significant area of overseas army wifehood. Adams and Allen's (1998) work is used in establishing the need to understand the context of specific friendships before introducing Pahl's (2000) work on the darker side of friendship and the nature of exclusion. Friendship and power struggles are considered by Bunnell et al (2012), Skeggs (2001) and O'Connor (1998) to understand the various systems of power at play within the contexts of friendship. This section then draws on the limited work of relevant female friendship whilst Hey's (1997) work on adolescent female friendship is also considered. Friendship of motherhood is examined through Cronin's (2015) work on the extended domestic space; this facilitates a discussion on the politics of belonging, as defined by different grouped activities, such as rank and motherhood, within the specific enclosed environment of a military garrison. Such considerations introduce Mulchaly et al's (2010) work on the social capital of friendship, before turning to Yuval-Davis' (2006) work on belonging which not only facilitates an understanding of the nuances of belonging but also of the importance of identity construction within the context of belonging. Construction of identity belonging returns us briefly to Bourdieu's work on capital which introduces the concept of class. Lawler (2005a; 2005b; 2011), Skeggs (1997; 2005), Skeggs and Loveday (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012), Walkerdine et al (2001), Tyler (2008) and Hanley's (2017) work conducted around class and class as experienced by women.

The methodology and analysis chapter considers the approaches adopted, introducing the interviewees, data analysis and use of focus groups. The subsequent four analysis chapters bring the women and their experiences to life. Throughout these chapters it is their voices that are heard, narrating their reflections on their incorporation both into their military marriage and overseas military incorporation. The first analysis chapter, *Moving with the Army*, accompanies wives as they prepare for relocation overseas. It follows their arrival in Fimonue as they adapt to the challenges of daily life, becoming subsumed into the military administrative procedures, learning the military's doxic expectations. Like the newly arrived families, the chapter contends with the field struggles and rules of the game, learning the expectations placed upon the newly incorporated overseas army wife.

Having moved behind the wire, the second chapter, *Patch Life*, examines the realities of Fimonue's geographical space and the [lack of] socio-spaces available to wives. It reflects on the effects of this absence upon wives and the chain of command's response. It investigates the military garrison's dominated space indicating wives' incorporated status into the militarised system, responding to their perceived want of positioning through their adjunctive role of wife. It reveals the impact of ranked patches and resultant incorporation into the ranked stratigraphy at play within the wider garrison, including how enlisted families' lack of a garden fence facilitates panoptic control within the nominally private space of the family MQ.

The third analysis chapter, *Marriage and the Army Wife*, moves into the private space of the military marriage. It probes the expectations in place within army marriage, how these are performed, or not, on the soldier husband's behalf. It considers how emotion work of marriage was expected and encouraged upon army wives through incorporation into their husband's military career. It investigates symbolic domination, how the women experienced incorporation into their marriage, becoming lost to themselves during the time they too served.

The final analysis chapter, *Motherhood, Friendship and the Army Wife*, returns to the garrison's more public setting, examining the politics of belonging and the complexity of living within a ranked community of women. It probes the realities of friendship behind the wire and how husbands' rank leaves women struggling to develop friendships outside such predetermined boundaries. It considers how women police the boundaries of these friendships, calling into question those who do not conform to the marital ranked status. It shines a light on the alternative identity created through motherhood, whilst reflecting, too, on the impacts of non-motherhood as experienced by a small cohort. It considers wives' underemployment within the garrison and the direct implications on some women's mental health as they learnt how to re-identify with themselves, cast adrift from their own professional identity. The final consideration returns us to how army wifehood was viewed and reflected upon by the interviewees as they located themselves within the community of wives and wider garrison.

The concluding chapter ties these strands of overseas army wifehood together reflecting on the nuanced and complex situatedness experienced in Fimonue. It revisits the multiple and varied ways this thesis is ground-breaking in its consideration of incorporated overseas army wives through utilising the theories of both Goffman and Bourdieu whilst providing enlisted army wives the opportunity to narrate the realities of incorporated army wifehood overseas behind the wire. It explores the concept of wifely incorporation and their militarisation through this incorporation, revealing how these women responded in their multiple different ways to their inclusion into the overall military machinery of the British Army living as an overseas wife 'behind the wire'.

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The research questions probe how overseas army wives experience their military marriage and their negotiations of incorporation in Fimonue. The questions reflect upon what shaped and governed this subjective positioning whilst considering their army marriage and pseudo-militarisation. This Literature Review initially explores cognate studies investigating both military and incorporated wives to locate my thesis within this small canon. It then addresses issues arising from the first research question (how wives experience military marriage overseas) through reviewing literature on the sociology of marriage, women's changing role and position within society, reflecting on factors influencing employment/underemployment before investigating the construction of identity as facilitated through mother/nonmother status.

The next section reflects on Goffman's work on Total Institutions (1961). The literature review subsequently turns to studies of identity performance demanded of those living in a ranked environment. Feminist geography and its value in understanding the overseas military garrison and the wives' socio-spaces is considered before reviewing Bourdieu's work on fields, doxa, symbolic power habitus and capitals. Within the reviews of Goffman and Bourdieu, feminist critiques of their theories are highlighted, acknowledging the weakness of both sociologists' work in relation to a gendered examination of army wives. Subsequently studies of friendships are reflected upon examining the construction and lived experiences of friendship amongst adult women. The final section of this chapter considers the politics of belonging within a constructed militarised space and how such literature is key to understanding how wives negotiate their incorporation whilst overseas.

### **Military Wives, Militarised Lives**

Since the 1970s, minimal studies have focused on servicemen's wives. This canon ranges from examining historical British wives (Bamfield, 1974; Trustram, 1984; Venning, 2005; Esdaile, 2014) to the

militarisation of both international (Enloe, 1988; Enloe, 2000) and British wives (Hyde, 2015)<sup>35</sup>. Jervis (2011) explores psychosocial and emotional impacts of relocation on overseas British military wives. British and North American military wives' role and positionality in the latter twentieth century have been investigated (Jolly R. , 1987; Parker, 1985; Jessup, 1996; Harrison & Laliberte, 1994; Jolly R. , 1996; White & Weinstein, 1997). Ware's (2012) work on the British Army's Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) soldiers briefly considers wifely incorporation, noting the worrying impact of the dislocation and isolation facing F&C wives in the UK and on overseas postings<sup>36</sup>.

Enloe considers "connections *between* militarised women, [revealing] how militaries have come to rely on women to be 'feminine', and how confounded militaries become when women refuse to live according to that artificial standard"<sup>37</sup> (1988, p. xvi). She cautions that "the military's use of its unusually privileged status within the state has to be taken into explicit account if we are to fully understand how it can penetrate women's lives" (2000, p. 47)<sup>38</sup>. Reflecting on the militarisation to which wives are subject, and by "finding militarised uses for those women who have married soldiers" (2000, p. 157), the "alien presence" (2000, p. 157) of *woman* in a hyper-masculine environment such as the infantry, is mitigated and reduced. This has been achieved by "the exercise of institutional control: if women can be socialised to *become* military wives, they can perhaps further some of the military's own goals" (2000, p. 157)<sup>39</sup>. This concept of institutionalising wives into performing tasks in order for the army to commoditise their efforts has its roots in the earliest army wives providing succour and relief to their soldier husbands whilst on campaign – even carrying him on her back when exhaustion set in (see Figure

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<sup>35</sup> Cree (2017) examines how the Military Wives Choir can be used by the national imagination as an important means through which women married to servicemen are rendered useful for the military locating her work within the CMS canon but not directly relevant to the research questions tackled within this research undertaking.

<sup>36</sup> Whilst Hyde does include some responses from F&C wives, Ware's is the only work that I am aware of focusing exclusively on F&C wives and her inclusion is minimal as her focus is on the serving F&C soldier rather than the accompanying F&C spouse. As far as I am aware Jervis did not interview F&C wives.

<sup>37</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>38</sup> Enloe examines how "[t]he close identification of the military to the state thus gives the military a kind of influence and privilege rarely enjoyed by a larger corporation or a public health agency" (Enloe, 2000, p. 46).

<sup>39</sup> Original emphasis

2). Through this provision of help, wives' position was legitimised, incorporating them on the strength<sup>40</sup> (Bamfield, 1974; Trustram, 1984) and thus acceptable to military authority.



Figure 2 - Soldiers (and Wives) on the March<sup>41</sup>

North American research examines military wives' role and positionality. White and Weinstein researched officers' wives alongside examining serving females' interaction with the American military's "bastion of masculinity" (White & Weinstein, 1997, p. xiii). Harrison and Laliberte's ethnographical interviews of Canadian military wives sought "to discover women's real experiences" (1994, p. 6) and their "harness[ing] to the requirements of a powerful institution" (1994, p. 7). These investigations explore women's positionality as military wives, husbands' absences, demand and performance of domestic labour and support, resulting in wives' continuous dislocation from the labour market, thereby creating a vulnerable position. The expected militarised role of helpmate and the impact this places on

<sup>40</sup> 'On the strength' denotes a wife who was added to the battalion's roll call and was provided with ½ rations at the army's expense. A soldier keen to marry had to seek his commanding officer's approval and if he married without this approval she would not be entitled to rations. Furthermore, if the battalion was relocated a wife 'off the strength' had to fund her own relocation, if she was on the strength then she would be relocated in with the baggage carts. For an illuminating insight into historic army wives see Bamfield (1974), Trustram (1984) and Venning's (2005) work.

<sup>41</sup> Camp followers in the Peninsular War (Brown, 2015)

officers' wives from an identity perspective is ignored, seemingly no attempt was made to garner understanding of the cost of this positionality nor whether through the changes in her own status this role could provide a creation of an identity perhaps otherwise unattainable. These scholars research the effect of the institution on the *collective* of military wives, reinforcing the institutional idea of a homogenous collection of women who become militarised helpmates of serving husbands.

Turning to recent British cognate studies, Jervis, a psychodynamic scholar and counsellor (2011, p. ix) employs a psychosocial and psychoanalytical approach to explore emotional exigencies of overseas postings on Tri-Services wives. Jervis, herself a Royal Naval officer's wife, undertook her research whilst overseas (2011, p. 2), conducting her field work in a British military<sup>42</sup> base in north-eastern Europe where the serving personnel was seconded to a multinational organisation. Initially intending to conduct a psychoanalytic study, following another wife's accusation of "disloyalty" to both husband and the service resulting from her non-participation in flower arranging (2011, p. 2), a psychosocial approach was considered more relevant as "people are social beings, any attempt to understand them requires both intrapsychic and intersubjective theories" (2011, p. 3). Her research comprised twenty-five qualitative interviews with fifteen cross rank spouses (2011, p. 7)<sup>43</sup> alongside fifteen questionnaires<sup>44</sup>. She weaves psychoanalytic analysis of her respondents' emotional response to social factors relevant to living overseas. Jervis is keen to elucidate interviewees' emotional responses, the conscious and "normative unconscious" (Layton, 2006, p. 107; Jervis, 2011, p. 8) going "some way to explaining why such compliance is sometimes rationalised today as a 'choice'" (2011, p. 8). Acknowledging that relocation "evoke[s] disturbing emotions" (2011, p. 7) building on Jervis, this thesis is a sociological

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<sup>42</sup> As opposed to an examination of wives married to members of a British battalion

<sup>43</sup> In her appendix she provides a breakdown of her interviewees – of which there was fifteen in total. I have surmised that ten were enlisted spouses, five were officer spouses and one was not disclosed. My assumption is based on terminology, where they are officers' spouses, she states officer in her brief biography of each woman and where not stated it would indicate that the woman is married to an enlisted serviceman. She had one male respondent and the rest were female.

<sup>44</sup> She also received three additional questionnaires with women she did not interview.

investigation of how overseas women negotiate their enforced dependent identity, their responses to this quasi-military incorporation and how they seek to carve an existence behind the wire.

Hyde (2015), a gender scholar spent six months living with a British (non-infantry) army regiment based in Germany, undertaking an ethnographic field study on military mobilities of army wives<sup>45</sup> exploring women's agency, probing what this informs about militarisation and women's participation in, or resisting, of it. Her research demonstrating that "militarisation maintains and ruptures gendered expectations" (2015, p. 11) investigates various responses to military power, wives' feelings towards it, and their negotiation of militarisation at a micro-level.

Both Jervis and Hyde explore the military's patriarchal nature and how, despite living in the socially progressive early twenty-first century, civilian women who become army wives are 'choosing' to support their husband's career, "suspending their career in both time and space" (Hyde, 2015, p. 56). Support can be viewed as choice, "those who continue to comply...can regard this as something that they have chosen" (Jervis, 2011, p. 37). This 'choice' reaffirms military ideology – of the "wife's natural support for her husband" (Jervis, 2011, p. 37) where she will be rewarded by *his* ongoing career progression, including financial rewards (Jervis, 2011, p. 37; Finch, 1983). Jervis argues that "[army] wives today are as concerned as their predecessors that their own behaviours should help, not hinder their husbands' career" (2011, p. 37). Using a sociological framework through which wives' varied responses to this militarised ideology can be explored, this thesis' analysis chapters seek to gain an understanding of and reflect upon their negotiation of incorporation, thereby addressing the second research question (what shapes and governs their incorporation into and negotiation of their military life?).

Jervis' psychosocial psychoanalytically-oriented thesis examines her interviewees' responses to loss – friendship, career and self, examining how loss is experienced concurrent to the lived reality of "the

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<sup>45</sup> Hyde does not break down the marital rank of her respondents, I have inferred that they are predominantly officers' rank from close analysis of her thesis and the descriptions (where provided) of the women interviewed.

military determin[ing] the meaning of their lives” (2011, p. 48) arguing that “individuality is unwanted, and largely denied” (2011, p. 48). Wives’ identities become lost, subsumed into the overarching needs of husband, family and military. Jervis contends wives’ “just getting on with it” (2011, p. 50) minimises loss created through multiple relocations, enacting prevailing attitudes of gendered social norms resulting from the “potentially life-threatening nature of her husband’s work (2011, p. 37). This ultimately results in “privileging military needs above their own” (2011, p. 37). Similar to mid-late twentieth century army wives (Finch, 1983; Callan, 1975), twenty-first century ones do not want to be seen as deviant, unsupportive and hindering their husband’s career (Jervis, 2011, p. 37). Denial of loss and stoicism impede the mourning necessary to “facilitate creative adaption and personal growth” (Jervis, 2011, p. 50). Jervis’ work provides the foundations for the understanding of the emotional impact that wives experience when relocating overseas and her contribution to this research project is considerable.

Hyde utilises Foucault’s assessment of military rank, how “the power of rank inheres in the place one occupies as a classification” (2015, p. 97; Foucault, 1975, p. 145). Rank acts as a “power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology” (Hyde, 2015, p. 110; Foucault, 1975, p. 97). These instruments bind the military into a cohesive unit and, though for the wives a false classification, it is nonetheless how they are denoted. Despite considering rank an enabler of social mobility for soldiers facilitating a degree of social mobility for wives, Hyde does not examine this in any detail. She acknowledged that she “never completely grasped the categories and sub-categories of rank and the correct nomenclature that accompanied them” (2015, p. 98). Rank features for Jervis arguing that women “who base their identities upon their husbands’ uniform and rank run the risk of losing parts of their own personalities that are perceived as incompatible”, (2011, p. 32), she considers rank within the domestic setting. For Jervis, “[w]ives’ subordinate status overseas, and the expectation of certain behaviours that it implies, creates a similar split between servicemen and their wives to that

existing between officer and other ranks” (2011, p. 42). Hyde indicates that “more could be done to analyse [ranks’] manifestations...such as through gender and class for example” (2015, p. 98). Responding to Hyde’s suggestion, this thesis demonstrates the multiple sub-divisions and categories within the enlisted ranks which influence wives’ positionality and identity through being typecast at a particular level. Addressing the second of the research questions (and using the researcher’s intimate understanding of them), the thesis explores these ranked divisions, providing insight into the ranked stratification of wives behind the wire, revealing the nuanced differences in the ways rank is experienced by officers’ and enlisted men’s wives, governing their behaviours and their participation in community life behind the wire. Such an investigation is ground-breaking in its contribution to CMS as no other study explicitly explores this difference between rank.

Despite similar themes revealing themselves in the wives’ narratives, there are significant differences in the analysis of these previous research projects. Hyde’s exploration of military mobilities provides a careful examination of the militarised nature of her study’s participants. Her work on the specificities of the imbrication of the women’s domestic space and the front line of Afghanistan “unsit[ing] death from the battlefield and plac[ing] it at women’s doorsteps, at the boundary of the public institution and the domestic sphere” (2015, p. 134) is thought-provoking. This research’s intentional focusing on the sociological lived experiences of the women in Fimonue in the post-Afghan period, reveals the changes rendered on their identity as they are moved with and into the militarised environment, thus demonstrating the clear space between the two research undertakings. Jervis’ approach, drawing on psychosocial and psychoanalytic responses to wives’ incorporated living, delving into the “psychic representations that serve to make each women’s life meaningful” (2011, p. 192) is stimulating and ground-breaking; offering “a rare glimpse into the gendered influence of the military upon the lives and feeling of mobile [Tri]servicemen’s wives” (2011, p. 194).

The clear space between this research project and that of Jervis is that this current work investigates the minutiae of life behind the wire and its impact upon interviewees. Jervis uses loss as her starting point, this thesis undertakes a journey of incorporation (or not), moving with the wives behind the wire, allowing each woman to reflect upon the totality of her experience as an overseas army wife, her responses to her new positionality, and how this negotiation has taken place. Space was provided for the women to understand the conditions of their incorporation and their adjustment to their socio-positioning as army wives. Breaking down the realities of ranked living, not only through the expected behaviours associated with the wives' different ranked stratigraphies but through the inclusion and exclusion they experienced due to their marital rank, this thesis reveals the direct impact of such pseudo-militarisation on civilian women. An understanding of the garrison's socio-spaces and how wives conducted themselves within the physical boundaries of the remote location, provides insight into how these civilian women negotiated their incorporated army wifehood both in the garrison's external spaces and in the intimate site of the marital home. A novel interrogation of the intimate space of military marriage and wives' responses to marital incorporation is undertaken before finally examining wives' responses to their own physical, ranked and ontological location within the army wife community. My privileged position as both insider and researcher has given these wives their own voice, bringing them out of Jervis' "doer done to" (Jervis, 2011, p. 42) role, empowering them to tell their story in their own words, a hitherto untold story.

### **Incorporated Wives**

Army wives belong to a wider collective of incorporated wives. The previous chapter highlighted some key work in this field, further cognate research includes studies of policemen's, politicians', managers', clergymen's, academics', and diplomats' wives' (Cain, 1973; McPherson, 1975; Pahl & Pahl, 1971; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978; Finch, 1983; Fowlkes, 1980; Callan, 1975; McCarthy, 2014). Apart from policemen's wives, these studies are "explicitly concerned with family relationships in the middle-classes" (Finch, 1983, p. 16). As this thesis with its focus on predominantly enlisted wives demonstrates,

formal and informal demands are “not intrinsically confined to the middles-class” (Callan, 1984, p. 3) but are equally exerted on enlisted army wives.

For diplomatic and army wives, the notion of belonging to the ‘family’ prevails, attendance at wives’ groups being “more or less mandatory” (McCarthy, 2014, p. 314). In her work on the diplomatic corps and its female incorporation, McCarthy states that attendance, irrespective of personal preferences, is expected wifely behaviour, “‘I loathe it[...]I am on our Charity Committee, and one of the senior wives[...]I have to seem keen to encourage the junior ones’” (2014, p. 314). This expectation demonstrates more than simple domination, rather “a neat device whereby the social system makes use of easily available *procedures* of behaviour (deference etc.) to serve quite sophisticated ends such as what Goffman calls ‘public order’”<sup>46</sup> (Callan, 1975, p. 91; Goffman, 1961). Crompton argues that “what people do always presupposes some kind of pre-existing ‘structure’ – rule of behaviours, resources etc., but in what they do, they simultaneously create the ‘structure anew” (Crompton, 1989). Traditional institutions such as the military perpetuate gendered structured roles, “[g]ender order (or gender regime) is institutionalised through practice, which can be cyclical or divergent. Gender relations are stable to the extent that groups constituted in the network of gender relations have interests in the conditions of a cyclical rather than divergent practice” (Crompton, 1989, p. 582; Connell, 1987). It is thus necessary to investigate how, within these environments, women find themselves conflicted and fixed by the institution’s structured and prevailing attitudes.

Whilst wives not working overseas or taking jobs for which they are overqualified is well documented in cognate research, no previous work has examined the direct emotional impact experienced by underemployed (Morrison & Lichter, 1988) army wives overseas. This thesis further contributes to the sociology of incorporated wives whilst simultaneously investigating the direct impact of underemployment on community assimilation, self-perception and mental health. Significantly for a

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<sup>46</sup> Original Emphasis

study of incorporated army wives, Papanek's work examining "the two-person single career" (1973, p. 852) probes the "combination of formal and informal institutional demands [...] placed on both members of a married couple of whom only the man is employed by the institution" (1973, p. 853). Stating that this work is "particularly prevalent in middle-class occupations" (1973, p. 852) multiple researchers have drawn upon her insightful theory. Papanek scrutinises the locale of incorporated wives "where the employing institution operates in a social enclave, as in overseas diplomatic missions, army posts, college towns, and company towns" (1973, p. 859) comes under scrutiny, arguing that women's positionality becomes imbued with "institutional perquisites of rank outside the office – housing, level of consumption, friendship circles, clothes, sociability, manners, club memberships and so on" (1973, p. 859). Wives, she contends, become beholden to performance levels directly related to husbands' rank. Studying diplomats' wives, Callan develops the argument of vicarious assumption of rank, placing them in a position independent of their own capabilities and achievements denoting, at least superficially, a degree of acceptance (1975, p. 87) of institutionally imposed demands and performance. According to Papanek, prevailing social stereotypes "require [wives] to be satisfied with knowing the extent of her contribution to her husband's work and to the growth and development of her children" (1973, p. 99; Finch, 1983; Weinstein & Mederer, 1997, p. 9). She becomes "gainfully unemployed" (Papanek, 1973, p. 863) supporting her husband, representing the "three-way relationship between employers and two partners in a marriage, in which two sets of relationships are of the 'secondary' type and one is of the 'primary'" (Papanek, 1973, p. 855). Considering multiple forms of wifely incorporation, Finch states that organisations' and husbands' needs supplant wives', "[b]oth husbands and employers benefit from the incorporation of a wife's labour" (1983, p. 117). Wives' incorporated domestic labour provides organisations with employees beholden only to their demands. Wives relegated to the domestic rear-guard "come a rather poor third" (Finch, 1983, p. 117). Working on the second shift, Hochschild argues that women with their own career "who felt forced to severely curtail or relinquish their career" (1990, p. 132), might find this gainful unemployment frustrating, resulting in "loss of self-esteem and depression" (1990, p. 132). The dynamic of these primary and

secondary relationships overseas warrants exploration, as wives are positioned outside of their normative home environment, where experiencing an on-going secondary relationship may have detrimental effects on emotional well-being.

Finch argues that acceptance of mobility and incorporation into her husband's career demonstrates a "crucial assumption that a wife will be committed to her *husband's*<sup>47</sup> work upon which employers so commonly rely" (1983, p. 114). Mobility [de]structures relocated women's lives "in ways central to her employment prospects, her lifestyle and her personal identity" (1983, p. 53). Peripatetic lifestyles result in minimal continuity not faced by men as there is an "inherent trend of continuity, precisely because each move is related to his work " (Finch, 1983, p. 53). For Finch, women viewed as secondary participants in this process, experience this as an "inherent disruption rather than continuity" (1983, p. 53). Mobile wives, she contends, are placed in an invidious position, acknowledging her husband's work as more relevant than her own career aspirations. Women choosing to "not be married to the job" (Finch, 1983, p. 169), are viewed as "deviant...placed on the defensive and has to justify herself, and will meet major obstacles in trying to organise her life so as to avoid incorporation" (Finch, 1983, p. 169). Placed outside the boundaries of acceptability, failure to support husbands renders "the health of the marriage [as] suspect. There is a sense that in which declining to support his work does constitute marriage 'failure' since it is an explicit sign that a wife is rejecting the helpmate role, and therefore not acting as a wife" (Finch, 1983, p. 155). In the military this is construed as service disloyalty, representing a wife's negative attitude (Jervis, 2011, p. 2). Unsurprisingly, "[f]aced with such daunting prospects, being married to the job is bound to seem the easier course of action, or indeed the only possible one" (Finch, 1983, p. 169).

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<sup>47</sup> Original emphasis

Finch's work on incorporated wives from a cross-section<sup>48</sup> of professions holds relevance given her consideration of wives' classed incorporation. Finch acknowledges the "manual/non-manual dichotomy" (1983, p. 126)<sup>49</sup> between those who are and are not incorporated, with the preponderance occupying the non-manual strata. She recognises more opportunities for incorporation "if one is married to a man who does professional work than to one who does factory work" (1983, p. 125)<sup>50</sup>, and that a wife's key contribution is to assist *his* career progression. This thesis considers and examines wives' contributions and the dichotomous perception of the efforts of officer and enlisted wives, a contrast not previously explicitly and comprehensively explored in cognate research. Saliently Finch recognises geographic mobility and incorporation are not exclusively the preserve of the professional and bureaucratic professions "although it is often treated as if it were" (1983, p. 125). She notes, and what this thesis considers, are that "some of the worst effects of it are probably experienced[...]by soldiers' wives because their husband's moves are entirely outside of their own control" (1983, p. 125). Control is a key, frequently revisited, concept relating as it does to army wives' embodied experience negotiating their overseas positionality. Despite this research taking place over thirty years after Finch's seminal book, it is this ongoing lack of control that this thesis investigates. It queries how modern incorporated wives respond to their status within and against their military marriage and incorporation, probing whether they still experience a tripartite relationship between their soldier husband and the military CoC, scrutinising whether there has been any developments since Finch, Callan and Papanek when investigating women married to the army. Through the responses of the interviewees in Fimonue, conclusions can be drawn relating to if, and where, women have been able to renegotiate the terms of their incorporation or indeed if incorporation is still explicitly expected of wives.

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<sup>48</sup> The range of Finch's empirical sources for examining incorporated wives is extensive ranging from Norfolk fishing communities, diplomats, corporation wives, politicians' wives, historical wives (Prime Ministers, creative writers and military), policemen's wives and journalist wives. She also introduces evidence on wives married to miners, railway workers and lorry drivers (1983, pp. 16-17).

<sup>49</sup> I have inferred non-manual to represent the officer class and manual to represent the enlisted ranks.

<sup>50</sup> I am taking factory work to be indicative of the enlisted ranks, especially the more junior ranks (private to corporal).

Having examined the main cognate studies relevant to this thesis, the literature review now turns to the key themes arising from these and their associated literature. The next three sections summarise studies relevant to the first research question: “how women experience military marriage overseas”. The sections thereafter review studies relevant to the second research question: “what shapes and governs their incorporation into and negotiation of their military life?”

### **Marriage – Changing Expectations, Hidden Powers and Lived Realities**

The Introduction of this thesis indicated how this investigation’s analysis of army marriage is shaped by studies of military masculinity<sup>51</sup> and by wider sociological studies of marriage. Oakley’s (1970) seminal work on housewives provides insight into the traditionalised world of an Englishwoman’s marriage, opens with the striking comment that “[t]he synthesis of ‘house’ and ‘wife’ in a single term establishes the connections between womanhood, marriage, and the dwelling of family groups” (1970, p. 1) This combination of two distinct words places the wife in the subservient position to the master signifier (Nayak & Kehily, 2006, p. 466) enforcing her subordinated role whilst simultaneously creating her status within the meaning. Without the house the wife has no role, the very word order indicating a patriarchal structure (Oakley, 1970, p. 61).

Smart explores social and cultural factors shaping different expectations placed upon both genders in heterosexual marriages (2011, p. 36). She points to the “feeling rules” (Hochschild, 2012) of marriage where “western cultures expect women to carry out ‘emotion work’ in relationships” (Smart, 2011, p. 36). In seeking to elucidate women’s incorporation, or not, into a militarised marriage “offering more to the [warrior] husband than to the [army] wife” (Clulow & Mattinson, 1989, p. 17), this researcher must be alert to the various cultural expectations at play both within the marriage itself and the wider military garrison. Smart stresses that marriage “in the early 2000s [is] very different to marriage in 1950. In the 1950s, in most Western societies, a women might have expected on marriage to give up her job in order

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<sup>51</sup> See pages 19 – 22

to become a full-time housewife and look after her husband” (2011, p. 41; Mansfield & Collard, 1988). If a woman did not give up work immediately on marriage “she would do so on becoming pregnant because of social expectations[...]meaning that marriage, and in particular motherhood, created a situation of economic dependence for wives upon their husband” (Smart, 2011, p. 41; Smart, 1984). Lauer and Yodanis explore the construction of roles created for women through marriage where there is “a clear institutional understanding of what one does when married[...]once entering marriage, the institution constrains, enables, and provides meaning to social behaviours associated with marriage” (2010, p. 62). Saliently, they suggest that “if certain information about the institution of marriage is embedded” (2010, p. 65) this spreads the “normative ideas about marriage” (2010, p. 65) specific to its particular cultural environment.

Gendered expectations appear in Tichenor’s work examining financially successful wives, arguing that “hidden power” (2005, p. 26) within marriage “is exercised through individual decisions, institutional procedures and dominant values that shape interaction.” (2005, p. 26). Awareness of hidden power “can sensitise us to the subtle ways in which gender expectations shape [marital] power dynamics” (2005, p. 26; Davis & Greenstein, 2013, p. 67; Clark, 1991). Such “cultural expectations regarding gender at the institutional level” (Tichenor, 2005, p. 26) indicate to what extent the military expects and military couples respond to overseas wifely incorporation, which as Tichenor suggests is hidden power within marriage. These statements are significant in an examination of overseas military marriage specifically considering the hidden powers at play within the private spaces of Fimonue.

Smart contends that “the idea of marriage [as] a more equal relationship is,[...]fiercely debated in sociological literature” (2011, p. 42; Jamieson, 1998; Jamieson, 1999; Van Hoof, 2013; Rubin, 1976). In late modern society (Plummer, 2003), Giddens suggests that individualisation encourages freedom of choice (1992; 2000), removing binding structures in which intimate relations should be placed. As Giddens, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (amongst others) argue, there is greater choice regarding

relationships, marriage, cohabitation or adult friendships (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2004; Giddens, 1992; Plummer, 2003; Roseneil, 2006). These intimate relations “vary in substance, expectations, norms and morality from individual to individual...from relationship to relationship (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2004, p. 5). These changes indicate “more individualistic approach[es] to private life” (Lewis, 2001, p. 83), less conscious of the “duties owed one another, to children” (Lewis, 2001, p. 83) and the emergence of the “pure” relationship (Giddens, 1992) where “love has become more democratic, which constitutes a much more optimistic view of the growth of individualism” (Lewis, 2001, p. 83).

Giddens’ pure relationship is “a social relation...entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it” (1992, p. 58). This considers “[r]elationships between *partners*...to be characterised by self-fulfilment, flexible roles, open communication, and equality”<sup>52</sup> (Plummer, 2003, p. 26). Equality is key in intimacy’s transformation (Giddens, 1992, p. 149), each partner valued and occupying equal positions of worth. However, burgeoning gender equality within ‘pure relationships’ challenges Giddens’ theory, “declar[ing] the undermining of male transformations in heterosexual intimacy theoretically unlikely” (Jamieson, 1999, p. 481). Clulow and Mattinson state that “[a]n expectation of equality between men and women has been created[...]. This egalitarian ideal is readily transformed into expectations of marriage, expectations which can easily be disappointed when the ideology is in advance of what actually happens” (1989, p. 16; Mulinari & Sandell, 2009). In environments promulgating gendered traditions and identities of marriage – stressing “the ‘naturalness’, that is, the biological necessity, of these categories and identities, when they are in fact socially produced” (Plummer, 2003, p. 82), the continuance of gendered love and the very notion of equality within marriage must be explored. This thesis investigates whether overseas military marriages supports Giddens’ pure relationships or if instead perpetuate the norms of traditional incorporated marriages.

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<sup>52</sup> My emphasis

This thesis, and specifically the third analysis chapter, contributes to the sociologies of intimacy and marriage through examining the interplay between modern 'pure' relationships, where both parties are regarded as equals, and traditional military relationships of the nuclear family with a dominant head of household. Further insights are provided by considering how couples negotiate the potential conflicts between the mores of wider society and its attitude towards cohabitation versus the traditional army attitude towards marriage.

### **Women, Underemployment and Emotion Work**

Historian Zweiniger-Bargielowska summarises the dramatic changes to women's lives occurring throughout the twentieth century, "[Women] gain[ed] control of their fertility, acquir[ed] equal access to education, and in principle, to the labour market whilst establishing their status as equal citizens" (2001, p. 1). However, despite these advances, inequalities persist. This thesis explores how inequalities are (re)produced within overseas military marriages.

Peplau contends that "the unequal division of labour that persists in families headed by heterosexual couples<sup>53</sup>...is a consequence of how we as a society have come to define what it means to be a 'man' or a 'woman'" (1994, p. 170). This is, for Smith, evidence of how "men and women have been socialised in the relations of subordination and domination" (1983, p. 3). Peralta and Tuttle concur, suggesting that it is the "gendered behaviour" that leads to the creation of such social environments favouring men above women (2013, p. 256). West and Zimmerman explore "this process of socially constructing what it means to be male or female" (Peplau, 1994, p. 170) arguing that "[d]oing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures'" (1987, p. 126). In "[r]educing gender to a fixed set of psychological traits or to a unitary 'variable' precludes serious consideration of the ways it is used to

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<sup>53</sup> Acknowledging that there are both heterosexual and same-sex marriages within the military, the specific focus of this thesis is male-headed heterosexual marriage.

structure distinct domains of social experience” (1987, p. 128). They suggest that “new members of society come to be involved in a *self-regulating process* as they begin to monitor their own and others' conduct with regard to its gender implications”<sup>54</sup> (1987, p. 142). This

“‘recruitment’ process involves not only the appropriation of gender ideals [...] but also *gender identities* that are important to individuals and that they strive to maintain. Thus, gender differences, or the sociocultural shaping of ‘essential female and male natures’, achieve the status of objective facts. They are rendered normal, natural features of persons and provide the tacit rationale for differing fates of women and men within the social order” (1987, p. 142).

West and Zimmerman provide a cautionary note that “[i]f we do *gender appropriately*, we simultaneously sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements that are based on sex category. If we fail to do gender appropriately, *we* as individuals – *not the institutional arrangements* – may be called to account (for our character, motives and predispositions)”<sup>55</sup> (1987, p. 146). This final point is significant in this investigation as the interviewees themselves explore the institutional arrangements that have created the gendered role of army wife, how these are individually and collectively sustained and policed by those within the community, both wives and the CoC. In recognising these arrangements vigilance must be maintained as Issacs urges, alert to “active participants” (2002, p. 132) working to find ways to contend the institutional arrangements of “their own subordination” (2002, p. 132). This thesis endeavours to reveal how and where these micro-level pockets of resistance exist. Having established that “[d]oing gender furnishes the interactional scaffolding of social structure, along with a built-in mechanism of social control” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 147) holds significance we must now turn to the specificities of women’s place within society, highly relevant for this cohort of women born during the late twentieth century.<sup>56</sup>

Growing up under Thatcher and Blair, potentially imbued with the concept that they exist “as free agents with infinite choice, their freedom spiritually unbounded, their inner female essence and worth

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<sup>54</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>55</sup> My emphasis

<sup>56</sup> The youngest wife at time of interview was twenty-four and the oldest being forty-eight, so all wives were born between the 1970s and the early 1990s.

completely emancipated and of absolute value” (Chen, 2013, p. 449). Chen suggests that life is dictated by “[c]hoice’, ‘freedom’ and ‘agency’” (2013, p. 440) whilst “continually seek[ing] to improve her own competitiveness in a ceaseless project of the self” (2013, p. 446). Neo-liberalism encourages “individuals to willingly and freely choose to follow the path most conducive to their self-interest: the path which often turns out to be the normative one, the one for which the state has provided the best conditions” (Chen, 2013, p. 443). Walkerdine et al (2001) further this in examining working-class social mobility through girls’ education in the 1990s. They investigated how “girls’ subjectivities [are] created in the social spaces that open up for them in specific historical circumstances and social and cultural locations” (2001, p. 11), and whether the “changes in the lives of the girls and their families relate to those social, cultural and economic changes that accompanied the much-hyped rise of ‘girl-power’” (2001, p. 11). Growing up under the neo-liberal politics of Great Britain from the 1980s onwards (Walkerdine, et al., 2001; Chen, 2013; Allen, 2014), in a “permissive, free choice society [which] brings with it a new obligation to be liberated and to enjoy this freedom” (Chen, 2013, p. 448) will have influenced the interviewed cohort’s aspirations. Of interest is how enlisted wives enact this critical element of ‘choice’, utilising previous non-married experience, where freedom and agency collided when brought face to face with the patriarchal military institution.

Despite advances towards gender equality, “the nature and meaning of work for most women in Britain has continued to be linked with their positions within the household, family and kinship networks” (Holden, 2001, p. 135). Households are still dominated by a male head of house, the symbolic violence of male legitimacy through “the exercise and perpetuation of power” (Swartz, 1997, p. 88; Bourdieu, et al., 1977c, p. 5) is still exerted. Peplau similarly contends that “one must not overlook the influence of the larger contexts within which families function. In particular, social power and domination within the institutions of society must be addressed” (1994, p. 173). Fechter concurs that within expatriate wives’ traditional role “the more or less explicit mechanisms and ideologies maintained by husbands,

employers and wives themselves [...] contribute to a system that effectively confines women to rather circumscribed and professional positions” (2008, p. 195).

Fowlkes argues that “[t]he fundamental expectations of professional life are that a career is the major source of one’s personal and social identity [...] that the career is the major determinant of the chronology and geography of one’s life and the central organising feature of a given day” (1980, p. 356). It is through employment and the associative professional identities that “perceived competence” is gained (Raskin, 2006, p. 1361). Perceived competence combined with professional identity grants legitimacy as it is through “work that we become persons. Work is that which forms us, gives us a focus, gives us a vehicle for personal expression and offers us a means for personal definitions” (Gini, 1998, p. 708). However Fowlkes contends that “it is obvious that professional life is neither incidentally nor coincidentally a male way of life. It is intrinsically and ideologically a male way of life, an occupational extension of the male role” (1980, p. 356). Summerfield further suggests that “women wanted to work [...] but this work had to fit round family demands on their time” (1994, p. 63). This provides an entry point to examine the “effects of geographical mobility on *underemployment* among married and single women”<sup>57</sup> (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 161) examined in the final analysis chapter and it is imperative to note that “the predominance of husband-centred migration suggests fundamental differences in the value placed on husbands’ and wives’ careers” (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 162). Whilst overseas “women may find employment at the destination, [...] it may be work for which they are underpaid or educationally overqualified” (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 164). Morrison and Lichter’s relevance lies in their examination of the realities of migration on women’s employment. Not only do “[m]igration-related employment disruptions [...] affect employer perception of labour force commitment [...] reduc[ing] prospect for employment among migrant families” (1988, p. 164) but in removing women from their career, places greater salience onto their husband’s “reinforce[ing] status distinctions within

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<sup>57</sup> Original emphasis

the family” (1988, p. 171) reminding us of male legitimacy established within the military masculinities in *loco* behind the wire.

Within a consideration of military marriage, Hochschild’s insight into emotion work is crucial for, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis and specifically in the first, third and fourth analysis chapter, it is expected that army wives perform emotion work on their soldier husband’s behalf. Hochschild (2012) defines emotional labour as requiring “one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (2012, p. 7). It is “the possible cost of doing the work” (2012, p. 7) that is relevant and the question that must be posed is what is the personal cost to these women experiencing military marriage overseas and how this, as the second research question poses, shapes and governs their incorporation. It is the performing of these labours, conforming to the “social engineering of her emotional labour [...] reducing her control over that labour” (2012, p. 8) that is salient. This thesis examines the control, or lack thereof, that wives experience over that labour and indeed the expectations placed upon them resulting from incorporation and the feasibility, if any, of refuting the socially constructed demands on their physical labour and emotion work.

Hochschild states that “individual[s] often work on inducing or inhibiting feelings so as to render them “appropriate’ to a situation” (1979, p. 551). What is key is that the “[r]ights and duties set out the proprieties as to the *extent* [...], the *direction* [...], and the *duration* of a feeling, given the situation against which it is set. These rights and duties of feeling are a clue to the depth of social convention, to one final reach of social control”<sup>58</sup> (1979, p. 564). Hochschild cautions that this “work to make feeling and frame consistent with situation is work in which individuals continually and privately engage. But they do so in *obedience to rules* not completely of their own making”<sup>59</sup> (1979, p. 563). The concept of obedience brings to mind the commitment of Goffman’s complicit soldier and inmate of the institution

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<sup>58</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>59</sup> My emphasis

(1961), obeying lawful commands of the overarching institution. Whilst Hochschild examines the emotion work undertaken by all players of society; the idea of obedience underlies the multifaceted intersections experienced by army wives performing such work within the overseas garrison community. To analyse this emotion work, it is necessary to probe the social conventions the interviewees articulated as being placed upon them as they negotiated their role and performance considered in all the analysis chapters. These “rules are unique” (1979, p. 566) to the world of army wives overseas and behind the wire.

By drawing on Hochschild’s established emotion work theory, this thesis breaks new ground in its discussion of how army wives perform this additional work, how it is constructed and imposed upon them through the wider community, the CoC and within their own marriage. Returning thus to the third analysis questions, this thesis furthers our understanding both of the work involved in overseas incorporation and how civilian army wives both respond to this expectation and performance that is required in its fulfilment.

### **Mother/Non-motherhood as Identity Markers**

Various identities are embedded into the fabric of army wifehood; identities which are, as Laney et al argue, multifaceted (2014, p. 1247). Motherhood/non-motherhood (McMahon, 1995) is a significant factor in identity construction for the three-quarters of interviewees who were mothers. Relevant to this thesis’ fourth analysis chapter is Bailey’s consideration of “the social construction of mothering and its relationship to the oppression of women” (1999, p. 335), within patriarchally constructed environments defining societal and power relations (Lee, et al., 2014, p. 315). Laney et al (2014) suggest that latent “stereotypes about women and motherhood[...]still influence women’s and men’s views of the roles of women” (2014, p. 1228; Rogers & White, 1998; Ross & Van Willigen, 1996), arguably in this instance directly impacting and influencing army marriage. The overseas military garrison and army wives themselves construct their “primary responsibility [as being] to mother, and, whether mother

themselves or not, women are defined in relation to this role” (Letherby, 1994, p. 525; Bailey, 1999, p. 337). A “lack” (Letherby, 1994, p. 525) of motherhood runs contrary to historical perceptions, and indeed this overseas garrison’s expectations of women, with nonmothers continuing to have “little status in [Fimonue’s] society” (Letherby, 1994, p. 526).

Park argues that there are cultural expectations around the “norm of motherhood” (2002, p. 25). Conversely, non-motherhood whilst a choice (McMahon, 1995) and a viable construction of identity, provides women with the “appearance of self-determination” (McMahon, 1995, p. 112). This choice is especially relevant within the workings of the societal (total) institution (Lawler, 2000, p. 23) of Fimonue that create the norm of motherhood, casting outside those who are nonmothers (McMahon, 1995). The fourth analysis chapter explores this positioning as either insiders or outsiders through motherhood, examining its impact on wives’ experiences of incorporation and negotiation of overseas military life. Such examination breaks new ground in sociological understanding of feminine identity, motherhood and overseas military life.

### **Goffman – Total Institutions and the Army Wives**

Goffman’s total institutions provide an entry point into the examination of life within an overseas military garrison. Whilst his theories have proven fundamental in examining institutionalisation of military recruits, only Jervis has previously used his work to examine military wives<sup>60</sup>. Goffman, revisited throughout the thesis, holds specific relevance to the first analysis chapter. He defines total institutions as

“a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life” (1961, p. 11).

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<sup>60</sup> Murphy (2006, p. 7) in her MA thesis references Total Institutions as explored by Cheal (2002) and similarly Segal’s work on Greedy Institutions (Segal, 1986). Hyde too makes brief mention to Goffman but does not use his work as a framework of analysis (2015, pp. 10, 128).

He describes the fourth of his five different total institutions as “institutions purportedly established the better to pursue some work like task and justifying themselves only on these instrumental grounds: including army barracks, ships, boarding schools” (1961, p. 16). For Goffman, the handling of “many human needs by the bureaucratic organization of whole blocks of people [...] is the key fact of total institution” (1961, p. 18). Goffman focuses exclusively on serving soldiers; however, as this thesis’ examines army wives, it is necessary to consider the relevance of Goffman’s work for this cohort in their specific overseas incorporation and positionality.

Jervis uses total institutions as an entry point into her deconstruction of the overseas garrison. Addressing wives’ “deeply personal experience and the impact upon that experience of their social connectedness” (2011, p. 1), Jervis considers “emotional responses of British servicemen’s wives to military relocation”. Even though Jervis predominantly focused on the “psychoanalytic, given the nuanced environment of an overseas military garrison by drawing from both psychoanalytic and sociological frameworks” (2011, p. 4), her objectives were to demonstrate “the complex psycho-social factors that influence the emotions of relocated servicemen’s wives” (2011, p. 4). Despite leaning on Freud and Klein’s psychoanalytic frameworks, Jervis builds on Goffman’s total institution treatise in her sociological introduction. Focusing on interviewees’ emotional response to various losses, Jervis’ analysis chapters considered “both the intrapsychic and interpersonal influences upon servicemen’s wives’ emotions, following military relocations” (2011, p. 147). Whilst agreeing with Jervis’ analysis of in-processing of women into a total institution, this thesis probes deeper into the sociological, rather than psychoanalytic, experiences of wives’ negotiation of their dispossessions as they relocate overseas.

Goffman states that total institutions’ “encompassing or total character is symbolised by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant such as[...]barbed wire, cliffs” (1961, pp. 15-16). Whilst the interviewees were not prohibited from leaving Fimonue, their remote isolation facilitated institutionalisation. Albeit in a very different cultural setting,

Odrowaz-Coates (2015) used Goffman's framework investigating expatriate women living in a gated community within Saudi Arabia negotiating the divide between the compound and wider Saudi society. Like my interviewees, the respondents were 'nominally' free to come and go into the wider community, however contrastingly, for Odrowaz-Coates' cohort, "the compound [was] perceived by many as a safe haven in an ocean of oppressive culture", (2015, p. 236) with the total institution becoming a haven or in Goffman's terms a "retreat" (2015, p. 239).

A key feature for Goffman is that "all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority" (1961, p. 17) and that "various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution" (1961, p. 17). Recruit standardisation is, for Goffman, a requirement as they transition into a total institution, becoming "standard issue, uniform in colour" (Goffman, 1961, p. 28). Standardisation facilitates "normalising and regulating" (Hancock & Garner, 2011) achieved within military total institutions through uniforms "adorned as they are by medals and insignia of rank [...] reducing individuality" (Jervis, 2011, p. 20). Reduction in individuality enforces the "micro-physics of power, regulat[ing] the movement of bodies" (Hancock & Garner, 2011, p. 332) through which power or domination over soldiers is constructed through their categorisation and positioning within the total institution. Despite Goffman specifically referring to soldiers' incorporation into total institutions, this thesis considers whether incorporation occurs through women's marital bonds, becoming adjunctively incorporated as they "march through the day's activities in the immediate company of a batch of similar others" (1961, pp. 17-18). I believe an examination of the implication of standardisation for wives is warranted and is specifically explored in the first and second analysis chapters. No previous cognate research explicitly considers whether such standardisation occurs either through the ranked housing wives are expected to occupy or the sense of homogeneity potentially expected of them via the appellation of army wife and dependent. Similarly, no previous work has broken down the multiple variants of wives' overseas incorporated daily life, stretching from their occupancy of certain socio-spaces, the expectation of their

participation in the daily life of the garrison and involvement within the community. This thesis' second research question seeks to elucidate army wives' responses to the inferred standardisation of behaviour as they become incorporated into Fimonue's total institution explored in the second and fourth analysis chapters.

Goffman suggests that "[i]n total institutions there is a basic split between a large managed group [...] and a small supervisory staff" (1961, p. 18). Furthermore, that "[s]ocial mobility between the two strata is grossly restricted; social distance is typically great and formally prescribed" (1961, p. 19). Rank "forms the backbone of the British Army[...]defin[ing] a soldier or officer's role and degree of responsibility" (British Army, 2018). As with other total institutions, Goffman suggests that the army's "[t]wo different social and cultural worlds develop, jogging alongside each other with points of official contact but little penetration" (1961, p. 20). This thesis uniquely and explicitly considers the implications of rank for wives, investigating whether there is indeed 'little penetration' between the different groupings of women and if it is true that "social distance is typically great and often formally prescribed" (1961, p. 19). It will determine how or if rank is inferred and experienced by those for whom it is an abstract but binding status, externally imposed upon them. Such an investigation must be cognisant of the nuances (and complexity) of rank as wives are categorised within the ranked stratigraphy splintering them into various subgroups within the overall collective as they transition into their overseas identity of incorporated army wives.

Goffman considers the implication of moving into a total institution for recruits, "being squared away the new arrival allows himself to be shaped and coded into an object[...which] necessarily ignores most of his previous bases of self-identification" (1961, p. 26). Jervis argues that "incorporated wives become invisible as individuals" (2011, p. 25) which is "a disturbing phenomenon because people usually perceive themselves, and wish to be perceived by others, as identifiably separate and autonomous" (2011, p. 25). This thesis builds on Jervis' and Goffman's statements, probing whether wives perceive

themselves as 'invisible' outside of their soldier husband and their response to the lack of separate and autonomous identification to that of their militarily constructed army wifehood. This invisibility is achieved, according to Goffman, most successfully through the dispossession of an individual's name and "that whatever one is thereafter called, loss of one's name can be a great curtailment of the self" (1961, pp. 27-28). Probing their responses to being a dependent spouse, known as 'wife of' and almost exclusively by their married name (at least initially) rather than their first name, this thesis investigates whether the interviewees experienced such dispossession, thereby contributing to significant loss of self and overarching sense of invisibility. Dispossession is a key theme during the process of transition and Goffman argues the importance of the dispossession of property "because persons invest self-feelings in their possessions" (1961, p. 27). Despite army wives leaving behind possessions representing the physical removal of "previous bases of self-identification" (1961, p. 26), the theme of investment into belongings and personal effects remains unexplored in previous cognate studies. I contend that it is through examining the minutiae of their relocation overseas, including the loss of possessions, that a true sense of the impact of absorption will be revealed, thereby breaking new ground in the sociology of ongoing marital incorporation experienced by twenty-first century army wives.

Goffman looked exclusively at the male dominated military world and male recruits in the mid-twentieth century. It is undeniable that, in a volunteer army such as the British, both the military recruit and the trailing army wife are ultimately free to terminate their contract. Yet, within the parameters of Fimonue, three-and-a-half-thousand kilometres away from home, moved at the army's behest, wives' incorporation could be contended as non-negotiable, reducing choice and control. This thesis considers whether women "fed into the administrative machinery of the establishment, to be worked on smoothly by routine operations" (Goffman, 1961, p. 26) become adjunctive and knowable through their militarised categorisation. Wives' incorporation alongside that of their militarised husbands is explored and questions are posed pertaining to whether the experiences of these wives perched on a cliff,

located behind a barbed wire, requiring a dependent's pass to access their own front doors mimic those of the raw recruit.

### **Rank and the Performance of Identity**

The second analysis chapter explores the impact of rank and the CoC on wives' incorporation. Rank and its all-pervasive binding identities are a mechanism of military control. It is only through understanding the complexity of identity construction through rank and its impact upon civilian women living within this confined 'total institution' that the second research question can be addressed. This section provides a critical foundation for the work undertaken in the fourth analysis chapter.

The constructed identity of military rank exerts what Goffman terms "pattern[s] of appropriate conduct[...]. Performed with ease or clumsiness, awareness or not...it is nonetheless something that must be realised" (1959, p. 81). Within the garrison and military barracks' boundaries, Goffman's "unseen audience", who may "punish deviation from these [rank-imposed] standards" (Goffman, 1959, p. 87), or Foucault's panopticon (Foucault, 1975) may be present, providing witness to performance within a perceived domestic and familial setting with actors adapting differently to institutionalised settings and definitions. As the analysis chapters demonstrate some wives embrace their vicariously constructed identity, engaging in the multiple behaviours that such acceptance entails. Others partially or wholly reject it, irrespective of the tension between the act of belonging and that of disavowal, which is exacerbated within a closed community where life is deemed to be scrutinised by the institution and the collective.

Embedded within each person's performance is the "sociality" (Dunn, 1997, p. 701; Mead, 1932, p. 49) of their role, of being several things at once. For women, the *inter-alia* roles of army wife, mother/nonmother constitute their identities requiring performances in conjunction with their institutional position. Such roles are nuanced and diverse, however, as Goffman intimates, the actors

are “unlikely to be told in full detail how to conduct” (1959, p. 79) themselves, they will have to learn on the job and will be expected to “‘fill in’ and manage more or less, any part that [they are] likely to be given” (1959, p. 79). This expectation brings us to Goffman’s performances of identity concept, that “[t]o *be* a given kind of person, then is not merely to possess the required attributes, but also to sustain the standards of conduct and appearance that one’s social grouping attaches thereto” (1959, p. 75; Branaman, 2006, p. lxvi)<sup>61</sup>. Therefore, examining the multiple roles that the interviewees inhabit behind the wire will elucidate their experiences of incorporation, how the practice of incorporation is developed through community belonging and shared, inferred identity expectations.

Adoption of social setting mores demands a performance, visibly conforming and “sustain[ing] the standards of conduct and appearance” (Goffman, 1959, p. 80) particular to their institutional inhabitation and incorporation. Those within the military, specifically soldiers, demonstrate acceptance and belonging through performance of ranked living, carrying out of lawful orders. There is an appropriately timed homogeneity (Goffman, 1959, p. 64) that must be realised, encouraging an acceptance of the role that is predetermined within this particular setting. Stets and Burke echo this sentiment in examining group membership stating that “people know the structural categories and relationships, and act in accordance with that knowledge” (2000, p. 232). They further suggest that in behaving “according to the expectations tied to our identification, we are acting in the context of referring to, and reaffirming social structure” (2000, p. 232). Thus, the civilian interviewees found themselves bound by the overt behavioural expectations in place, bound by and conducting their lives according to their membership of the army wifehood community.

Conversely Butler suggests the possibility to “reverse, re-signify to the extent that the norm fails to determine us completely” (1993, pp. 126-127) and as shall be explored in the analysis chapters whether these “dominant discursive structures” (Manokha, 2009, p. 430) can be used as a method of

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<sup>61</sup> Original Emphasis

transformation. This reversal, or re-signifying, is according to Foucault, a position of freedom as “[p]ower is exercised only over free subjects” (Heller, 1996, p. 100; Foucault, 1982, p. 790). Inhabitants of institutional environments are thus able to “re-establish territories of the self, spheres of autonomy, separate social structures, and separate systems of status” (Branaman, 2006, p. lxi) even within the boundaries of the total institution. Involvement for Goffman imparts a status in the community enabling a degree of “control over the guise in which [s]he appears” (1961, p. 28). Conversely there are those unwilling to conform to institutional diktat. Goffman argues that, rather than being subversive, this way of “reserving something of oneself from the clutch of an institution[...]is not an incidental mechanism of defence but an essential constituent of the self” (Branaman, 2006, p. lxi; Goffman, 1961). He suggests that the policing of each other, implicit within this environment, demonstrates the moral rules (Goffman, 1955; Branaman, 2006, p. l) adopted and adhered to by the institution’s inhabitants. For Goffman adherence to the ‘rules of the game’ is the ‘primary adjustment’ (1961, p. 172) to the institution where inhabitants are “transformed into a co-operator [becoming a] ‘normal’, ‘programmed’ or built-in member” (1961, p. 172). Within this primary adjustment, co-operators are expected to create an identity for themselves within the institutional parameters, “present[ing] images of themselves socially supported within the context of given status hierarchy” (Bauman, 2004, p. xlvi; Lawler, 1999, p. 107). To inhabit such an institutional setting, they are “*subjected* to the rules and norms engendered by a set of knowledge about these identities.” (Lawler, 2008a, p. 62)<sup>62</sup>. These invisible, unwritten and unspoken norms permeate every aspect of institutional life, demanding in concert behaviour from those identifying with the group. Army wives’ adoption, acceptance and performance or conversely their refutation of the identities available within Fimonue are fundamental to this thesis’ reflection on wives’ institutional identity behind the wire as explored in the fourth analysis chapter.

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<sup>62</sup> Original Emphasis

## **Feminist Geography and the Military Garrison**

Cognate army wives' studies pay minimal attention to overseas garrisons' physical construction and none to civilian and military uses of their socio-spaces. In examining the community in Saudi Arabia, Odrowaz-Coates' considers how "[t]he geographical barrier of being relatively far from a population centre, together with its high walls, barbed wire and rigid control of entry, gives it a feel of a fenced-off, military camp" (2015, p. 235). However, her investigations probe "the symbolic exchanges in and outside the walls" (2015, p. 233) rather than the socio-spatial environs within the compound. An investigation into Fimonue's socio-spaces is critical to understanding women's incorporation into overseas army wifehood and garrison life. The second analysis chapter focuses extensively on Fimonue's construction and the interviewees' responses to life experienced whilst behind the wire and the physical ontological experiences of the "symbolic perpetuation of the social order" (Bahloul, 1992, p. 129; McDowell, 1999, p. 72). This thesis is thus ground-breaking in its consideration of the influence of Fimonue's physical geographies on the wives who live there.

Feminist geographers (McDowell, 1983; McDowell & Massey, 1984; Harding, 1990; Harraway, 1991; Hanson, 1992; Bondi, 1998; Booth, et al., 1996; McDowell, 1999) articulate the need to understand the positionality and situated knowing of location, and how "women's location in the world shapes their view of the world" (Hanson, 1992, p. 573) through the spaces that they can legitimately occupy (Hammer & Maynard, 1987). Building on this introduction, it is necessary to consider how men and women experience the use and construction of space differently and their understandings of socio-spaces as "expressions of patriarchy" (Valentine, 1989, p. 385). In her work examining various suburban areas of Edinburgh, Bondi states that "from the first moments of suburban development, the distinction between city and suburb was imbued with ideas about separate spheres for men and women, in which the public domain of the urban centre was both deeply masculine and associated with social, economic, and political power. Conversely, the suburb came to be associated with middle-class domesticity,

femininity, and dependence” (1998, p. 161)<sup>63</sup>. Arguing that “urban environments are always inherited environments: in a multitude of ways, urban forms are legacies bequeathed by previous generations. As a result, urban environments have provided rich evidence of earlier ideas about gender” (1998, p. 166). Pateman concurs, stating that “it is true that the private sphere has been seen as women's proper place.[...]Women's day-to-day experience confirms the separation of public and private existence.[...]Moreover, the two spheres are linked because men have always had a legitimate place in both. Men have been seen both as heads of families—and as husbands and fathers they have had legally sanctioned power over their wives and children—and as participants in public life.” (1989, p. 163). In an investigation of overseas wifely incorporation with wives physically situated within the military's housing, it is pertinent to consider the various legacies ‘bequeathed’ onto modern army wives through expectations regarding performances of wifely duties. It is through examining women's positioning within the military garrison, both in the domestic living spaces and the wider socio-spaces, that we can ascertain whether army wives become delegitimated from the public, influenced and obfuscated by “a particular form of [militarised] gender division” (Pateman, 1989, p. 183; Bondi, 1998; 2011).

The designation of socio-spaces is relevant for this investigation as “the production of space depends on decisions made about what should be visible and what should not, who should occupy the space and who should not” (Moran, et al., 2001, p. 409; Zukin, 1990). In their study examining the varied uses of the gay village in Manchester through “marginalised groups” (2001, p. 409) Moran et al explored how “visibility is about a recognition in or out of place that invariably involves regimes of placement. Symbolic territorialisation depends on investment in a future belief of knowing where one's place should be and making claims for that space” (2001, p. 409). This is salient when investigating how army wives experienced the CoC-designated socio-spaces available for their use as and the wives' consequent understanding of their ‘place’ within the military hierarchy.

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<sup>63</sup> See also (McDowell, 1983; Davidoff & Hall, 1987; Mackenzie, 1989; Poovey, 1989)

Hanson reflects on the importance of feminist geography arguing it is fundamental to understand “your context—your location in the world—shap[ing] your view of the world and therefore what you see as important” (Hanson, 1992, p. 573). This idea of context and where women belong is equally vital for Skeggs in her work on Manchester’s gay village, stating “that most women learn that they do not belong in many public spaces” (1999, p. 222) and that furthermore “struggles for visible identities will often incite danger, for visibility can threaten the normalised landscape” (1999, p. 221). It is this struggle between acknowledging their positioning as army wives, their acceptance or refutation through visible belonging and use of space which this thesis examines. Saliiently, Skeggs’ acknowledgement that “the concept of struggle precisely identifies that which cannot be known in advance. It is only in the concrete articulations of living the everyday[...], that one can begin to understand what is and what is not beyond incorporation” (1999, p. 229). This highlights the importance of using the garrison’s socio-spaces in studying army wives’ incorporation. This geographically informed consideration of army wives is innovative and challenging, contributing both to the sociology of wifely incorporation and to feminist geography in its examination of the use of dominated incorporated socio-spaces.

### **Bourdieu and the Army Wife**

Bourdieu’s theories significantly underpin this thesis’ arguments. Alongside Goffman’s work on total institutions explored in the first analysis chapter, Bourdieu’s work on fields and doxa are drawn upon as we relocate behind the wire. Both the second analysis chapter’s investigation of bounded patch life in Fimonue, and the third analysis chapter’s discussion of military marriage draw on Bourdieu’s symbolic domination and habitus theories. The final analysis chapter uses Bourdieu’s work on capitals. No former study of army wives makes such extensive use of this body of work. Throughout the thesis I am alert to the various criticisms that have been levelled at Bourdieu’s opus and these will be addressed individually within the analysis chapters.

Bourdieu's dynamics of social life theorisation through the concepts of habitus, capital, field and doxa offer a fruitful way of probing women's incorporation within the patriarchal and dominating institution of the overseas military garrison. Bourdieu differentiates between field and total institutions indicating that "institutions suggests consensus, whereas fields emphasises the conflictual character of social life" (Swartz, 1997, p. 120). Through his theory of fields, Bourdieu developed "a concept that can cover social worlds where practices are only *weakly institutionalised* and *boundaries are not well established*" (Swartz, 1997, p. 120)<sup>64</sup>. If this thesis examined the strongly institutionalised and clearly bounded nature of life behind the wire for male soldiers, the employment of field terminology would be questionable. However, as this study examines wives' inhabitation of Fimonue where boundaries between themselves as civilian women and army wives were opaque, and often contested, the concept of field is demonstrably pertinent. Fields are where "social activities were organised" (Calhoun, 2011, p. 379) or "systems of relations independent of the populations defined by those relations" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The "more autonomous a field, the more it produces an autonomous and specific language, representations and practices, and the more the perception of realities is subject to the logic specific to the field" (Hilger & Mangez, 2015, p. 7); all holding relevance when discussing the field of an overseas garrison.

Bourdieu asserts that "[e]ach field [...] has its own distinctive [...] resources (capitals) and hierarchies of prestige and influence" (Calhoun, 2011, p. 380). Within Fimonue, hierarchies are explicitly the rank conferred upon wives through housing and her assumed place in the hierarchy within the collective of army wife. This thesis explores the various fields of play within Fimonue, examining wives' responses to their positioning within each space as well as whether their capitals assist with their assimilation into, or their refutation of, their positioning behind the wire. Deconstructing the various aspects of life within

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<sup>64</sup> My emphasis. Wives even though overseas are nominally free to come and go both off garrison and back to the UK. Nonetheless, if a wife were to be out of the SFA for more than twenty-eight days then Welfare had to be informed so that the Living Overseas Allowance could be recalculated. If wives were absent for more than 90 days then the service personnel must hand back the quarter, it is perhaps questionable as to how weakly institutionalised a wife's position was whilst based overseas.

Fimonue, revealing the nuanced spaces that the interviewees inhabit, allows a reflection on the “fields of power” (Calhoun, 2011, p. 383), for within each field, as Bourdieu asserted, there will be those occupying “dominated positions within the dominant elite” (Calhoun, 2011, p. 383). Bourdieu’s construction of fields, thus facilitates a deliberation on the specific nuances of Fimonue and how rank is itself a metaphor for the prestige and influence that can be placed (both positively and negatively) onto the women under investigation.

Bourdieu further describes fields as “*structured spaces of dominant and subordinate positions*” (Swartz, 1997, p. 123)<sup>65</sup>. Within fields, various forms of struggles are imposed on the actors (Swartz, 1997, p. 125), the deep structuring of the field creating the *doxa* “as it represents a tacit, fundamental agreement on the stakes of struggle between those advocating heterodoxy and those holding to orthodoxy” (Swartz, 1997, p. 125). In Bourdieusian theory, *doxa* is “the self-evidence of the world...reduplicated by the instituted discourse about the world in which the whole group’s adherence to that self-evidence is affirmed” (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 162). Serving military personnel and dependents, are bound by institutional discourse, their environment’s “doxic truth” (Lawler, 2004, p. 120), defined by a physical wire delineating inhabitants’ behaviours. Whilst soldiers’ doxic truth is the oath of allegiance to Queen and country, soldiers’ wives are bound by uncodified “*collective beliefs*” (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 162). Inhabiting this environment, the authorised (Lawler, 2004, p. 123) discourse infiltrates their everyday domestic life. Reiterated by the dominant class, this discourse “command[s] attention [as] an ‘authorised language’, invested with the authority of a group, the things it designates are not simply expressed but also authorised and legitimated” (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 164). Militarised discourse verbalises the army’s “symbolic power” (Lawler, 2004, p. 182) within a doxic setting. Discourse highlighting the correct performance of army wifeness is objectified onto these women, potentially exerting (un)acknowledged pressures of behaviour, conduct and attitude whilst living behind the wire.

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<sup>65</sup> Original Emphasis

Heterodoxy contrasts with doxa, providing “*competing possibles*”<sup>66</sup> (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 165) to the “established *unanimity* of doxa”<sup>67</sup> (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 163). The army permits no opportunity to question, let alone mutiny<sup>68</sup>. Having signed no oath of allegiance, army wives are not similarly curtailed, creating space for “the struggle of the production and imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world, [meaning] the holders of bureaucratic authority never establish an absolute monopoly” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 22). Reflecting on the ‘absolute monopoly’ of the military organisation under whom the women live will be key to ascertaining whether overseas wives become totally institutionalised or whether they are able to contest their positioning. Furthermore, probing symbolic power behind the wire allows a detailed examination of the construction of “[s]ocial classifications, as in the case in archaic societies, where they often work through dualist oppositions (masculine/feminine, high/low, strong/weak etc), organise the perception of the social world and, under certain conditions, can really organise the world itself” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 22). Although Jervis argued that army wives occupy “done-to roles” (Jervis, 2011, p. 44), no work has reflected on the symbolic power and domination at play which “is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). In so doing, this work pushes beyond earlier work on wifely positioning, listening to and reflecting upon wives’ responses to their unique positioning in relation to the dominate symbolic power in place.

Fimouze is a male-dominated society, overwhelmingly patriarchal in its division of labour. For Bourdieu, such “masculine domination assumes a natural, self-evident status through its inscription in the objective structure of the social world which is then incorporated and reproduced in the habitus of individuals” (McNay, 1999, p. 99). In his work on masculine domination, Bourdieu asserts that symbolic power is “exerted from the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling” (2001, pp. 1-2). The symbolic

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<sup>66</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>67</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>68</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2006 stipulates life imprisonment for participating in, or failing to, suppress a mutiny (British Government, 2016).

struggle between the dominant and dominated sexes becomes inferred through matters such as lifestyle (Bullen, 2014, p. 24). However, as Bullen suggests this “recognition is actually a misrecognition that occurs when symbolic capital has been acquired and legitimated, obscuring the social processes and structures that make its existence possible” (2014, p. 24). This thesis seeks to establish whether living behind the wire, the interviewees felt able to question the predetermined army wife role assigned to them on marriage. It examines if the symbolic power at play locates women into a dominated domestic position rendering this a legitimated, natural role for women to enact whilst overseas.

Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power is an “invisible power[...]exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 164). This is relevant as this thesis probes interviewees’ responses, conscious or not, to the mechanisms of the symbolic power exerted (intentionally or not) upon them behind the wire. Such an examination reveals any vulnerabilities in the position wives occupied. Considering vulnerability conforms to Bourdieu’s statement that “symbolic power is defined by a determinate relationship between those who exercise this power and those who undergo it—that is to say in the very structure of the field in which belief is produced and reproduced” (1977a, p. 117). Thus, within an environment that is as deterministically constructed as an overseas garrison, it is necessary to probe the ways women respond to the structuring external structures and dominant social norms under which they live.

Bourdieu contends that whilst habitus “is unique to each individual, in order to assist empirical research, a group habitus is a permissible term” (Nash, 1999; Burke, 2016, p. 9) For Bourdieu, habitus are

“structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (1990, p. 53).

Habitus is not stable or fixed, changing through exposure to different influences, thus society and the individual do not oppose one another. Bourdieu viewed them “as if they are two dimensions of the

same social reality” (Swartz, 1997, p. 98), thus pertinent to a discussion on army wives brought into the new social reality of Fimonue where they must consciously learn the fields’ doxa. People, as some wives demonstrated, are able to adapt to their new social reality and even though habitus can constrain, it “does not determine thought and action, if an individual is both reflective and aware of their own habitus, they possess the potential to observe social fields with relative objectivity” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170; Hawthorn, 2018).

The feminist researcher is beholden to question whether the interviewees are aware of the cognitive construction (McNay, 1999, p. 38) of habitus and their performance within it for, as Bourdieu suggests, “social practice often works through an unconscious practical mastery” (Adkins, 2004, p. 194). An exploration of the wives’ narration of their time behind the wire, investigating the terms of their incorporation, requires continuous examination of their ‘mastery’ of the pre-determined role. This conscious adoption of the role of army wife initially commenced as “something practical and learnt” (Adkins, 2004, p. 194) and, in transitioning behind the wire, the women worked to acquire the rules of the game. In an investigation of women living within the unique social space of the interconnected (public field) army garrison and (private field) of army marriage, a reflection on the (generative nature) of habitus will prove useful as it facilitates an examination of the “obscure relation between individual habitus and the social circumstances or ‘field’ from which it emerges” (McNay, 2000, p. 38).

Bourdieu’s work on habitus provides further insight into army wives’ positioning against and within the military’s field for “habitus is what enables the institution to attain full realisation” (1990, p. 57). Examining Goffman’s work on the in-processing (Jervis, 2011) of army wife ‘recruits’, and Bourdieu’s work on habitus facilitating the institution to attain full realisation, allows a confluence between the two eminent theorists not previously established in CMS. In investigating wives’ responses to their positionality within the institution, overseas and through their marriage, this research breaks new ground as it considers whether moving overseas with the army can be deemed a form of institutional

control explicitly exerted over civilian women. Whilst this thesis investigates interviewees' responses to institutional habitus, it remembers that Bourdieu also argues that "while the field sets certain limits on practice, nonetheless the actions of agents also shapes the habitus of the field and hence the field itself" (Adkins, 2004, p. 194; Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, it is necessary to proceed with caution and not assume that wives' response to their incorporation is one-sided or without generative consequence.

### **The Context of Female Friendship**

Friendship plays an important part within wives' negotiations of military life and their experience of life overseas, the focus of the second research question. As explored in the final analysis chapter, friendship provided not only community and support to overseas army wives, it acted as a facilitator of belonging and exclusion rendered through the imposed military rank structure. Analysing how interviewees experience friendship demands an understanding of the theories surrounding the construction of friendship and the specificities of female friendship.

Adams and Allen statement that "[r]elationships have a broader basis than the dyad alone; they develop and endure within a wider complex of interacting influences which help to give each relationship its shape and structure" (Adams & Allan, 1998, p. 3; Allan, 1989; Allan, 1998) provides an entry point into this discussion. Furthermore "these relationships need to be interpreted from a perspective which recognises the impact of this wider complex, rather than from one which treats the dyad in relative isolation" (Adams & Allan, 1998, p. 3) resonates given the multiple strands demanding consideration in a reflection of friendship within a militarised environment amongst a collective of disparate women whilst overseas (Arieli, 2007; Copeland & Norell, 2002). Feld and Carter determine this 'wider complex' as the "foci of activity" (1998, p. 136), suggesting that these foci, "families, work-places, voluntary organisations, and neighbourhoods,[...]all have the common effect of bringing a relatively limited set of individuals together in repeated interactions in and around the focused activities" (1998, p. 136; Taylor, 2004). Focused activities within these "collective norms" (1998, p. 137) serve to create "interrelated

ties in the community” (1998, p. 139) lifting the dyad out of relative isolation demonstrating that “social context has important effects on who become friends” (1998, p. 136). Bunnell et al indicate that through attending to context “it is possible to examine social and cultural geographical variation in such issues as: what is deemed to constitute an appropriate friendship? Who is friends with whom, under what circumstances, and with what kind of expectations and consequences?” (2012, p. 494). The specific nature of the overseas garrisons, the socio-spaces and activities available to women, provide the shape and structure to the context of wives’ incorporation within which they establish friendship groups and interpersonal relationships.

Motherhood as a context of friendship is explored, developing Cronin’s work on the extended domestic space that is created through motherhood (2015). Where her work holds relevance is its account of how motherhood provides a “‘domestic sphere’ that extends beyond the family or household” (2015, p. 666). As will be elucidated, these women are removed from their own extended family and kin, reliant on the military community around them. Their friendships “operate as complex formations offering crucial forms of support, validation, identity and pleasure to them as mothers” (2015, p. 671). Considering motherhood as a facilitator of friendship addresses the second research question probing women’s negotiation of their incorporation into Fimonue’s community.

Hruschka’s debate of how, within specific societies, “imposed relationships will become something like friendship” (2010, p. 148) is relevant to the context of Fimonue and women’s incorporation in advising that particularised contexts and ascribed relationships “do not guarantee that two individuals will become friends” (2010, p. 149). This must be remembered on examining a group of women brought into militarily incorporated collective living. Considering disparate individuals, Bourdieu’s statement that “the performative power of designation, of naming, brings into existence in an instituted, constituted form[...]a collection of varied persons, a purely additive series of merely juxtaposed

individuals” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23), is particularly appropriate when reflecting on the terms of wives’ incorporation and friendships they subsequently create within the ranked designated environment.

Discussing collective friendship proves useful when considering “cross-class friendship” (Pahl, 2000, p. 162). Pahl argues that “typically, strong pressures exist in class-structured societies to avoid the formation of friendships between social unequals” (2000, p. 162). This thesis investigates how rank or militarily classed structures, specifically imposed on men under military command, holds ontological implications for civilian wives. Skeggs considers how within society there are “symbolic systems of knowledge and evaluation to which we have access and through which we recognise others” (2001, p. 296) and it is through these imposed locations within the collective that ‘allowable’ friendships are experienced. For O’Connor these types of friendships “reinforce[e] [the] stratified nature of society” (1998, p. 119) which locate those within and outside the varied subgroups of the collective of army wives. Pahl concurs, suggesting there are some that “*will* be excluded and loneliness and isolation may follow”<sup>69</sup> (2000, p. 152) furthermore arguing that “this is perhaps the *dark* side of friendship about which little has been written”<sup>70</sup> (2000, p. 152). Bunnell et al likewise probe “friendship through its entanglements with relations of power” (2012, p. 490) suggesting that “in a Foucauldian sense, material spaces such as schools, universities, workplaces, pubs and even prisons continue to constitute the key technologies of friendship”<sup>71</sup>. Whilst they do not articulate their specific meaning of key technologies of friendship they do state that “[f]riendships are also productive of lived spatialities that can confer or deny particular freedoms, fears and possibilities” (2012, p. 491). As the thesis explores the breadth of the interviewees’ friendships it will be salutary to bear in mind any restrictions that women experience in the establishment of friendships directly resulting from their incorporation within the total institution of the military garrison and its ranked hierarchical living.

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<sup>69</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>70</sup> My emphasis

<sup>71</sup> See also Coakley (2002) and Dowler (2001)

Bunnell et al consider that whilst “friendship [is] an interpersonal relationship between two or more people” (2012, p. 491), “like many other social relations and phenomena, [it] clearly has geographical dimensions” (2012, p. 491). As already discussed, geography holds significant importance for this investigation; however, incorporating an examination as to the specifics of army wives’ friendships and how these are formed within the military constructed space, reveals a deeper understanding of the social world of the garrison. As Bunnell et al argue, tracing “friendships through the affective social worlds that people inhabit [...] reveals a new dimension to the social while simultaneously contributing to its theoretical understanding” (2012, p. 491). By delving into the complex world of army wives’ friendships, the network and patterns they establish and maintain, this thesis furthers understanding of sociologies of incorporated army wives; it breaks new ground in its consideration of how friendships groups are a direct result of incorporation into ranked collective living, simultaneously contributing to both sociological theories of friendship and incorporated wifehood.

Whilst recognising that the following scholars have studied school or adolescent as opposed to adult female friendships, their work holds relevance for this thesis. Discussing material spaces, Bunnell et al suggest that “[s]chools are important sites of socialisation and social reproduction. Within such spaces, friendship formations and collapses are major features of identity production. Pressure to conform to social ordering of gendered [...] identities is extremely strong within schools” (2012, p. 501; Epstein & Johnson, 1998). Hey’s work similarly considers patterns of female adolescent friendship interrogating the “myriad interstices of feminine power which are forms of girls’ giving (and withholding) of friendship” (1997, p. 4). Hey reflects on adolescent girls’ “access to differential resources of social, economic and political power” (Hey, 1997, p. 29) which is a theme McDowell develops stating that adolescents’ “sense of identity is mutually constituted in the combination of spatial location, their class and their gender” (McDowell, 1999, p. 103). Brunell et al argue that girls practise “inclusionary and exclusionary tactics of friendships through particular spatialities to enable identities to be articulated

and performed” (2012, p. 501). Remaining alert to these tactics this thesis examines women stratified into different subgroups reflecting on friendship group boundaries and incorporated belonging.

The construction and lived realities of friendships between women married to the same regiment within an overseas garrison have not previously been examined and, responding to the third research question, contribute in myriad ways to the sociological discussions on female friendship and to the sociology of femininity. Furthermore through the window of friendship, the site of rank as a facilitator of inclusion and exclusion, explicitly explored in the final analysis chapter but touched upon in the second analysis chapter, directly advances sociological understandings of military life and its immediate impact on women married to the army living overseas negotiating their incorporation.

### **Politics of Belonging, Hierarchies of Class and Classed Identities**

Building and maintaining friendship is one means by which civilian women find a way of ‘belonging’ in the militarised world of a hierarchical overseas garrison. Understanding how boundaries of belonging “separate the world population into ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204), (explored within the second and fourth analysis chapters), reveals the diverse ways these women experience and respond to their categorisation. In seeking to comprehend wives’ responses to constructed community belonging Yuval-Davis’ statement that “belonging tends to be naturalised” (2006, p. 197) and is only “articulated and politicised[...]when[...]threatened in some way” (2006, p. 197) is apposite. This thesis probes how Fimonue’s boundaries of various categorisations are maintained, policed and if some even threaten the overall concept of wifely belonging.

Yuval-Davis argues that “the politics of belonging comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities” (2006, p. 197). She contends that within creating a sense of belonging there are “emotional components of people’s construction of themselves” (2006, p. 202), reflecting “an emotional investment and desire for attachment” (2006, p.

202). For Yuval-Davis, the emotional investment of the construction of identity is not simply linear but goes much deeper, especially when constructions of self and identity “in certain historical contexts [are] forced on people. In such cases, identities and belonging become important dimensions of people's social locations and positionings, and the relationships between locations and identifications can become empirically more closely intertwined” (2006, p. 203). Whilst alert to potential criticism surrounding the use of ‘forced’, I believe Yuval-Davis’ argument holds significance as to how the interviewees ultimately experienced their incorporation, assimilation and attendant collective belonging or whether this force pushes them towards previous civilian locations and identifications. This thesis moves beyond the acknowledgement of the collective identity encouraged upon army wives, probing at the “determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of a community, and of what roles specific social locations and specific narratives of identity” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 205).

Resonating with Yuval-Davis is Bourdieu’s social capital theory which “is the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group” (1986, p. 248). This membership confers “the backing of the collectivity[sic]-owned capital” (1986, p. 249). This ‘collectivity’-owned capital corresponds with Yuval-Davis’ attempts to probe ‘the determination of what is involved in belonging’ or, Bourdieu’s “endless effort[s] at institution” (1986, p. 249) necessary to “produce and reproduce lasting useful relationships” (1986, p. 249). This network is, for Bourdieu, “socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name” (1986, p. 249) the boundary of which delineates ‘us’ and ‘them’. Bourdieu’s so called social capital however is not independent of a person’s cultural or institutional capital “because the exchanges instituting mutual acknowledgement presuppose the reacknowledgement of a minimum objective homogeneity, and because it exerts a multiplier effect on the capital he possesses in his own right” (1986, p. 249). Specifically for the interviewees, this relationship or the implied “durable obligations subjectively felt”

(1986, p. 249) is experienced through the “alchemy of *consecration*” <sup>72</sup> (1986, p. 250). The MoD explicitly states that there is collective understanding of the “unlimited liability” (2016, p. 1) expected of serving personnel aware “that they might face serious injury or death during their service to the Nation[*sic*]” (MoD, 2016, p. 1). This ‘alchemy of consecration’, acknowledged as public risk, accepted as private sacrifice, demands of army wives what no other institutionalised marriage expects (MoD, 2016, p. 1) conferring “mutual knowledge and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 250). The group’s social capital thus “transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through the mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies, reproduces the group” (1986, p. 250). An examination as to the politics of belonging within the specificity of the army wife collective, considering both their acceptance and their refutation within the ranked boundaries at play behind the wire, has not hitherto been undertaken.

Remaining with Bourdieu’s work on capital, he states that “[i]n order for a field to function, there have to be stakes and people prepared to play the game, endowed with the habitus that implies knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the fields, the stakes and so on” (1993, p. 13; May, 2011). According to Devine and Savage, “[p]eople’s competence to participate in fields is critically related to their habitus, and their socially and historically acquired dispositions. Capitals can only be mobilised in particular fields and by people with appropriate habitus” (2005, p. 14). Mulcahly et al’s (2010) work on motherhood as a form of social capital is important to the exploration of social capital for the women of Fimonue. They suggest that motherhood potentially facilitates a tangible accumulation in women’s capital holdings. They suggest that “mothers’ groups enabled certain women to profit [from] their connections with each other” (2010, p. 10; Glover & Hemingway, 2005) however we must also be alert to the risk that “certain women do get left out of the prospering social networks” (2010, p. 10). Such instances of profit and loss of social capital holds resonance for the women of Fimonue and for the

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<sup>72</sup> Original emphasis

exploration of motherhood in this thesis. Having already examined field, habitus and social capital, we now turn to examine Bourdieu's work on cultural capital.

Cultural capital comprises acquisitions in "dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243), the arts, education and academic qualifications. The relevance here is these capitals' impacts on the interviewees, how their previous investments can be utilised (or made redundant) on moving behind the wire. Bourdieu divides cultural capital into "*embodied, objectified and institutionalised*"<sup>73</sup> states (1986, p. 243). In analysing women's transitions of identity, the embodied and institutionalised states are most relevant. Bourdieu terms this "labour of inculcation and assimilation" (1986, p. 244), as the 'embodied' state comprising investment of both the individual and family in which it is born and nurtured. Acquisitions, gained over time, mark individuals with traits such as dress, accent, regional pronunciations and class (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245), investing them with embodied cultural capital. The institutionalised state comprises education and academic qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247), providing "a certificate of cultural competence...confer[ring] on the holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247). An academic qualification legitimises the individual, demonstrating the right institutionalised capital required by the dominant group. Qualifications provide economic capital, as they can be converted into a waged job "guaranteeing...monetary value of a given academic capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247). However, as shall be examined in the final analysis chapter are the implications for women whose institutional cultural capital is rendered redundant in the particularised living conditions of Fimonue responding to the second research question.

Bourdieu's work on fields, habitus and capitals is open to criticism. "Bourdieu's work can be seen as continuing to work with assumptions about the existence of 'society' that are open to challenge in an increasingly fluid and complex world. Bourdieu assumes the existence of national societies in his work,

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<sup>73</sup> Original Emphasis

and is not spatially sensitive in reflecting on the way that flows and mobilities may lead to social processes that cross boundaries” (Devine & Savage, 2005, p. 17). Skeggs and Loveday argue that he cannot explain “the formation of personhood for those who cannot publicly legitimate themselves as ‘subjects of value’ [...] those who are purposefully excluded from and *cannot* access the ‘right’ resources, convert, exchange, or accrue value for themselves” (2012, p. 475). However, in an environment that specifically restricts social mobility between its two militarised strata, his work on cultural capitals provides a relevant framework to examine the researched community whilst positing their experiences as to the social mobility (or lack thereof) they experienced as overseas army wives.

Probing British gender and class relations, Lawler suggests “[w]hile classes are not homogenous entities, [...] there is sufficient shared understanding among what we might call a public bourgeoisie (compromising academics, broadsheet journalists, social commentators and the like) about what working-class people are like to speak about a set of doxic contributions of ‘the working-class’” (2005a, p. 431). This creation of shared understanding within the officer class, demonstrates how “working-class people are othered and hence, something about a normative and normalised middle-classness” (Lawler, 2005a, p. 431). Smith contends that the “ruling classes” impose their “moral order” (1973, p. 20) or normalised middle-classness on to the pejorative other. Considering the othering of working-class women, Skeggs and Loveday argue that “[a]ccess to the dominant symbolic, to the ability to circulate ideas about one’s moral value are central to the history of classificatory value struggles in the UK, applicable [...] to class” (2012, p. 473). Working-class representations, they state, “reveal the nature of the value claims made through classification practices of the middle-classes, of those who want to claim moral authority and attach value to themselves” (2012, p. 474). Identities conferred on working-class people by middle-class observers are “damaged or faulty” (Lawler, 2005b, p. 803) or, irresponsible, fecund and excessive (Skeggs B. , 2005) imposing a “set of assumptions and understandings of the world” (Hanley, 2017, p. 103) onto working-class women. Furthermore, Tyler states that “all processes of social classification including gender [...] are mediated” (2008, p. 18). In examining army wives, these

statements are of salutatory importance ensuring that, as academic observers, we do not make these women reducible to a simple collective.

For Bottero, “explicit class identities only emerge in *very particular contexts*”<sup>74</sup> (2004, p. 997) suggesting that “implicit ‘classed’ identities emerge from the hierarchical distinctions that people routinely make” (2004, p. 994). Bottero acknowledges that “social distance and cultural difference are as likely to prompt defensive reactions against those above [...] as against those below” (2004, p. 993). She cautions that to “present this as a product of the middle-class denigration of working-class culture ignores the way in which such reactions occur at every level of the social hierarchies that people inhabit (and reproduce such practices)” (2004, pp. 993-994). In acknowledging the veracity of these comments, we must be cognisant that for those living in the interviewees’ dualistic environment “[s]ocial identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 479; Lawler, 2005a, p. 429). The researcher must be alert to the reproduction of classed divisions operating within all levels of such collective living.

Class has multiple denominators: accent, dress, house furnishings and education (Bourdieu, 1986; Lawler, 1999; Skeggs B. , 1997; Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001; Skeggs & Loveday, 2012). It is “something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your psyche, at the very core of your being” (Kuhn, 1995, p. 98). When investigating women inhabiting a dominated classed society we must be cognisant that “[c]lass is always made by and in the interests of those who have access to power” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 3). Traditionally, enlisted wives, the majority of whom were from working-class communities, were viewed negatively<sup>75</sup>, having to demonstrate exemplary behaviour as predetermined by the army, or face being ‘struck off’ the strength and forced to return home (Trustram, 1984, p. 46). From the earliest

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<sup>74</sup> My emphasis

<sup>75</sup> Enloe briefly explores the historic representation of military wives and how military command’s purging of women required their discrediting “for it was far easier to send the women out of camp if they could be portrayed as rootless promiscuous, parasitic and generally a drag on the military’s discipline and battle readiness (1988, p. 2). Trustram (1984) also discusses the portrayal of wives, specifically enlisted wives throughout her insightful book *Women of the Regiment* focusing on the Victorian British army.

army marriages “they were subject to the kinds of poverty common to all lower-class women (Trufram, 1984, p. 139). Historically, enlisted army wives undertook domestic labour; whilst arguably all army wives still perform domestic labour, some remain subject to a greater number of inequalities of power than others.

The positioning and categorising of enlisted wives into a negatively perceived classed locale indicates potential “positional suffering” (Bourdieu & Acardo, 1999, p. 4) derived from minimal recognition and their historic low social standing (Reay, 2005, p. 913). McCall (1992) argues that minimal status “victimise[s] [army wives] by the classifying scheme of others” (1992, p. 850). This classification and minimal recognition coupled with the constructions of excessive and vulgar behaviour (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012), historically placed them outside the boundary markers of respectability, unable to belong to the middle-class, supposedly possessing abilities of “self-governance and restraint” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 104). Denoting enlisted wives as ‘other’ marked them as inferior, demonstrating “relations of superiority/inferiority, normality/abnormality, judgement/shame” (Lawler, 1999, p. 5). Positioned by a dominating military male class, wives were fixed into an exact location enabling definition and homogenisation. Judged and held accountable for behavioural mores only attributed to them directly resulting from their dominat[ed] categorisation (Skeggs, 2004, p. 14), as ‘army wife’, this thesis examines whether enlisted wives still face negative positioning through their marital ranked status.

Studies analysing working-class women’s negotiation of positionality and their responses to defining rhetoric indicate that these women are “categorised as inadequate...devalu[ing] rather than reaffirming the cultural capital they brought with them” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 67). Despite aspirations to renegotiate their fixity of position, classed women “become the objects of their own classification, produced from their location in class relations which positions them as inadequate, deficient and potentially pathological” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 72). Arguments surrounding the fixity of positionality emphasise that though habitus “is not ‘set’ at birth (or at any other point), [it] is continuously subject to adaptation and

change...dispositions can become 'sedimented', so that traces of *earlier* 'second sense(s)' remain" (Lawler, 1999, p. 14). Such struggles are a fundamental dimension of class struggle. "The power to impose and to inculcate a vision of divisions, that is, the power to make visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit, is political power par excellence. It is the power to make groups, to manipulate the objective structure of society" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). Manipulation of society through class has been hotly debated, particularly in response to Goldthorpe's theory, questioning whether, "where a male 'head of household' is present, his 'class situation' should determine that of the household" (Crompton, 1989, p. 571; Goldthorpe, 1983; Stanworth, 1984). This thesis probes the legitimacy of assuming that twenty-first century members of the same conjugal unit share the same 'life-chances'" (Crompton, 1989, p. 571). For those located into a positioning which has been pathologised as 'other' (Lawler, 1999, p. 11; Blackman, 1996, p. 362) such transference might create conflict between "*being* and *seeming*" (Lawler, 1999, p. 17) ultimately exerting a cost "in which the assumed pathology of their history and their desires is brought home to them all the more intensely" (Lawler, 1999, p. 19). This thesis probes wives' responses to the ranked/classed positioning conferred upon them, thereby charting new waters as overseas enlisted wives' positioning into ranked subgroups has not hitherto been investigated. It elucidates wives' lived responses to such categorisation, acknowledging the conflict of being and seeming whilst living behind the wire.



within. The nuanced existence of wives' lives is uncoded whilst simultaneously conforming to unwritten behavioural values expected by husband, the CoC and the army community. The invisibility of this codification of army wives' lives renders it omnipresent.

This chapter initially considers the methodological and interviewing approaches utilised in the fieldwork phase, examining key relevant discussions within feminist, ethnographic and psychosocial practices. It moves on to the identification and recruitment of interviewees followed by a consideration of the analysis framework and data analysis. The final focus of this chapter is an examination of the methodologies used in cognate studies of army wives.

### **Critical Military Studies as a Methodological Approach**

As briefly discussed in the Introduction, Critical Military Studies (CMS) is an interdisciplinary area of scholarship keen to understand the impact of militaries, militarism and militarisation. According to Rech et al, military sociology "has been dominated by an engineering rather than an enlightenment approach to the study of military phenomena, which has the aim of being of contributory benefit to armed forces and associated government military institutions" (2016, p. 6). Concurrently, "[g]overnments and managers with an interest in the possibilities offered by social scientific investigation are notoriously keen on quantitative-based, seemingly definitive, results and less certain about the utility of arguments deploying more culturally nuanced or experiential data" (Rech, et al., 2016, p. 6). Jervis develops this theory suggesting that "[g]iven that the military institution *itself* discourages any engagement with potentially messy and unruly feelings, it is hardly surprising that military research has tended to overlook whatever emotions exist beneath the surface of military communities"<sup>77</sup> (2016, p. 167). However, in examining women married to the army, the aim of this research is to seek out their emotional responses existing beneath the surface, investigating how women experience their overseas army wifehood. Therefore a CMS qualitative methodology must be turned to in order to engage with

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<sup>77</sup> Original emphasis

the “subjectivities, experiences and life-worlds” (Rech, et al., 2016, p. 7) experienced by the interviewees.

Key to this research project is understanding the everyday realities of living in Fimonue; allowing the women the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences is vital. A qualitative research methodology not only provides the women with their own voice and emotional response to their situatedness, it in fact reveals “the interrelated dynamics of militarism and militarisation” (Greenwood, 2017, p. 89) potentially in place in Fimonue thereby addressing the third of my research questions, seeking to further contributions to CMS. By revealing such dynamics, a more nuanced awareness of the impacts of incorporation can be exposed as not only is it the women’s role within military marriage that is explored but how wives’ positionality, created by the military establishment, has been constructed and maintained to support the historic positioning of the warrior soldier privileged and maintained in his role. More so than this, such a reflexive examination of their responses to and against the military garrison and the CoC, allows the researcher to consider and “challenge stereotyped binaries” (Greenwood, 2017, p. 92) arguably in place within a military constructed environment. This approach to uncovering militarily constructed binaries facilitates the opportunity to uncover “the differentiation and asymmetry of masculine and feminine as governing principles, as idealised qualities, as practices, as symbols. One thing you can say about militaries is: these are not feminine cultures” (Cockburn, 1999, p. 3; Woodward & Duncanson, 2017, p. 2).

In a project that probes at the positionality of overseas civilian women married to the army, an awareness of the complexity of their relationship with the military must be considered. The army and its soldier are not simply a state sanctioned institution performing combat and humanitarian tasks, instead the army is employer, landlord, relocater and service provider, influencing and impacting on all elements of overseas life. For as long as there have been armies, there have been following women (Fossey, 2012, p. 12) with men typically “associated with war, soldiering and violence [...] ‘protectors’ of

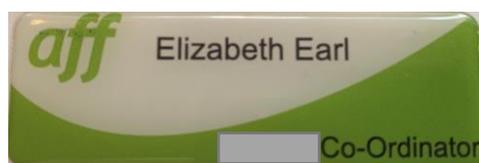
women, who are associated with nurturing, the home front and the reproduction of the nation” (Basham & Bulmer, 2017, p. 60). This positioning of women into a particularised domesticated role is one that, within the militarised world, is regularised given that “the military has for centuries been a source of normative conceptions of gender, which, on the one hand amplifies dominant cultural patterns and, on the other, actively participates in its production and reproduction. Thus, more than merely gendered, the military has also been seen as a 'gendering', gender-granting or gender-defying institution” (Carreiras & Alexandre, 2013, p. 105; Segal, 2006; Cohn, 1993). In remaining alert to this traditionalised positioning, the researcher must ensure that the research does not become reductive, that the interviewees’ individual experiences are key to understanding the myriad forms of incorporation rather than questioning the gendering of the army wife role *per se* against the historic expectations that the military holds. Thus, in acknowledging that these interviewees are placed within the domestic setting, the validity of such a research undertaking should not be reduced to “women and women’s issues” (Greenwood, 2017, p. 90). Instead it must recognise that the experiences narrated by overseas wives are in fact resultant from the institutional construction of gendered roles perpetuated through the militarily constructed garrison (including the domestic SFA), the militarily created adjunctive role and incorporated militarisation that wives evidentially feel expected of them.

Within qualitative CMS research undertakings, a reflexive stance is of critical importance especially as my role as researcher was intimately related to my position as army wife. Reflexively I had to remain vigilant to “the logics of our own conceptual framings, such as militarised masculinities, lest they too become cognitive shortcut[s] in our frameworks for understanding the world” (Basham & Bulmer, 2017, p. 61). Given my enculturation within this specific cohort of women, I had to ensure attentiveness to my position (Greenwood, 2017, p. 99) whilst working to understand “the every-day lived and often mundane experiences of militarism and militarisation and the ways in which gender and importantly other identity markers such as class, race, sexuality and age intersects at micro and macro levels” (Greenwood, 2017, p. 99). I could not combine or conflate my responses to my military incorporation

onto those of the interviewees, each narrative had to be handled sensitively whilst placing myself within the interview and ultimate interview analysis. I could not be ignorant of “the inevitable influence” (Jervis, 2016, p. 169) of my own personal history: that of a newly married army wife struggling with her own incorporation behind the wire. Therefore, a reflexive, qualitative CMS approach provided a supportive methodological framework in which to address my three research questions. This approach blends with and strengthens my chosen methodological feminist and ethnographic interviewing approach<sup>78</sup> allowing the impact of the expectations of militarised gendered positioning of army wives to be examined whilst being critically aware of, and intimately familiar with, the militarisation at place within the perimeter fence of Fimonue. Through its probing and reflexive stance, this approach allowed the women’s experience to be foregrounded and heard against the dominating and totalling institution of the overseas military garrison.

### **Feminist Research and Ethnographic Interviewing**

My desire to research army wives stemmed from my marriage to a soldier. I was new to the Bears having not previously lived in Service Family Accommodation, nor moving overseas as part of the unit move, and only attending a handful of ‘Mess dos’ prior to relocating overseas. Like some interviewees, I was grappling with multiple changes in my own life; my new marital status, career suspension and becoming a dependent army wife. Eight months after my relocation, concurrent with commencing my PhD studies, I started working for the Army Families Federation (AFF) (see Figure 4) which compounded my blurred, yet defined identities of ‘wife of’ a senior soldier and researcher.



*Figure 4 - My AFF Name Badge*

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<sup>78</sup> Discussed in the subsequent section

An AFF co-ordinator's role is multifaceted, primarily the eyes and ears of the AFF in UK and overseas army locations, working as an additional support service for army<sup>79</sup> families. In addition to working directly with families, I reported concerns and issues to the CoC and was involved in several high-level visits. With ethical approval granted by the senior Commanding Officer for Fimonue and the Bears' Commanding Officer, I sought and received AFF's permission for this research, ensuring no conflict of interest between my efforts as a researcher and my work as a coordinator<sup>80</sup>.

Living within Fimonue placed me in a unique position. Rather than being an independent researcher, I had to be aware of my own autobiography (Skeggs B. , 1994, p. 80) and my own incorporation amongst this cohort of women. Rather than parachuting in, conducting interviews, then departing, I participated in the life of the garrison, I was a known entity, no "friendly stranger" (Kirsch, 1999, p. 30). Such privileged insider locus provided insightful knowledge of the complex situatedness of those researched. In my professional and personal capacities, I attended the weekly organised coffee mornings, belonged to the running club, participated in the weekly PT circuits. My role as scorer for the cricket club (see Figure 5) gave me the additional dubious pleasure of washing the cricket whites, incorporating my emotion work into my husband's role as OC Cricket<sup>81</sup>, exemplifying "first hand field work" (Tedlock, 1991, p. 78; Yang, 1972) of my participation in army wifehood.

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<sup>79</sup> In Fimonue, and other overseas locations the AFF in fact works with Tri-Service families due to the other Federations not having overseas co-ordinators. Indicatively I supported families experiencing difficulties relocating back to the UK due to requiring specific housing needs or those facing homelessness resulting from termination of service simultaneously working on specific local projects.

<sup>80</sup> Please Appendix Four, page 334 for Ethical Approval

<sup>81</sup> Officer Commanding – Cricket



*Figure 5 - OC- Scorer, Scoring the Cricket*<sup>82</sup>

With friends on camp and through shared professional and personal conversations, I was aware of many issues facing wives behind the wire, experiencing the nuanced daily life of an army wife.

Given the complexities of my positioning within the project and within Fimonue, I needed to draw on multiple research approaches, facilitating a combined methodology keeping me alert to the impacts of my positionality on the research. A feminist ethnographic approach, leveraging some psychosocial and autoethnographic (Anderson, 2006) principles offered me a robust methodological platform. Through my dual positionality as researcher and army wife, an “empathy and rapport” (Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010, p. 4) between myself and interviewee could be developed, exploring together the complexity of living within Fimonue. This “a priori intimate knowledge of the community and its members” (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013, p. 251) provided space for a reflective stance within the research. This positionality of immersion and belonging enabled the “feminist researcher to gain greater insights into the contradictory knowledge of the everyday in which [army wives] are located” (Skeggs B. , 1994, p. 88)

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<sup>82</sup> Reproduced with kind permission

revealing these women as “constituted by social forces lying outside them, in the workings of the [army]” (Frosh, 2003, p. 10) and how they negotiated this incorporation.

As privileged, intimate insider (Taylor, 2011) I could, in conjunction with the interviewees, undertake an “emancipatory project of bringing women’s voices in from the margins” (Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010, p. 2). Furthermore, my insider credibility, created a “greater openness on the part of the participants” (Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010, p. 4) engendering an engagement with the interview process encouraging honesty in their reflections. Thus, in utilising a feminist approach, I aimed to embrace both my own and my interviewees’ “norms of empathy and subjectivity” (Reissman, 1987, p. 190) as we deconstructed the boundaries of army wifehood. My primary aim was to provide a platform for these wives to reflect on their own lives and experiences – as mother/nonmother and individual woman, bracketed into the nomenclature ‘army wife’. This narrative provided a window into the “gutsy human enterprise” (Reissman, 1987) in which these women participated through following the flag and soldier husbands.

Acknowledging my role and participation in the interview as more than a silent interviewer, I was not “a traditional interviewer, objective, distanced and detached” (Kirsch, 1999, p. 43). Bringing to bear my own autobiography created an experience of coproduction of knowledge (Tedlock, 1991, p. 80) between the wives and myself. This coproduction or collaborative interaction (Kirsch, 1999, p. 47; Kelly, et al., 1994, p. 39) stemmed from my involvement in the interview and natural empathy with wives’ frustrations. I offered them my vulnerability, my subordinated position within the army hierarchy, “elicit[ing] and analys[ing] knowledge that can be used by women to alter oppressive and exploitative conditions in their society” (Skeggs B. , 1994, p. 87), regarding their responses to the military hierarchy. Conducting fieldwork in such an environment, removing and distancing myself proved impossible, therefore, several ethical implications had to be borne in mind. I had to consider whether I was asking them, through highlighting their position as peripheral to the army, “to challenge the conditions of their

oppression” (Kelly, et al., 1994, p. 37), and if this could be construed as subversive or mutinous by the very institution which had consented for me to conduct this project.

Collaboratively with other army wives, a feminist ethnographic paradigm would “produce knowledge about women’s lives in specific cultural contexts” (Schrock, 2013, p. 48). Yet I needed to be alert to my own capital and habitus as a tertiary educated woman, PhD candidate, and former research analyst in the City of London for ten years. I was acutely aware during my research of the inherent problems of representing women who might be considered as other to me. One significant purpose of this research was to highlight how the complexities of such situated living impacted on a disparate collection of women. Parallel to my ability of speaking out *for* these women, I had to be conscious of alternative responses to their incorporation as my responses to *my* incorporation could not imbue *their* narrative. As with examining subaltern women (Schrock, 2013, p. 51), whose aspirations and reflections might differ, I could not use the privilege of permission and access to enforce upon these (potentially) vulnerable women my responses. *Their* voices had to be heard, representing *their* experiences as they made sense of institutionalised living behind the wire.

### **Field Diary and Critical Reflections**

During the fieldwork period, I kept a research diary exploring day-to-day feelings and apprehensions whilst reflecting on my researcher positionality as my emotions and the rate of interviews intensified. My field diary permitted space for reflection on the stories entrusted to me and the interview encounters. Furthermore, its use enabled the personal, as the personal “has never been subordinate in the private world of field notes” (Anderson, 2006, p. 384; Atkinson, et al., 1999, p. 60). Each interview had the potential to be emotionally challenging for both parties, some wives becoming upset during them. After one such encounter, I reflected that

*her sadness, her guilt, her distress was awful, and I felt incredibly guilty, saddened (for her), and worried that the interview had taken her down a path of such sorrow. I am now a reluctant secret keeper.*

The use of a field diary had, as Lofland encouraged, become a documentary depository of my feelings and reactions (1970, p. 106; Anderson, 2006, p. 384; Punch, 2012, p. 91; Holland, 2009; Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, & Kemmer, 2201). It also provided a release for the emotional impact hearing countless stories of personal misery and challenge. It became a listening post whilst I negotiated the role of interviewer within the interview. I noted a cautionary warning to myself,

*I think this is all making me very aware of people's vulnerability in this environment and I am now feeling very vulnerable and that when this is done, I really want to get out. I am not sure as to how much more I can take of this. Constantly living in a negative space is unhealthy.*

The vulnerability, negativity and overwhelming feeling of loneliness revealed through the interviews impacted on both parties. Maintaining the diary as documentary data to explore these vulnerabilities strengthened my resolve that this research was valuable.

Interviewing friends required certain ethical considerations. I did not want to be perceived as "manipulating friendships" (Kirsch, 1999, p. 26). In one instance, a good friend admitted keeping her sunglasses on during the interview, facing away from me and had considered prior to the interview exactly what she was happy to reveal to protect herself, revealing what she "thought [I] wanted to hear"<sup>83</sup>. This was revealed at the conclusion of her interview and in subsequent feedback. All interviewees were asked to provide "critical feedback" (Kirsch, 1999, p. 38) both for my own development and so that I could monitor their own reactions after a relatively emotional experience. In this case, her feedback articulated the various emotions experienced.

"Academically, I was happy to be interviewed so I was a little surprised when we set the date, at how I actually wasn't looking forward to being questioned. On the day, I was clear that I would

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<sup>83</sup> Anonymised feedback

chat for an hour and keep my answers confined to facts and opinions only giving you information I thought would be useful.”<sup>84</sup>

She assumed she would be able to guide the discussion, choosing how to locate and reveal herself (Kirsch, 1999, p. 30; Blakeslee, Cole, & Confrey, 1996). Initially we were on equal footing, graduates sharing mutual interests. However, during the interview, she perceived the power swinging unexpectedly away, potentially believing that I created a sense of “misunderstanding, disappointment and an invasion of privacy” (Kirsch, 1999, p. 26) trespassing outside of her expectations of the interview’s boundaries. In her feedback to me she commented that:

I was uneasy at anything too personal being discussed and wanted to hide that information. As it turns out, I found the process too biographical and blurted out stuff I generally withhold. I was uncomfortable.<sup>85</sup>

I had to reflect whether she felt violated (Kirsch, 1999, p. 45) by surprisingly and unintentionally opening an unanticipated floodgate of emotions and heartache. In interviewing these women, I had to ensure that I was not placing them into positions of susceptibility and emotional distress. I realised that I would “[l]earn truths that I would rather not know” (Kirsch, 1999, p. 28), becoming as I had already noted to myself a reluctant secret keeper. She did conclude her feedback more positively reflecting that

I’m pleased to say that the initial discomfiture has passed and the strands of conversation have stimulated a lot of thought/navel gazing. I love your comment that you felt I had become invisible to myself.<sup>86</sup>

A significant ethical consideration was ‘duty of care’, towards the interviewees. Neither a clinician nor a therapist I had to ensure the women were safeguarded however Skeggs asks, “what else can you do? This is an ethical dilemma of feminist research” (1994, p. 81). I aimed to mitigate the threat of vulnerability by asking for feedback and offering clarification (Kelly, et al., 1994, p. 36). After each interview, I sent an email thanking the interviewee, requesting feedback on me or the interview, also

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<sup>84</sup> Anonymised feedback. All feedback is reproduced verbatim including spelling mistakes and grammatical errors

<sup>85</sup> Anonymised feedback

<sup>86</sup> Anonymised feedback

offering a further informal meeting if anyone felt unsettled post the interview. I received nine formal feedback correspondence<sup>87</sup>, no-one requested an informal meeting.

### **Psychosocial and Feminist Interviewing**

Psychosocial approaches to interviewing shaped the research to a certain degree as I drew on this approach in my efforts to remain alert to the (un)conscious embodiment of my interviewees' positionality. A research problem examining a constructed, incorporated group necessitates hearing the interviewees' voices, listening to their narrative, to understand "their own representations of their experiences" (Roseneil, 2012, p. 130) living as army wives. Crucially, a psychosocial approach permits "the expressions of inner worlds, feelings and emotions" which, according to this methodological approach, are "never outside the society and its social and cultural meanings" (Woodward, 2015, p. 55). Woodward further suggests that such expressions or "memories" revealed through "narrative psychosocial methods are never purely psychic" (Woodward, 2015, p. 55). Being "located within and associate[d] with relations with other people and a biographic history" (2015, p. 55), the social and the psychic are intimately interlinked.

Turning to habitus, within the army wifehood habitus are the dynamics of the individual woman. Her roles as woman, mother/nonmother, army wife, coexist within the institutionalised environment of an overseas army garrison. Army wife is an imposed categorisation resulting from marriage. The research investigates whether wives inhabit a conflicted existence endeavouring to maintain a sense of self, of identity, revealing "blurred lines between psychic processes and social processes" (Reay, 2015, pp. 13-14). The emotional and psychological works that each wife practices demonstrates "two interlocking forms of emotional work: the internal work of coping with contradiction, conflict and ambivalence, much of which they may not be aware, and the external work of reconciling what goes on inside with what they are supposed to feel" (Craib, 1995, p. 155). By considering wives' positionality and their

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<sup>87</sup> Either email or social media message

ontological responses I reveal a richer understanding of the negotiations undertaken to inhabit this nuanced world. By foregrounding the emotional nuances of these women's varied lives, my research highlights how they created an identity and a habitus exploring whether it is "destabilised...torn by contradictions and internal divisions" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 160).

This intertwining and interplay of individual experience within the social world of institutionalised living conforms with Roseneil's suggestion that "the point of a psycho-social analysis is to direct attention to the interplay between the social and the psychic" (2006, p. 851). More than this however, it seeks to place the individual into the spotlight, to provide more than a "generalisability across a larger population" (Roseneil, 2006, p. 851). Each wife had her own story. Providing the interviewees with an uninhibited narrative platform had the potential to empower each woman during the interview; eliciting the emotional in the narrative, revealing the conscious daily living and the unconscious narrative, offers a more vivid picture of the realities of living in Fimonue.

Psychosocial methodology was specifically pertinent to my project through its facilitation of an awareness of what the researcher brings to the interview. As Walkerdine et al argue, "no matter how many methodological guarantees we try to put in place, the subjective always intrudes" (2001, p. 84). Inhabiting a "multidimensional subject position" (Phillips, C. & Earle, R., 2010, p. 631), invested me with "distinctive assets and liabilities" (Phillips, C. & Earle, R., 2010, p. 361). These assets and liabilities could be reflected upon during and post interview, understanding whether I "influenced someone else's biographical narrative" (Clarke, 2006, p. 1165). Clarke suggests, that self-reflection is the "central question in the psycho-social method." (2006, p. 1165). Reflexivity within the interview process also needed to explore the interview setting, both physical and ontological as a potential area for the creation of identity. It necessitated vigilance to the wife's portrayal of her own life story and her work in constructing her identity within the social contexts of the interviews. Unique to these interviews was mutual awareness of husbands' rank, our social 'friendships' and our statuses as mothers/nonmothers,

overlaid with our community involvement, all contributing to the baggage we brought with us. I recognised the multiple variables within the research dynamic; inhabiting a position within a closed community, I was alert to how we interacted based on the variants of our garrison existence. I welcomed our preconceptions, baggage and agenda into the interview dynamic, noting how this intersected onto the wife's narrative.

Despite being located overseas, the interviews were intended to cover life experiences both before and during this current posting. To elicit the information that contributes to the *Gestalt* of life experiences, taking Holloway and Jefferson's interpretation of Gestalt as meaning "based on the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" (2013, p. 69), necessitated a free rein so interviewees' own stories could be explored. The objective was to provide the interviewee with the opportunity to examine and introduce what they saw as most pertinent, creating the truths of their own lives (Atkinson, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1998). In this way, the women explored their own life history making sense of, and validating, their own actions. Many enjoyed this opportunity to be self-reflective whilst others found aspects of this process more challenging than they, or I, had anticipated.

My initial intention had been to ask the interviewees one opening question:

So maybe a starting point could be...where and when did you meet your husband? So, what were you were doing at the time, were you working or in education?"

This seemed a good entry point given the research's focus was on interviewees' journeys into army wifehood. (Reissman, 1987, p. 173; Cazden, 1983; Pasupathi, et al., 2007, p. 90). The question specifically focused on the development of her relationship with her army partner, offered interviewees the opportunity to "consider 'story-like' interpretations or explanations" (Orbuch, 1997, p. 456; Maines, 1993), this fundamental relationship being her reason for army wifehood. Furthermore, this relationship is the commonality across all interviewees, a commensal "concrete situation" (Kidd & Parshall, 2000; Merton & Kendall, 1946), the shared culture of marriage behind the wire. I envisioned

minimal interview-structuring, akin to the Biographical Narrative Interview Methodological (BNIM) technique (Wengraf, 2001, p. i). This methodology stresses limited interaction by the interviewer, “giving up control’ at a tactical level to the person being interviewed” (Wengraf, 2001, p. 3). However, it became apparent that without placing myself in the interview, the process would have floundered and quickly dried-up. The more feminist methodological approaches such as those advocated by Oakley (1981), Finch (1984), Skeggs (1994), Reissman (1987), Kelly et al (1994), Williamson and Kitzinger (2013) permits interviewer interaction which had to occur in conjunction with those interviewing remaining, “silent at key points” (Reissman, 1987, p. 176), allowing the narrator to cover their most pertinent experiences. It was a balancing act of guiding whilst not dominating the narration to the exclusion of the true essence of the interviewees’ story. I employed this approach allowing the interviews to develop conversationally yet ensuring I provided the interviewees with space to reflect on their own personal life stories.

Facilitating wives’ reflections as free-flowing narrative helped mitigate feelings of constraint through imposed questions. It is in the interpretation of the narrative that one must “be alert to the ways in which we may distort, misrepresent or have subjects’ experiences obscured from view because of *our* biographical experiences or subjectivities”<sup>88</sup> (Phillips, C. & Earle, R., 2010, p. 374). Drawing on psychosocial methodology provided the freedom to register how my biographical experiences of life as an army wife might impose on my interpretations of the interviewees’ discourse. A psychosocial approach stresses that my interpretation is only one understanding of the narratives. Those with different experiences and subjectivities could interpret the data differently. Acknowledging multifaceted interpretations of the data refutes a searching for a “dominant theoretical paradigm” (Clarke, 2006, p. 1167) on the construction of army wives’ identities. Whilst allowing the space for a psychosocial or free association approach contributing significantly to the wealth of data gained, I did not use a psychosocial approach for its analysis. To work in a Kleinian manner identifying “paranoid

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<sup>88</sup> Original emphasis

schizoid” or “depressive” positions is beyond my skillset. My interest lay in understanding “the micro and macro, the personal and social, inner worlds and outer worlds” (Woodward, 2015, p. 5) of Fimonue and interviewees’ responses to these worlds as they negotiated their army wifehood incorporation. I strived to give voice to army wives, not as another research subject, but as women inhabiting and negotiating life through complex institutional constraints, classified, ‘ranked’ and objectified through marriage.

### **Identification and Recruitment of Interviewees**

To ensure that differences of incorporation experienced by these Bears’ wives were represented, and avoid manipulating the results to either support my own personal hypothesis or “creat[ing] an illusion of solidarity and sisterhood” (Kelly, et al., 1994, p. 31), I aimed to include women married to all ranks, from as wide a demographic as possible. The serving unit was an all-male infantry battalion; of the 180 spouses<sup>89</sup>, it was imperative to interview as broad a cross-section of women married to all ranks as possible with realistic aim of engaging approximately thirty women. In total twenty-nine participated. I was particularly keen to include into my sample wives from the Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) Community. The F&C community constitutes a small percentage of the total British Army, 13,800 (BAFF, 2016) or fifteen percent of the total service personnel (79,460)<sup>90</sup>. F&C citizens are entitled to join the British Army and relocate their families on accompanied postings either in the UK or overseas, as long as their wage hits the minimum threshold for all immigrants into the UK (AFF, 2014). Between ten and twenty Bears are F&C soldiers, all apart from one senior ranking soldier within the junior and mid-level enlisted ranks (private to Sergeant)<sup>91</sup>. Their home locations ranged from the Caribbean, West and East Africa and South Africa. Two women married to F&C soldiers were bracketed in with the F&C community, one British and one European. One woman of F&C origin was married to a (senior) enlisted

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<sup>89</sup> At time of interviewee recruitment, there was one same sex married couple within this group however he declined to interview.

<sup>90</sup> Source – FOIR, see Appendix Three, page 332

<sup>91</sup> I was nominally part of this group as my husband is South African and joined as an F&C soldier from South Africa. He was the only senior ranking F&C soldier within the Bears.

British soldier<sup>92</sup>. Eight F&C women were approached resulting in five interviewees: two wives were F&C origin married to soldiers from the same Commonwealth country; two were married to F&C soldiers but not F&C origin themselves and the remaining one wife was F&C origin married to a British soldier. Appendix Five<sup>93</sup> provides a comprehensive breakdown of the wives' various key statuses (gathered at the end of each interview where I formally asked key statistics relevant to the analysis stage) that help inform the analysis chapters.

The physical layout of the garrison's domestic quarters ('patches') is extensive. As will be discussed in the analysis chapters, the various ranks inhabit three very different spaces, nicknamed 'the ghetto' for privates and JNCOs, the 'posh side' for the Senior NCOs and the enclosed, remote world of the 'officers' patch' situated a considerable distance away, at the bottom of the hill. Whilst keen to interview women from across the patches, I had to be aware of the accusation that I was essentialising them into the ranked positionality I was seeking to avoid.

Each patch influenced the way the subsections of the community were regarded. Wives living at the top of the hill were thought of as divisive by other patches, of being the most 'Rank Conscious'. The officers' world is seen by many as a world away, living within and amongst themselves. I had to be aware of the "discursive positions available to different groups" (Skeggs B. , 1994, p. 78), how each would view itself and others. The groups within each patch were "likely to produce different knowledge" (Skeggs B. , 1994, p. 78), so including all patches was fundamental to ensure a wide cross section of knowledge and experience. This breadth of knowledge was vital to the integrity of the research.

There were three distinct routes for interviewee recruitment, stretching from recruiting army wife friends, asking friends for recommendations or approaching the Unit Welfare Officer (UWO) for a list of

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<sup>92</sup> NB: when referring to an enlisted serviceman (private to Warrant Officer/Sergeant Major), he is referred to as either soldier or enlisted. An officer will only be known as officer. This same approach is utilised in this thesis.

<sup>93</sup> See Appendix Five, page 335 – 340

wives' names. Employing the methodology of recruiting my small number of friends had the merit of simplicity and a likely high success rate, these friends knew of my research and seemed open to participation. They were tertiary educated, employed in a career and lived independently prior to marriage. However, three were officers' wives; hence any findings would be significantly skewed and unrepresentative of enlisted wives' experience. This categorisation placed them as both insider and outsider as they parachute into a battalion for the mere two years of their husbands' posting, becoming involved in the community. However, unlike enlisted wives, they do not follow the same battalion (and thus wives) across multiple postings. I felt it was valid to incorporate them into the interviews with their potentially different perspective on community life yet understanding the implications of being married to a heteronormative institution. Considering utilising a gatekeeper sample, there were three UWOs between my arrival in February 2015 and the unit departure during Summer 2017. Aware that I had permission from the Commanding Officer (CO) to undertake this research project, all were, theoretically, happy to 'support' my endeavours. Cognisant of the length of time it takes for things which are not 'mission critical' to happen, relying exclusively on this approach as the main gateway had to be avoided. Similarly, there were concerns with possible interaction with the CoC, the possibility of potential interviewee suggestions "shaping research trajectories" (Rech, et al., 2016, p. 7) and a perceived conflict of confidentiality.

A mixed approach for identifying potential participants was chosen. Two wives, married to enlisted soldiers who knew the battalion intimately were chosen as "initial samples" (Heckathorn, 2011, p. 356) in a respondent driven approach (Heckathorn, 2011, p. 358). These women, whilst not formal gatekeepers, provided a window into the battalion, identifying those to whom I had minimal exposure, offering a different insight into battalion living than those of my social group. Married to mid-ranking NCOs, both had been 'in' the Bears' for several years and were mothers, facilitating their integration into the wider battalion community. I stressed that I needed to access women from different ranked levels and lived experience, such as those on the school run where I had limited interaction. There had

to be an honest consideration as to what shaped their recommendations before I approached those put forward. I had to reflect on whether the names suggested were only those unhappy with life behind the wire, potentially swaying my research into the negative. Using these initial samples to elicit recommendations also placed a burden of trust and confidentiality on those not bound by any signed agreement.

Professionally I was employed by the AFF as the local co-ordinator exposed to several families. It would have been ethically and morally wrong to approach these women for interviews. As agreed by the CoC and AFF, there was a clear dividing line between those I supported professionally and those researched. The women I approached were therefore outside of my professional client/service user network. Any role crossovers were highlighted at the outset of the interview stressing the distance and independence between my research and work for AFF.

An area of careful reflection was that of rejection. Sixty-two potential interviewees were identified with a realistic aim of securing thirty<sup>94</sup>. There were honest expectations that not everyone would agree to be interviewed but where wives were not keen to be involved, I had to be alert as to why, managing this rejection, understanding that, in so closely intertwined a community as Fimonue, some would be understandably reluctant to share personal experiences. I had to be mindful of not being blinkered to the effect my position as interviewer might have, especially as those most reluctant to participate were of my military stratigraphy – SNCOs' wives, a cohort of key interest. The longest inhabitants within this contained community, their husbands had served upwards of twelve years, potentially undertaking multiple deployments, including Iraq and Afghanistan<sup>95</sup>. Those who have not lived through the constant

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<sup>94</sup> See Appendix Five, page 335 – 340 for a breakdown of all women approached for interview.

<sup>95</sup> For example, one SNCO in the Battalion completed two tours of Northern Ireland, one in Bosnia, two tours in Iraq and two tours in Afghanistan over a serving period of 19 years.

worry of a spouse on Herrick or Telic<sup>96</sup> tours recognise their experiences as different. Daphne commented;

...but because Des hasn't been away, like, you take some of the sergeants' wives. They've been too, you know, Iraq - gone through some properly awful stuff. [He] has never done that [tours]. [...] I haven't been a wife going through that. [...] I've not experienced half, even a tenth of what some army wives have<sup>97</sup>

Only two of these wives agreed to be interviewed. The others' rejections demonstrated I could not assume that everyone would be interested purely because they were wives. I had to accept that not everyone "share[d] the same level of interest *in* and commitment *to* the research project"<sup>98</sup> (Kirsch, 1999, p. 36). My insider role within their military stratigraphy yet outsider role as researcher, could potentially be negatively perceived amongst the wives.

Turning to the interview framework, a key consideration was finding a location where interviewees felt relaxed. I remained vigilant of how the socio-spatial-setting might potentially impact upon the interview's dynamics. Using a room in the Amenities Building<sup>99</sup> was inappropriate as this could have lent an air of militarised authority to the project, potentially linking it to the CoC. The project needed to remain distinct from the military institution, avoiding the potential for the institution's omnipresence within this militarised socio-spatial setting to impact negatively on the interview's dynamics. Locating the interview in the domestic socio-spatial setting, created a dynamic of host and guest reassuring interviewees that this was their territory, their comfort zone. As Elwood and Martin (2000) suggest, this location offered wives the opportunity to construct their life-story and identity behind the wire as they themselves see it, rather than being consciously or unconsciously constrained by the institution's expected view of them. What the wives deemed appropriate to their interview (McDowell, 1998) might

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<sup>96</sup> These are the codenames for operational deployments in both Iraq and Afghanistan (Ministry of Defence, 2016; <http://operationtelic.co.uk>, 2016).

<sup>97</sup> Interviewee # 14 2512 – 2520

<sup>98</sup> Own experience

<sup>99</sup> Please see Figure 19 and Figure 21(pages 163 & 176) for a map of Fimonue highlighting the Amenities Building and its purpose.

not have been so openly discussed in a more institutionalised setting. Using the feminised domestic MQ, embodying the socio-spatial arrangements of the private, wives had greater control over the social activity and boundaries of what was openly discussed, diminishing any potential power play (Forsey, 2010; Sin, 2003, p. 308; Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 655) between the wives and the institution and the wives and myself, ultimately empowering the interviewee.

In organising the interviews, those with the twenty-three mothers occurred during 'child-free' periods. Wives with husbands at home came to my home, aiming for a neutral setting where they could talk freely about their experiences rather than feel inhibited by their husband's presence (albeit in a different room), and, as husbands spend limited time at home whilst overseas, they might not have appreciated the interview impacting on their rest period. In total, twenty interviews were conducted at the interviewees' own homes, one at the interviewee's workplace, and eight at my house<sup>100</sup>; in the analysis I remained alert to any sense of discomfort for those interviewed at my home. I did not know either Chloe or Rosie who requested to be interviewed away from their homes, however both fully engaged with the process demonstrating no obvious negative implications from being interviewed in an unfamiliar socio-space. I had either a working or personal connection with the remaining six being intimately friendly with two women. All interviewees were asked to sign a consent form and were provided with an invitation letter outlining the parameters of the research project<sup>101</sup>.

### **Interview Analysis Framework**

The reality of analysis was daunting. The interviews resulted in over ninety hours of recording; as Onwuegbuzie et al (2009) assert, "[t]ranscript-based analysis represents the most rigorous and time-intensive mode of analysing data." (2009, p. 4) Each recording required verbatim transcription, including my words, a highly time consuming task, as one hour of recording took up to four hours to transcribe. Being dyslexic with impaired short-term auditory memory and concentration, my supervisor

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<sup>100</sup> Please see Appendix Seven, page 342 for a visual breakdown of the interview location

<sup>101</sup> Please see Appendix Eight, page 343 – 346 for the Invitation Letter and the Consent Form

and I agreed that a “reasonable adjustment” (Equality Act, 2010) would be to use a trusted transcriber to assist. Additionally, given the fluidity of mine, and the battalion’s time on island, it was imperative to complete the first-round interviews, before being posted away from Fimonue and losing contact with my participants. The transcriber allowed research momentum to be maintained, freeing me to review the transcriptions and complete any follow up work required.

Theoretical considerations were of fundamental importance to the overall analysis, one consideration is both the micro and macro contexts of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Poland, 2003, p. 10). Furthermore, the close community in which the research occurred had to be acknowledged. The “micropolitics of interpersonal relationships” (Oakley, 1981, p. 32) within the interview dynamic had to be at the forefront of any analysis. Correspondingly each interpersonal relationship, stretching from close friend through to acquaintance and unknown, was broken down including which husbands were under my husband’s command<sup>102</sup>. Of the twenty-nine interviewees, ten husbands had, unintentionally, a subordinate working relationship. Thus, I had to be conscious of how, if the conversation veered towards the military dynamic and relationship, this might impact on their narrative. Rebecca acknowledged the presence of rank within our relationship by intimating her reaction to interacting with my husband.

“I get a bit panicked when Danny speaks to me [...] because I don't want to get Issac into trouble.”<sup>103</sup>

At the beginning of each interview confidentiality was stressed. Indeed, where there was a crossover of work and personal, I reiterated that anything discussed would not be revealed to the CoC and furthermore everything would be anonymised. Despite these assurances, this relationship and its impact was an important consideration for the subsequent analysis.

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<sup>102</sup> This was an unintentional bias resulting from my husband’s role within the largest of the five companys [*sic*] of the Bears.

<sup>103</sup> Interviewee #10 1817 – 1818. All quotations from interviewees are faithful to the transcriptions and have not been ‘tidied’.

Evolving from the macro-context was each interview's micro-context (Poland, 2003, p. 10). One micro-context is that of an inferred hierarchical relationship between researcher and interviewee. Oakley suggests that "interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship." (1981, p. 27; Finch, 1984; Skeggs, 1994). Not only did the hierarchical nature of Danny's working relationship affect the macro-context but potentially the researcher's positionality as outsider imposed itself onto the discussion. For those women who had left school at either sixteen or eighteen with no further involvement in education or research projects, any potential sense of feeling threatened by the interviewer/interviewee dynamic had to be considered. Carrie commented,

*Carrie* You'll have to watch it with me. I get nervous so I'll just get tongue-tied.

*ENE* Don't worry.

*Carrie* The wrong thing comes out.

*ENE* You will not feel nervous at all. Don't feel like that at all.

*Carrie* That's one problem I do have. When I talk to people I get so nervous.<sup>104</sup>

Thus the "social/personal characteristic" (Oakley, 1981, p. 24) of this interviewee had to be reflected on; whether her nerves stemmed from being in an alien situation, because of the suggested 'superior' academic positionality or due to her own lack of confidence, discussed at length during her interview. At her request, the interview took place at my house; initially she was visibly nervous however, as the interview progressed, she became at ease, as highlighted in her feedback, Figure 6.

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<sup>104</sup> Interviewee #21 10 – 16

Hi Elizabeth,

Thank you so much for the visit. You made me feel very relaxed and comfortable to be able to discuss issues and problems. I never thought I would discuss some of the problems with anyone but I'm so glad I did. You have definitely helped with my personal issue as well. I can't thank you enough.

Regards

*Figure 6 - Carrie's feedback post interview<sup>105</sup>*

Therefore, the analysis had to include a much wider perspective than just what was said, it also had to contain a consideration of the various dynamics at play within each interview setting.

As a feminist approach where the voice of the interviewer could be heard was used, I would, despite Moser's caution be, "emotionally involved with the respondent" (Moser, 1958; Oakley, 1981, p. 25). In such a closed community there was minimal social distance (Oakley, 1981, p. 32) between interviewer and interviewee. As was evident from the outset, the interviewer role was that of a participant in both the conversation and the community. One of the underpinning frameworks of the research was to ascertain how army wives negotiate their positionality within a closed patriarchal community. Thus, remaining outside of the interview dialogue, would have created a falsity in the interview relationship. Where interviewees asked questions, or sought confirmation of experience, for me to refrain from answering could have had disastrous consequences for eliciting the wives' narratives. Nonetheless, care had to be taken that my personal opinions did not direct the interviewees whilst acknowledging the validity (Kvale, 1995, p. 19; Oakley, 1981) of my experience. As army wives, life behind the wire is shared, exposing us to the same everyday nuances of military life, the interviews incorporating my participation had to accept the "possibility of specific local, personal and community forms of truth, with

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<sup>105</sup> Interviewee #20

a focus on daily life and local narrative” (Kvale, 1995, p. 21). Denying this community position could have squandered the opportunity of revealing how each wife interpreted the meaning of her existence within this hierarchical environment. My additional insider knowledge of living in and understanding Fimonue’s particular challenges positioned me as an informed and aware interviewer, enabled me as researcher to act “as an instrument for promoting a sociology for women – that is, as a tool for making possible the articulated and recorded commentary of women on the very personal business of being female in a patriarchal[...]society” (Oakley, 1981, p. 30).

The transcriptions themselves were a messy, rude awakening (Poland, 2003, p. 7) to my involvement in the interview process. Despite being tempted to write myself out of the interview, reducing my interaction in their narrative creation, I have remained faithful to the recording. The interviews required the women to construct their narrative, in so doing they were asked to create their life-story which, as Atkinson argues, is to make truth of their experience (Atkinson, 2002; Orbuch, 1997). By asking for the narration of their life-story, the research is linked to a broadly interpretivist stance providing the wives “a greater sense of control and understanding of their environment[...]allow[ing] individuals to cope with emotionally charged and stressful events” (Orbuch, 1997, p. 459; McAdams, et al., 1997). It is through this narration, “as a way of telling the self, to the self and others, through a story” (McAdams, et al., 1997, p. 678), that wives examined their identity as constructed within the confines of the military garrison. In asking for their life-story, to have avoided participation in this creation, could have restricted the formation of their truth. An interpretivist approach supports Kvale’s suggestion that “[t]ruth is constituted through a dialogue; valid knowledge claims emerge as conflicting interpretations and action possibilities are discussed and negotiated among the members of the community.” (1995, p. 24). As members of the same community, understanding its nuances, it could be argued that not working with the interviewees to create their knowable truth would have undermined the whole research endeavour. Only during the transcription analysis would it become apparent whether the text is the validity and truth, as constructed by each interviewee, or whether I biased their life-story truths.

The reality of the analysis also had to be faced. Careful manual reading was combined with use of the NVivo package which facilitated the creation of nodes creating accessible groupings of different themes as Figure 7 demonstrates.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On
Army First	1	3	28/02/2017 14:47	ENE	29/03/2017 14:47
Husband's career	4	15	29/03/2017 15:14	ENE	31/03/2017 17:04
Husband's promotion	2	2	06/03/2017 09:29	ENE	29/03/2017 17:40
Play the game	0	0	06/03/2017 09:14	ENE	06/03/2017 09:14
Serving together	4	7	14/03/2017 09:45	ENE	31/03/2017 16:55
Wife Soldiering on	5	19	29/03/2017 15:37	ENE	31/03/2017 17:07
Wife's role	3	5	22/03/2017 12:05	ENE	31/03/2017 17:02
Army Wife	1	6	28/02/2017 14:55	ENE	30/03/2017 16:12
Army Wives' Army	0	0	06/03/2017 09:48	ENE	06/03/2017 09:48
Asking for help	2	3	29/03/2017 12:23	ENE	29/03/2017 17:46
Choice	4	5	29/03/2017 12:38	ENE	30/03/2017 15:28
Play the game	2	2	06/03/2017 09:14	ENE	29/03/2017 16:05
Role as Army Wife	6	39	28/02/2017 14:47	ENE	31/03/2017 17:07
Role as Mother	5	17	29/03/2017 12:07	ENE	31/03/2017 15:51
Typical Army Wife	4	21	28/02/2017 14:55	ENE	31/03/2017 17:06
Young Wives	5	10	29/03/2017 12:24	ENE	31/03/2017 16:25
Behind the Wire	1	1	31/03/2017 15:08	ENE	31/03/2017 15:09
Career	1	2	28/02/2017 14:14	ENE	30/03/2017 16:12
Earning more than husbands	0	0	14/03/2017 10:03	ENE	14/03/2017 10:03
Future Career	3	4	29/03/2017 15:46	ENE	31/03/2017 15:13
Loss of career	5	8	22/03/2017 12:06	ENE	31/03/2017 16:34
Own Career	3	6	29/03/2017 12:01	ENE	30/03/2017 16:13
Civvie St vs Planet Army	1	1	30/03/2017 16:13	ENE	30/03/2017 16:13
Community	3	7	28/02/2017 14:46	ENE	31/03/2017 16:59
Being outside community	4	5	29/03/2017 12:26	ENE	31/03/2017 16:35
Being part of	5	17	22/03/2017 12:08	ENE	31/03/2017 16:55
Getting Away	3	4	29/03/2017 16:09	ENE	31/03/2017 17:07
Impact of Social Media	0	0	14/03/2017 09:43	ENE	14/03/2017 09:43
Lack of Community	3	3	30/03/2017 15:31	ENE	31/03/2017 17:01

Figure 7 - Representative Nodes within NVIVO

As each wife's narration was unique to her life-story, the coding system was initially broad, not restricted to what I considered pertinent in the transcriptions. To ensure comprehensive capturing of the data, the initial nodes were relatively generic, loosely based on the underlying themes of the research questions. It was imperative that the coding, as with the rest of the analysis and the interviews themselves, were guided by what the wives narrated, not by my personal agenda. The initial coding sought to capture wives' responses to their current situatedness such as "Army First", "Army Wife", "Career", "Rank", "Education" and "Location". The transcriptions demonstrated that though each wives' narrative was unique to her own experience, commonalities were emerging. These stretched from the complex nature of friendships behind the wire, the emergence of a small trend of post-natal depression, its detrimental impact on confidence (and subsequent growth in anxiety), friendship, mother/non-motherhood and underemployment. Yet, even though themes emerged, I could not rely solely on key word searches resulting in moving beyond NVivo which, I found, did not accommodate the breadth of experience narrated. Consequently, I transposed the themes that had arisen in the initial reading of the transcripts into a much more thorough data capture in an excel spreadsheet as Figure 8 demonstrates.

	D	E	F	G	J	K
	Line Ref	Theme	Theme	Theme	Extract	
1						
226	502 - 503	Intimacy of living together			everyone knows everything, everyone's got something to say about what you do.	
227	537 - 539	Out of loop as not beind the wire in Woolwich	Girlfriend status		I was going to, but then I missed the cut-off because obviously again I was an individual mover, I didn't get all the emails about jobs, anything like that, so by the time we came out here the cut-off date had pretty already happened.	
228	1109 - 1110	Service number	Husband away	Diminution of self	I was like, "But he's not here for six months" you know, "I need to get ..." but no you can't do anything like that. You feel stupid.	
229	1188 - 1189	Pace of life	Husband away		So in my head I was like "Yeah, but that's what we're here for". We know they're gonna be away, it's not a holiday, they're gonna be working really really hard. They're a Reserve Battalion, that's what they're here for.	
230	1337	Not part of the community			I'm frightened that I'm gonna be out of it again.	
231	1346 - 1349	Wanting to belong	Husband's not integrating wives		I think [redacted] perhaps needs to make more of an effort to include us and things, like whereas before, before we were married and stuff, you know, he had his friends who did have wives but he never introduced me to them, and I think he could have made more of an effort to include me into the life that he has got.	
232	1530	Finding positives			Because I think before I think, because of the wives and the way some of them can be, I think before I probably would have just broken down and burst into tears and just ... probably gone home [laughs]. Whereas I think now I've probably toughened up and it's kind of just water off a duck's back. I'm just like "Think what you want, I really don't care".	
233	1562 - 1563	Becoming a mother			But actually, to have a child would help fit in a little bit as well.	
234	1570 - 1571	Loneliness	Becoming a mother		I think it kind of brought it to a head more for me, because I was quite lonely and I felt, you know, if I had a child, then that would give me another sort of way in almost.	
235	1596- 1597	Transitioning out of battalion	Golfish bowl		I think to be able to meet my own friends, whereas here you kind of see the same faces every single day, even if you don't always want to, you bump into them,	
236	1602 - 1603	Finding own identity	Group identity	Collective Belonging	so I'm quite looking forward to being able to just be me again a little bit	
237	1607 - 1608	Family privacy			And I think it might be quite nice for us as a family to just be [redacted] for a bit, not "That's Sergeant [redacted] wife over there" or "That's E [redacted]" and, you know	
238	1645 - 1649	Army wife role	Doing her bit		You know, and I've said to him all along I will support him and I always do, you know, and I'm very proud of what he's done. And when he goes away I'm there and, you know, I'm at the other end of the phone, sat here with the house and with Megan and with [Zazzles? 23:45] and you know, going to the wives things and I'm doing kind of my side of what you feel you have to do	
239	1653	Army wife role	Doing her bit		Sometimes I feel that you almost have a <u>little bit of a duty</u>	
240	1683 -1685	Army wife	Proud		I think I do, in that I'm beside him, you know, I will always be beside him supporting what he does in his job and wherever he needs me, I will be there, or I'll, you know, we will travel, you know, I've dropped him off places and miles away, so he can go on exercises	
241	1702 - 1705	Community belonging	Friendships	Loneliness	Everyone kind of looks after themselves and, you know, do the odd favours. Unless you've got really you know a close group of friends, and I know that if I called them, they would be there for me. But I think for those perhaps those wives that don't drive, I think it's a very lonely life. I think especially in C [redacted]	
242	1707	Loneliness			You know, it can be very lonely	
243	1772 - 1773	Friendship	Intensity of friendship		I think also because this particular person wanted me to be friends with just them	

Figure 8 - Transcription extract spreadsheet with key themes identified

### **Cognate Army Wives Studies**

Other studies of military wives have also made extensive use of qualitative interviews. Jervis, married to a naval officer living overseas, was the closest in terms of personal relationship within the institution as she too was an overseas wife using a psychosocial methodology. Employing a psychosocial free association approach and embracing a more psychoanalytic methodology in her analysis, Jervis interviewed fifteen spouses (commissioned and enlisted ranks) across all three services, receiving written material from two further wives (Jervis, 2011, p. 7). Hyde spent six months within the community of wives, living at the Sergeants' mess (2015, p. 4), conducting over fifty interviews (2015, p. 16) with spouses, soldiers and the CoC. North American researchers Weinstein and Mederer, investigating fifteen Submarine Officers' wives' experience in the Canadian Navy, used a mix of surveying and interviews over a three-year period (1997, p. 8). Harrison and Lalibererté spent three years conducting interviews with one hundred and twelve military wives married to Canadian military personnel (1994, p. 3). Apart from Weinstein and Mederer's use of a quantitative survey (1997, p. 8), all used a similar feminist approach of open ended unstructured life history interviews.

Outside of direct cognate studies, the MOD, an evidence based institution, conducts an annual quantitative annual survey, *The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey* (AFCAS, see Figure 9) across all three Armed Forces (MoD, 2016). Introduced in 2007 its purpose is to "coherently assess and monitor the attitudes of Regular Service personnel in key policy and management areas and is used by groups internal and external to the Ministry of Defence. It is a statistically valid and robust survey which is annually distributed to almost 28,000 regular serving personnel" (Elliot-Mabey & Davison, 2019).

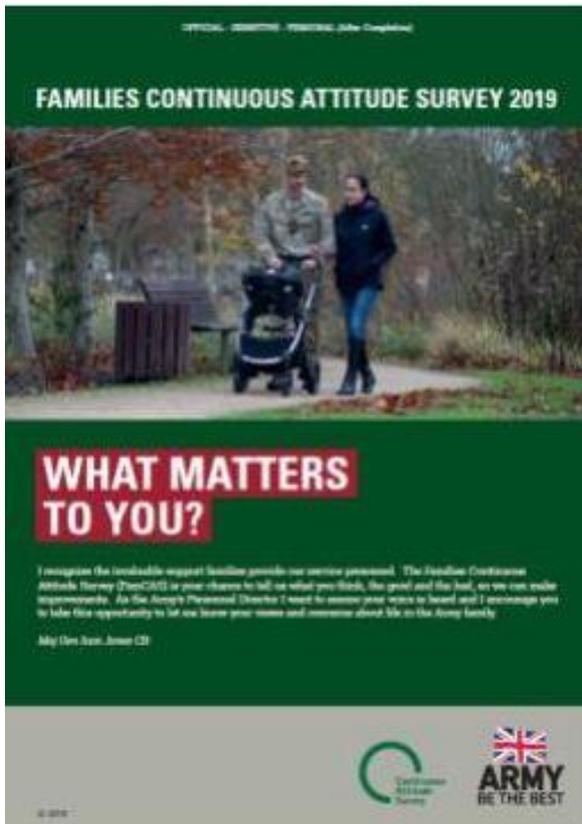


Figure 9 - The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey<sup>106</sup>

“In 2016, the year of the research project, 4,069 army personnel returned their surveys from a sample size of 10,190 (MoD, 2016), these surveys were randomly distributed to MQs, anonymously filled in and returned.<sup>107</sup> With sections on “Morale, Commitment and Engagement” (p. 1) “Work/Life Balance” (p. 23) and “Family Life and Being Part of Society” (p. 35), these surveys provide overviews as to key challenges facing the Armed Forces; however, they are both quantitative and directed at the serving personnel with only a handful of questions directly focusing on the dependent spouse and family such as Figure 10 demonstrates.

<sup>106</sup> (Wattisham Hive, 2019)

<sup>107</sup> In full disclosure, we received an AFCAS questionnaire in 2016 which I filled in and returned.

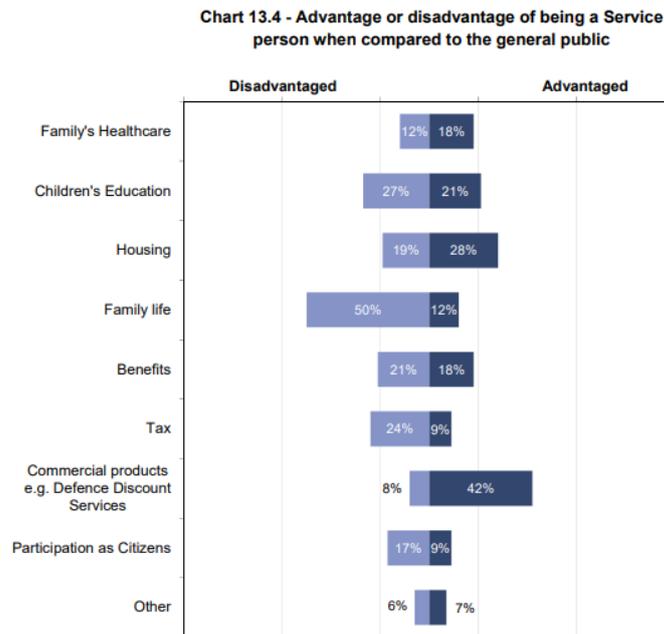
**Advantage or disadvantage when compared to the general public**

Chart 13.4 indicates what percentage of personnel feel either advantaged or disadvantaged when compared to the general public in a number of areas.

In most areas, the majority of personnel feel neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. The area in which respondents feel they are most disadvantaged is 'Family life' with 50% indicating that they feel disadvantaged in this area. The area in which Service personnel feel that they are most at an advantage is 'Commercial products and services', with 42% indicating that they feel advantaged in this area.

**Data Quality Note**

The questions in this section were changed in 2016. The 2015 survey offered two response options (Advantaged / Disadvantaged) and the 2016 survey included a 5-point advantage scale, plus a don't know / N/A option. Comparisons to 2015 results are not possible due to this change in question structure.



AFCAS 2016 37

Figure 10 - Extract from 2016 AFCAS analysis document<sup>108</sup>

The AFF conducts an annual review specifically investigating spouses' responses. Their 'Families Concern Survey' (AFF, 2016) is compiled from all the enquiries received in a given year.

“It breaks down the different areas to show the scale of our families’ concerns and how they compare to 2015. This report, together with our survey results, will be used as evidence to support proposals for change to a range of key stakeholders including the MOD, politicians and civil servants and will give a representative picture of the concerns army families were faced with in 2016” (AFF, 2016, p. 3).

The AFF is a charitable organisation, working alongside families and CoC positioned as “the independent voice of army families work[ing] hard to improve the quality of life for army families

<sup>108</sup> (MoD, 2016, p. 37)

around the world – on any aspect that is affected by the army lifestyle” (AFF, 2016). Local coordinators working on the ground supporting army families globally, are a point of contact for areas of concern, logging queries and issues which are then collated and inform their annual report<sup>109</sup>. AFF’s surveys are concerned with immediate issues facing army families and are leveraged to inform policy change at the highest of military and governmental levels. In 2016 they received their highest ever number of respondents (AFF, 2016, p. 11) in response to the MOD’s proposed changes to Service Family Accommodation: a total of 8,322, more in fact than the responses received back from army personnel for the AFCAS of the same year.

The “Big Survey 2016” (2016, p. 11) focused on housing (Figure 11).

**AFF SURVEYS**

Once an issue has been identified, AFF will often survey families to investigate how widespread the problem is and, where appropriate, will write a brief to highlight it to the appropriate audience. All of our briefs and survey results can be found at [www.aff.org.uk/aff\\_in\\_action](http://www.aff.org.uk/aff_in_action)

**IN FOCUS:**  
**THE BIG SURVEY 2016: The Future of Military Housing**

The Future Accommodation Model (FAM) is currently being developed by the MOD and, if implemented, will see a fundamental change in the way Army families live their lives. As one of the most important stakeholders in FAM, it is vital that Army families are consulted at an early stage to ensure that their needs and concerns are properly understood. 2016's Big Survey asked the most pressing questions around FAM, giving us an unrivalled snapshot into families' thoughts on a number of things including their views of patch life, what they consider stability to be and what their main fears were connected to the FAM proposals.

AFF received 8,322 responses to the survey, more than all our Big Surveys put together since 2010, a clear demonstration of just how important the issue of housing is to Army families. Results showed:

- When asked what the potential impact of removing SFA would be on retention, of 5,990 respondents:
  - 46% said they would consider leaving the Army
  - 30% said they would definitely leave the Army
  - 22% said they would remain in the Army
- When asked what respondents most like about living in SFA/SSFA of 5,942 respondents:
  - 74% like living close to other Service families and being part of a community
  - 66% like having access to Service community support facilities such as the Army Welfare Service and unit welfare staff

Three key themes have emerged as a result of this survey and the resulting anecdotal evidence we have been gathering from our community via our co-ordinators, specialists and social media:

- Families indicated that SFA, patch life and stability are all key, positive characteristics of the 'offer'.
- Families place little importance on the 'positives' (home ownership and choice of location) put forward by the MOD through FAM.
- FAM is being poorly communicated to families and there is little trust that they will be listened to when it comes to the final decisions around FAM.

For further information, please contact AFF Policy and Research Director Louise Simpson at [policyresearchdirector@aff.org.uk](mailto:policyresearchdirector@aff.org.uk)

**AFF SURVEYS 2016**

This year we surveyed our families on:

- VOTING OVERSEAS**  
Proxy or Postal?
- WATER PRESSURE PROBLEMS**  
Stafford new builds
- BIG SURVEY**  
The Big Survey 2016: The Future of Military Housing
- EMPLOYMENT SURVEY**  
How we make work 'work'

**AFF SURVEYS 2017**

In 2017 we will be undertaking a number of surveys to better understand the changing landscape of the Army and how families will be affected.

- SCOTLAND**  
Learning more about Army family life in Scotland
- HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Reviewing and understanding the pathways families take for higher education for their children
- THE BIG SURVEY 2017**  
Reviewing the support given to families going through transition
- HOW MANY ARMY FAMILIES PROFIT FROM A PURCHASED HOME THEY INTEND TO LIVE IN**  
Understanding the impact of new buy-to-let rules on Army families.

Figure 11 - Army Families Federation 'The Big Survey 2016'<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> This was indeed part of my responsibilities during my time as Fimonue’s AFF Co-ordinator.

<sup>110</sup> (AFF, 2016, p. 11)

Despite these surveys providing insight into army families and serving personnel's overall experiences spouses are not currently offered a platform through which their voices can be heard, a sentiment echoed by my interviewees. Rebecca's feedback (Figure 12) speaks volumes.

The interview itself was very in depth and asked all the right questions in terms of fully understanding the life of an army wife and all that it entails! It was quite emotionally draining as I was almost forced to face feelings that I had comfortably buried away (which again I think is an army wife trait) or didn't realise I felt. This is not something I regret as I think it's important that someone gives soldiers wives a voice!!! The interview was made easier by Elizabeth (you 😊) providing her own experiences and opinions while still managing to remain objective ! I did enjoy the interview as I feel as though it gave me a voice

Figure 12 - Interview response from Rebecca<sup>111</sup>

## Conclusion

In recognising army spouses' minimal visibility in the MOD's research, a project focusing exclusively on army wives takes up the mantle of breaking the "silence and speaking out" (Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010, p. 3) that feminist research aims to achieve. Living within a hierarchical patriarchal institution, army wives "are making history, but not of their own choosing" (Skeggs B. , 1994, p. 88). Army wifehood has been "an enunciative position and[,] as an ontological basis of community, has been violently policed, exactly because its boundaries are mobile and contestable" (Bell, 1999, p. 7). Examining the intersections and multi-complexities of army wifehood as felt and viewed by those inhabiting this role necessitated an exploration of power dynamics, rank, friendship and socio-spatial living. The exploration of these "intersections of identities and power within the 'matrix of domination'" (Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010, p. 4) lies at the very heart of my research question.

The thesis' qualitative approach, focusing on a smaller sample size of twenty-nine interviewees, facilitated an exploration of women's experiences, contributing to an in-depth understanding as to how they negotiate their incorporation behind the wire. Free from the rigidity of predetermined

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<sup>111</sup> Interviewee #11

survey questions, the wives' narratives enabled an exploration of the transitions that women undergo through their marriage, relocation overseas and their inhabitation of a specific militarised environment. The structuring structures (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53) of two heteronormative institutions, marriage and army, and the women's responses to these two constructed and imposed spaces created the foundation in which to examine the life histories of the wives researched.

## Analysis Chapter One – Moving with the Army

### Chapter Introduction

To understand the transitions that civilian army wives experience living in an overseas military garrison, we need to move behind the wire, accompanying these women on their overseas unit move, transitioning into the day to day activities and the actualities of living within a militarised environment. Drawing on interviewees' narrative, this chapter examines their response to the "in-processing" (Jervis, 2011, p. 40) of the total institution, starting in the UK before departure and their subsequent arrival overseas. The chapter deconstructs their reflections on their changed status becoming 'dependent'<sup>112</sup> on their soldier husband's 'head-of-the-household' status (MoD, 2014)<sup>113</sup>. This "logocentrism" (Nayak & Kehily, 2006, p. 466) of dependent and head-of-the-household permeates all aspects of life behind the wire reinforcing the positioning of the "'master signifier' whereupon the absented sign is impelled to take on a subordinate position" (Nayak & Kehily, 2006, p. 466) such as the one created through the term 'army wife'.

Despite two contemporary investigations into overseas British military wives (Jervis, 2011; Hyde, 2015), investigatory work is still required to understand the sociological implications of incorporation for overseas army wives. In seeking to address this gap, this chapter draws upon Goffman, to whom Jervis also refers; and upon Bourdieu's theories to which Hyde makes brief reference (Hyde, 2015, p. 114)<sup>114</sup> but to which Jervis makes none. Engaging with Goffman and Bourdieu's theoretical standpoints, and their critics, enables a deeper understanding to be offered of the experiences of army wives. The women overseas occupied a contested intersectional position, living under military jurisdiction, classified as dependent (thereby experiencing a reduction of self

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<sup>112</sup> This term shall be examined in greater depth however any accompanying spouse is known by the military as a dependent.

<sup>113</sup> Like dependent, head of the household is the accepted military term for describing the serving-personnel's status.

<sup>114</sup> Hyde states that "A full Bourdieusian analysis of rank and the exchange of multiple capitals, along with ideas about military habitus, would be a fascinating and useful undertaking, but is beyond the scope of this chapter and indeed, this thesis" (Hyde, 2015, p. 114).

having exchanged their civilian status for that of dependent) yet these nominally civilian women are 'free' to enter and leave the institutional space of the army garrison. Whilst Goffman provides a framework for considering assimilation into the military garrison, the women (unlike 'total' members of total institutions (Goffman, 1961) are not restricted from leaving the garrison, nor are they bound by an oath of allegiance, allowing them (at least superficially) to question the dictate of the military jurisdiction. The research therefore requires a broader perspective from which to examine their experiences. Utilising Bourdieu facilitates an examination of the 'contested' nature of Fimonue's social conditions and the assigned identity placed on women through marriage.

Newly arrived women are issued with a status stamp (Figure 13) permitting access to medical and dental services, enabling them to withdraw money from the post office and purchase duty-free products from the Naafi<sup>115</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> Small supermarket in Fimonue

No. 29873

**CERTIFICATE OF STATUS**  
ONLY VALID WHEN PRESENTED WITH PASSPORT

FULL NAME: Elizabeth Ann Verrell Newman

PASSPORT NUMBER: [REDACTED]

UNIT ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

THE ABOVE NAMED IS:-

a. A Dependant of a member of the British Forces [REDACTED]

b. An authorised United Kingdom official entitled to be treated as a member of the British forces [REDACTED]

c. A member of the civilian component of the British Forces [REDACTED]

d. A dependant of a member of the civilian component of the British Force [REDACTED]

e. A dependant of category b or c above with restricted access to the use of BEE facilities.

Valid for employment /  ~~Not valid for employment~~

Dependant Sponsor: [REDACTED]

Expires: 30/8/17

GARY THOMAS NEWEST  
FISCAL OFFICE ASSISTANT  
Name and Status of signatory

Signature: [Signature]

Toux: 30/8/17

HQ SOVEREIGN  
BASE AREA

12 NOV 2014

THIS FORM SHOULD BE REMOVED WHEN VISITING A CSSRA/CSSCA COUNTRY.  
PLEASE REINSERT WHEN YOU HAVE RETURNED FROM YOUR VISIT

Figure 13 - My Fimonue Status Stamp

However, this conferred status was a contested space, one where wives ultimately felt reduced suddenly [to] a second-rate citizen [...], you're basically a joke, you're a nobody, you're completely ignored because you are a woman and you are a dependent.<sup>116</sup> It is wives' responses to this adjunctive positionality and conferred identity that this chapter and the overall research project seeks to investigate.

The garrison is in a remote southern European location, closer to the Middle East than Europe. The camp is encircled by ten kilometres of barbed wire fencing, with only two points of access, gated and

<sup>116</sup> Interviewee #9 1615 – 1617

guarded by soldiers with rifles where identification (a dependent's pass Figure 14) is required for entry.



Figure 14 - My Dependent's Pass

Wives move as part of their husband's battalion company<sup>117</sup> with minimum personal control as to when they will be relocated. Women overseas become dominated by the military, its paternalistic terminology a constant reminder of the dependent status of all overseas spouses. As discussed in the literature review, Goffman's work lends itself to a feminist analysis of a militarised total institution as he provides a framework in which to understand the structuring components of the multifaceted experiences of the move. A key element of his work on total institutions is through highlighting the various dispossessions that the inmates experience during admission. Whilst his work was specific to male army recruits' experiences, women absorbed by a total institution undergo a similar procedure concurrent to being doubly dominated by their dependent position on their soldier husband.

### **Moving with the Army**

Of the twenty-nine women interviewed, eleven were pre-existing members of the battalion community<sup>118</sup>, married to their husbands during (at least) the Bears' previous posting, living in military quarters or married unaccompanied<sup>119</sup>. One wife moved directly overseas from her own

<sup>117</sup> A battalion is broken down into four or five different companies which will have varying responsibilities and focus.

<sup>118</sup> See Appendix Five, page 335 – 340 for visual break down of wives' relocation experience

<sup>119</sup> Term used when a soldier chooses to "serve away from home in the week" (Army LGBT Forum, 2018).

home; however, she had been married for nearly twenty years, experiencing two overseas tours, living in UK Service Family Accommodation (SFA) during her marriage. Two newly married women moved directly (within the preceding six months) from their F&C country of origin. One spent five months in a UK military quarter before relocating overseas with the battalion, the other moved to the UK weeks before the unit move. Two enlisted wives were already overseas as their husbands transferred from the in-situ battalion as was the case for one officer's wife. Four women moved independently during the Bears' time on island. Two were relatively new to their military marriage with Fimonue their first time living within the battalion, Jenny moved from outside the wire overseas where she and her boyfriend had been co-habiting for two years near to Fimonue, moving inside after their marriage. Five were newly married, relocating from the UK. Finally, three officers' wives arrived as independent movers. This was the first married posting for eight women, their second posting for ten and for the remainder this was their third or more posting. Nine was the greatest number of moves experienced by any interviewee. Seven co-habited prior to marriage and three lived as 'married unaccompanied' immediately prior to relocating overseas.

Infantry battalion wives predominantly relocate every two to three years (either within the UK or overseas) as part of a 'unit move', a total move of the battalion, its military accoutrements and trailing families. The battalion moves *en-masse*, families are assigned a movement 'wave', their relocation timetabled and scheduled along military lines. Unsurprisingly the language of the move is infused with military parlance. Sophie mentioned relocating "with the advanced party"<sup>120</sup>, Tabitha recollected that she moved with "main body forward"<sup>121</sup> on her first relocation overseas. Whilst Chloe stated, "when we joined the army"<sup>122</sup>, perhaps indicating that it was a combined act for both she and her husband. The elision into the husband's militarised language demonstrated that even prior to moving behind the wire, language became militarised demonstrating the 'we-talk' of the

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<sup>120</sup> Interviewee #12 1244

<sup>121</sup> Interviewee #21 211

<sup>122</sup> Interviewee #6 34 – 36. My emphasis

encultured (Tedlock, 1991) or “institutional lingo” (Goffman, 1961, p. 55), intimating the beginnings of their submersion into the total institution. Anecdotally when talking with other women, the elision between the wives and their use of ‘us’, ‘we’, ‘our boys’ was commonplace<sup>123</sup>. The distance between the two worlds narrowed due to minimal spacing between the militarised world of the soldiers and the quasi-domestic space, this no-man’s land<sup>124</sup> between civilian and military that wives inhabited. Jolene observed, “the lines are so blurred [...] between home life and work life”<sup>125</sup>. Lack of separation between work and social is a key element for Goffman where the three spheres of life “sleep, play and work” (1961, p. 17) happen under one jurisdiction.

Any house move involves sorting and discarding possessions, but those moving with the army must ensure that their possessions do not exceed their shipping entitlement<sup>126</sup>. Goffman suggests that the act of leaving possessions is the removal of “previous bases of self-identification” (1961, p. 26) not just the simple decision of what to pack, what to leave behind. When moving overseas, decisions must be made as to what possessions are considered essential, equally, what can be discarded<sup>127</sup>. Goffman further suggests that on entering a total institution the “dispossession of property [is] important because persons invest self-feelings in their possessions” (Goffman, 1961, p. 27). Possessions stand as the visible material accomplishment of hard work. For Jolene,

everything I’ve just worked to get I’ve now got to put in storage for three years because I can’t take everything with me.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> I was aware of doing this during my time overseas both as interviewer and as a wife.

<sup>124</sup> Hyde examines the no man’s land of military mobilities however she does not examine the questionable space that army wives occupy as quasi-civilians overseen by the military. Indeed, she states her aims as “to explore the particular ways in which these dynamics of inside/outside, home/away, familiar/foreign and ultimately, the nation and its other, are traversed by women married to servicemen (Hyde, 2015, p. 46) yet her examination does not incorporate the domestic space of the MQs.

<sup>125</sup> Interviewee #15 993 – 995

<sup>126</sup> See Personal Effect and Storage Entitlement in Appendix Nine, page 347

<sup>127</sup> In preparation for the Bears’ return to the UK there was a flurry of sales occurring between those departing and the incoming battalion. Things being sold ranged from household goods to fake grass for the garden, goldfish and even cars. The sale of such items indicates the transient nature of the battalion’s stay in this specific location and how possessions eventually become disposable and uninvested with self-feelings due to the peripatetic lifestyle.

<sup>128</sup> Interviewee #15 2568 – 2569

These chattels mattered, physical manifestations of long hours working in care. They represented ownership and roots for her, especially arriving in the UK with just two suitcases as an F&C wife; leaving one life behind, her pending relocation to Fimonue demanded a further relinquishment of belongings. Whilst she acknowledged that, “[y]ou only get X amount of an allowance, which to an extent I understand fine”<sup>129</sup>, the enforced choice as to what she shipped overseas conforms to the dispossession of property and self.

When an army family prepares to move, the vitals are packed, the minutiae of everyday life not deemed essential put into storage<sup>130</sup>. Tamsin, commented how three moves ago they

put a lot of things into storage, obviously thinking we were only going to be here for two years.<sup>131</sup>

Her family had been overseas for nearly six years despite anticipating being overseas for one tour<sup>132</sup>.

Jolene takes issue with this aspect of service life observing that,

[t]his ‘just three years’, just another two years [...] I’m like “So you’re gonna live your entire military life going it’s just another two years”.<sup>133</sup>

Jolene seemingly questions the diminished control the peripatetic nature of service life enforced upon army wives. Thus, even though she initially recounted her frustrations with not being able to bring items of furniture, these irritations led her to investigate a deeper feeling, that of rescinded control over the regular relocations she faces during her army wifehood. Not only are her possessions invested with self-feelings as Goffman suggests but in fact it is her former life that has been invested into which now must be discarded as she trails her husband from posting to posting.

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<sup>129</sup> Interviewee #15 2567 – 2568

<sup>130</sup> See Personal Effect and Storage Entitlement in Appendix Nine, page 347. It is worth noting that if a wife relocates outside of the three-month window of the unit move, not only is her shipping not funded but any storage must be self-funded as well.

<sup>131</sup> Interviewee#1 378 – 379

<sup>132</sup> Approximately two-three years

<sup>133</sup> Interviewee #15 2574 – 2576

Jolene had been married for three years, moving three times in quick succession, she had perforce to learn a new way of being, a new way of thinking, she had to,

stop everything in your entire life. And it wasn't even just stop, it was ... you had to conform to a certain way.<sup>134</sup>

Arguably, not only was she mourning the *possessions* of her former life, she was implicitly mourning *her* former life, learning the mores of living behind the wire, conforming to certain ways of living. A mother and peripatetic for thirteen years, Tabitha married and moved behind the wire and away from home for the first time, all within a few weeks of turning twenty. Stating that she had “never really been away”,<sup>135</sup> she explicitly discussed grief. Arriving behind the wire she

was this young mum, I had just been *ripped* away from my family, I think I was *grieving* for my home life.<sup>136</sup>

Prior to pregnancy and marriage, Tabitha had a nascent career; relocating overseas she experienced a sense of loss and dislocation, reinforced by her language, struggling to transition into army wifehood.

I did find it really hard and I did find that transition from civilian, umm life, to military spouse really hard, really really hard.<sup>137</sup>

As Tabitha articulated using words such as ‘grieving’, ‘ripped away’, re-emphasising ‘really hard, really really hard’, she struggled with transitioning into her new positionality. Her career, even though in its early stages, had to be discarded, her family ripped away. Although not physical, these were important emotional possessions scaffolding Tabitha’s life. Jolly (1987) and Jervis (2011) both consider the impact loss has on military wives, indeed the latter pays considerable attention to the impact that loss and grief causes for these women

“[s]mall everyday losses merely bruise our confidence and we usually recover our self-esteem readily. However, it is more painful if losses are large, or several small losses happen simultaneously. The concurrent loss of everything meaningful undermines one’s entire identity.” (Jervis, 2011, p. 49)

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<sup>134</sup> Interviewee #15 2565 – 2566

<sup>135</sup> Interviewee #21 410

<sup>136</sup> Interviewee #21 401 – 402 my emphasis

<sup>137</sup> Interviewee #21 436 – 437

Tabitha and Jolene exemplify Goffman's theory of dispossession from self-investment demonstrating how loss of both physical and non-physical emotional possessions represented the substance of their own lives outside of the wire, reinforcing how the peripatetic demands placed upon them detrimentally impacts upon overseas army wives.

In the twenty years preceding this fieldwork, the Bears had relocated seven times, moving on average every two and three-quarter years (Earl, 2015). In addition to these unit moves, families undertake individual postings out of battalion dependent on the demands of the army and soldiers' career progression. Sandra, the longest serving member of the enlisted interviewees and the most mobile of those interviewed, living in one location for as little as ten months stated that, "I have lived in nine different houses and four different countries"<sup>138</sup>, observing that that this is "all I have known for seventeen years"<sup>139</sup>. Women who continuously move must fit into a pre-determined shipping container, their life repeatedly boxed up moved at the army's behest, minimalising their role as agentic choice maker. Sandra recounted how her new-born baby was

six weeks old when I was packing [...] I have not got over having her yet [...] but "come on send all your stuff, what do you want, what don't you want?"<sup>140</sup>

As Sandra revealed, a wife has no choice as to her relocation, that the timetable of her family is the army's regardless of their individual circumstance as Figure 15 demonstrates.

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<sup>138</sup> Interviewee #4 1208

<sup>139</sup> Interviewee #4 1387

<sup>140</sup> Interviewee #4 822 – 823



*Figure 15 - Moving on the army's rather than the family's timetable<sup>141</sup>*

Narrating this episode, slipping into the present tense despite it occurring several years previously, Sandra indicates how she is (re)living that moment in the present. Many interviewees discussed the lack of choice. Daphne stated, “that’s what I find wearing, the lack of choice”<sup>142</sup>, Ruth commented that, “I don’t choose where to live, I don’t choose where my children go to school”<sup>143</sup>. Gwen reflected that,

occasionally it just creeps into your head [...], these people will be telling us where we’ll be living for the rest of our lives.<sup>144</sup>

Lack of choice is a frame (Goffman, 1974) enabling women to reflect on their incorporation as it was both explicitly and implicitly experienced in their daily life. This framing was revealed in their use of such expressions as ‘crack on’, ‘suck it up’. Daphne expressed this as,

you have to pick yourself and dust yourself off and deal with whatever’s thrown at you the best way that you can.<sup>145</sup>

This articulation of just getting on with things demonstrates absorption into the institutionalised lifestyle, evidencing to the military community (and themselves) that they are capable army wives, performing to the standards perceived as expected of them. As they narrated their life stories, even

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<sup>141</sup> Reproduced with kind permission

<sup>142</sup> Interviewee #14 554

<sup>143</sup> Interviewee #27 2845 – 2846

<sup>144</sup> Interviewee #13, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview 1048 – 1049

<sup>145</sup> Interviewee #14 813 – 814

the most positive interviewees articulated that this lack of choice was the largest imposition placed upon them. Not only were they leaving kin and family support networks, their personal possessions standing as the physical representation of hard work and accomplishment, but concurrent to this they must pack up their choices and surrender control of large decisions, placing them in storage for the duration of their 'service' as army wives.

Many interviewees perceived removal from their previous identifiers of personal belongings negatively, however, for others, the peripatetic nature of the army was not viewed so restrictively or as a loss of self. Tabitha now gained enjoyment from the moves, noting she had "itchy feet"<sup>146</sup> having been based in Fimonue for several years, commenting that "I enjoy going to new places, meeting new people"<sup>147</sup>. Tabitha's overall outlook demonstrated a positivity that grew with maturity during thirteen years' exposure to the army, summarising her outlook as,

if you don't have that positive mindset then you are stuffed basically, and you are going to hate every single posting.<sup>148</sup>

She gained acceptance of her position within, and alongside, the militarised environment of the garrison, revealing her transition through the first adjustment into the second adjustment phase of in-processing into the total institution. Goffman states that primary adjustments demonstrate that "[s]he is transformed into a co-operator" (1961, p. 172) whereas secondary adjustments "represent ways in which the individual stands apart from the role and the self that were taken for granted for him by the institution" (Goffman, 1961, p. 172). This idea of secondary adjustment is pertinent, indicating how Tabitha has assimilated to her "new situation [...] mak[ing] institutional life as comfortable as possible" (Scott, 2011, p. 24). Sandra also noted adjustment or acceptance of her positionality, musing "maybe that comes with years"<sup>149</sup>. The adjustments Tabitha and Sandra made as army wives are explored through subsequent chapters charting the various stages of transitions

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<sup>146</sup> Interviewee #21 1598

<sup>147</sup> Interviewee #21 1669

<sup>148</sup> Interviewee #21 1791 – 1793

<sup>149</sup> Interviewee #4 1485

that women experienced. However, it is worth highlighting at this juncture that whilst the interviewees related a reduction in their choices, some women moved beyond these frustrations experiencing some positives behind the wire.

Tabitha, Tamsin and Sandra along with Jolene, Daphne and Gwen demonstrated how their lives and relocations are dictated by the demands of the army. Packing up their homes at the army's behest, deciding what they can or cannot bring dependent on their shipping allowance. Their possessions become mutated by the demands of the army, no longer mere items of furniture, they become invested with self-feelings, for Jolene the physical representation of her work in a demanding job, for Sandra her new baby's cot invested with maternal love and nurture. Returning to Goffman's statement about dispossession, the women reflected on the impact of their loss of "previous bases of self-identification" (1961, p. 26); these removals or losses are emblematic of the first step in changes women undergo relocating overseas: loss of possessions masking the deeper loss of self and the grief experienced as they negotiate relocation.

### **Lost behind a Service Number**

On a pre-determined date, families are transported to a military airport, flying to their destination on 'the Trooper'<sup>150</sup>, landing into an overseas British military airport. The wives and families move outside of civilian jurisdiction, becoming "squared away" (Goffman, 1961, p. 26) into the total institution. On arrival overseas, women become identified and processed through their husband's service number, an eight-digit number through which all British military personnel are identified. For women arriving overseas, these eight digits become key to their positionality and access whilst behind the wire. They are now "shaped and coded into an object that can be fed into the administrative machinery of establishment" (Goffman, 1961, p. 26) demonstrating a further continuation of their absorption into the institutionalised environment. Not being personally

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<sup>150</sup> Interviewees #14, #18, #4

assigned a service number they are, from their arrival onwards, tracked through their husband's one, reinforcing the loss of "previous bases of self-identification" (Goffman, 1961, p. 26).

Prior to relocating overseas, these women were able to open bank accounts, buy cars, organise and book doctor's appointments in their own name and on their own terms. However, overseas they became reliant on their husband's service number alongside seeking his permission to achieve everyday tasks. Rebecca related feeling unable "to do anything without his permission"<sup>151</sup>. Georgia, arriving overseas, with her husband deployed on a combat tour, was required to wait for his permission, sent to the CoC, to purchase their family car.

They were still debating whether to send the paperwork to Gary in Afghan to sign, to then send it back.<sup>152</sup>

The Welfare Officer subsequently instructed her that she "need[ed] to get Gary to email [...] *permission*"<sup>153</sup> before the purchase could be completed. Due to the mechanisms of the army and restrictions placed on army wives, it was deemed necessary to request a soldier on a *combat* deployment to authorise his wife to complete the purchase! Georgia's positioning highlights women's domination within the Bear's CoC directly resulting from their status as dependent. These concepts will be continuously explored throughout this thesis however it is necessary to deconstruct this dominance as it is key to army wives' positionality. Smith argues that patriarchy is "inwardly experienced as a product of how women and how men have been socialised in the relations of subordination and domination" (1983, p. 3). A military garrison is clearly a patriarchal environment (Enloe, 1988; Finch, 1983; Harrison and Laliberte, 1994; Hyde, 2015; Jervis, 2011; Jolly, 1996; White & Weinstein, 1997), thus on entering the garrison, women became subordinated by prevailing patriarchal practices. This dominance was exerted in different ways, her appellation as 'army wife' or 'dependent' indicating the master-signifier dichotomy; reduction in choice as to where they live, and, as this thesis demonstrates, who they can socialize with, the lack of employment opportunities

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<sup>151</sup> Interviewee #15 825

<sup>152</sup> Interviewee #19 1214 – 1215

<sup>153</sup> Interviewee #19 1224 – 1225 my emphasis

and ultimately removal from their home environment. All service personnel spouses are bound by such rules; however, it is predominantly women<sup>154</sup> who follow their soldier husband from posting to posting, conforming with the concept of domination and subordination as it relates to men and women, through the very terminology of head-of-the-household and dependent wife, perpetuating the concept of the dominated and subordinated wife.

For newly arrived wives, a different way of living is required. Medical and dental appointments are booked, post addressed to the husband's workplace and the joint bank account they are permitted are achieved through the service number<sup>155</sup>. Chloe recounted her frustrations with being identified with her husband's service number when attempting to book herself a doctor's appointment.

I can't be dealing with, "you want a doctor's appointment so what's your husband's service number?" "I just need to come the doctor's, why do you need to know?" [laughs] [...] "What's his service number?", "Why? I am here for me, why are you associating me with him?"<sup>156</sup>

Even though there might be legitimate reason<sup>157</sup> for her being thus processed, Chloe experienced a loss of self, subsumed into her husband's military identification, invisible in her own right. As she articulated, the elision between self and husband, self as civilian and self as a possession of the army had occurred. Jackie similarly felt bound by her dependency on her husband's service number. During her times overseas, her husband was deployed on a peacekeeping mission, she was pregnant and was frustrated by not being able to either buy or sell a car.

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<sup>154</sup> Married male service personnel – 65.2%

Married female service personnel – 46.5% (Keeling, et al., 2016, pp. 7 - 8). See also FOIR, Appendix Three, page 332

<sup>155</sup> Arriving in Fimonue we went to organise a card on my husband's account. Having given his service number a new card was quickly printed for me. I noticed that it had been made out in his first wife's name, seemingly one wife is synonymous with another!

<sup>156</sup> Interviewee #6 1284 – 1285

<sup>157</sup> Overseas spouses are entitled to free medical and dental care whilst under military jurisdiction. To receive this provision, a soldier's JPA Personal Status Category (PStat Cat) must be marked as 1. Thus, when registering for the doctor or dentist and booking appointments, to ensure that a dependent spouse/child is able to use this facility the service number is required for verification.

But he's not here for six months you know, "I need to get ..." "but no you can't do anything like that". You feel stupid.<sup>158</sup>

Not only was she unable to sell the car, she was reduced to 'feeling stupid' by the construction of the military system and her positioning within it. Fimonue is structured in such a way that wives articulated that they felt unable to complete normal everyday tasks, be it sell a car or "even get a frigging library book without my husband"<sup>159</sup> reducing their sense of self. It could therefore be argued that service numbers render wives invisible not only to the overseas military system but also to themselves, dispossessed from any individual status.

Georgia remembered thinking that she, "was gonna have a mental breakdown"<sup>160</sup> during her relocation, moving at the army's behest, her husband on tour, thwarted by seemingly insurmountable bureaucracy even when it came to signing for her TV box<sup>161</sup>, "[y]ou can't even get a BFBS box"<sup>162</sup> without the husband's permission. Georgia, ultimately, felt a sense of achievement when, regardless of her husband being deployed and the myriad of obstacles placed in her way resulting from her positionality behind the wire, she achieved her goal,

it was absolutely horrific; the whole thing was horrific. It was the worst two weeks ever.

But we done it, me and the girls done it. We done good.<sup>163</sup>

Whilst there is a valid administrative purpose as to why the service number is the gatekeeper to various services<sup>164</sup>, it is necessary to consider the impact that this reduction in status has on this cohort. This diminution in identity perpetuated by the overarching establishment "presum[ing

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<sup>158</sup> Interviewee #8 1109 – 1110

<sup>159</sup> Interviewee #14 2915

<sup>160</sup> Interviewee #19 1129

<sup>161</sup> British Forces Broadcasting Services similar to a cable box in the UK which provides certain UK TV channels such as BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky News. It is free to British personnel in most global locations (BFBS, 2019).

<sup>162</sup> Interviewee #19 1131

<sup>163</sup> Interviewee #19 1324. At the time her daughters were under four.

<sup>164</sup> Whilst unable to find a definite answer from a military or MOD source, informally I was told that by registering services such as the BFBS box, the licence to occupy SFA or opening a bank account directly linked to the service number the service personnel then becomes accountable for any damage, unpaid fines, overdrafts can then be deducted at source from the serving soldier/officer. This arguably reduces the administration charges of chasing unpaid fines from the spouse who the military has no legal financial jurisdiction over whereas a soldier's pay can be deducted at source.

wives] to be dependent on the man who is her husband [...] for her very identity” (Enloe, 1988, p. 47) must surely highlight potential psychological damage inflicted onto army wives overseas. The impact of this absorption of identity is developed through this thesis; however, it is pertinent to understand how in the realities of relocating, overseas wives’ former identities become mutated into that of a dependent, requiring their husband’s permission for the, seemingly, most mundane of tasks.

An alternative reading of this example of Georgia’s experiences draws on Foucault’s later works (1975; 1986) arguing that the subjected, Georgia, in fact uses “dominant discursive structures [...] transform[ing] [...] herself into an object of power and adopts forms of behaviour that are expected by the prevailing discourse and truth configurations” (Manokha, 2009, p. 430). Georgia demonstrated that within these defined limitations, she moved her family successfully, setting up home and even acquiring a BFBS box, despite the frustrations and restrictions imposed upon her, gaining a sense of accomplishment, ‘we done good’, in defiance of the restrictive structures of the military bureaucracy. The experiences related here reflect the overseas military garrison’s nuanced environment. Garrison life in the UK will be distinctive to the experiences in Fimonue, longitudinal post-doctoral research interviewing the women on their return to the UK and their subsequent inhabitation of a UK military garrison probing their responses to the (dis)similarities between the two postings would be a fascinating undertaking.

On arrival in Fimonue, the family is ‘marched in’<sup>165</sup> to their SFA identikit houses with magnolia paint covering each wall on identikit streets. With her home referred to as an acronym, the very act of moving becomes nuanced and infused with military maneuvers, subsuming the woman into the marching army. Marching-in demonstrates the continuation of the militarisation of women’s

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<sup>165</sup> This is the standard military term for moving in and out of a military quarter.

language, the lingo of the total institution. As Figure 16 indicates, each house mirrors the other, uniform and nondescript offering minimal privacy from the prying eyes of the panopticon.



Figure 16 - SNCOs MQ<sup>166</sup>

On marching in, wives were instructed on occupation rules ubiquitous across all SFA properties, including, no more than four picture hooks in any one room, no ‘improvements’<sup>167</sup> and to be marched out of in spotless condition (CarllionAmey, 2018). These rules conform to Goffman’s argument that on entering a total institution the ‘inmate’ must become “standard issue, uniform in colour” (Goffman, 1961, p. 28). Caroline expressed frustration with this inability to personalise her SFA: “How can you expect people not to put any personal touches to a house?”<sup>168</sup> Interestingly Caroline deliberately called it a ‘house’ indicating the conscious distinction between this quarter being merely a house not their family home. Carrie considered not being able to do the most mundane of things as she would on “Civvie Street”<sup>169</sup>, “stupid things, like put wallpaper on your wall if you wanted. Or paint it any colour.”<sup>170</sup> The phrase, ‘stupid things’ indicates that outside the wire, putting wallpaper up is mundane but, within Fimonue, the limitations of choice take on a greater magnitude. These rules are in place so that the quarters are returned to the army in pristine

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<sup>166</sup> (Joannou & Paraskevaides, 2002)

<sup>167</sup> Improvements ranged from laying fake grass in the garden, building BBQ or outdoor structures and adding aircon units

<sup>168</sup> Interviewee #29 639 – 640

<sup>169</sup> Interviewee #20 3062

<sup>170</sup> Interviewee #20 3062

condition “SFA must always be left domestically and hygienically clean” (MoD, 2014, p. 19), minimising the cost of maintenance to the army. Redecorating is not, according to the MoD, actively discouraged; however those interviewed and observed during the field work period were exceedingly conscious of the high standards expected at ‘March Out’ inspection, “[d]on’t put anything on the walls, we don’t wanna be charged on March-Out”<sup>171</sup> resulting in avoidance of personalisation. A simple task in Civvie Street became magnified and consequential for the women occupying the magnolia painted houses. The limitations on the personalisation of the houses stands as another restriction. Tamsin reflected on the enforced lack of choice,

[t]hat is another difficult thing about being in the army, you don't really have a lot of choice [...] that's [...] quite hard to get your head round.<sup>172</sup>

reaffirming the lived reduction of choice and control women subjectively experienced when living as an army wife overseas.

Serving personnel take possession of the quarter, it is *only* the soldier who can ‘sign for’ the house. Wives are removed from their status as equal in this living arrangement as the serving husband is denoted as the head-of-the-household. Several women recounted frustrations with such ambiguous positioning within the military stratigraphy. Tabitha questioned the terminology surrounding wives’ occupation of SFA. “I complained ‘are we not tenants, why are we licensees rather than ‘tenants?’”<sup>173</sup> There was a discrepancy in the terminology utilised by the wives regarding their status, indicating the vagueness of wives’ status within the SFA and wider garrison. Rosie observed,

[w]hen we moved into the SFA, they don’t think of letting the wives see the contract that we’re signing up to.<sup>174</sup>

Diminished agency exacerbated through the dependent status is one of the key dimensions of this investigation and despite women needing a validity and sense of self-determination of their own,

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<sup>171</sup> Interviewee #15 2575 – 2576

<sup>172</sup> Interviewee #1 622 – 624

<sup>173</sup> Interviewee #21 530 – 531

<sup>174</sup> Interviewee #9 542 – 543

they repeatedly articulated how they were not positioned as holding equal status living under the jurisdiction of the military CoC.

Gwen recounted at length the deleterious impact of this positioning. Owing to missed appointments, Gwen and her husband had been threatened with eviction until their gas inspection could be completed. The CoC expected Gwen, even though not the licensee, to be the point of contact for facilitating the works.

I found the whole situation so demeaning, [...] first of all I am accepting that I have to take time off work because he can't because my job is not as important as his, [...] but then I have to accept that his name is the licensee, he signed for the property.<sup>175</sup>

For Gwen, there were two negative impacts requiring negotiation, firstly, the lack of recognition for the validity of her job, secondly, but equally important, was the consequential effect this lack of position meant to her. What Gwen found particularly frustrating was the mixed messages that she received from the CoC.

“[I]f I am not the licensee why are you calling me at work to book appointments, why are you not trying to call my husband to book appointments? Oh no wait, he is on the other side of the world [...], you have to speak to me. [...] I am only important enough to make the appointment, not actually to deal with anything important.”<sup>176</sup>

Gwen felt that she was valid for the organising of the appointment yet not significant enough to deal ‘with anything important’. She spent ten minutes of the interview<sup>177</sup> discussing how this lack of positioning resulted in her losing her sense of identity

We are separate people and that is the thing, the loss of identity, you are no longer your own person, you are just attached to somebody else.<sup>178</sup>

This reduction in status from equals, “it is not two equals moving together, it’s one as a supporting role”<sup>179</sup> to her husband, led to her feeling undervalued, ‘not important enough’ resulting in her

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<sup>175</sup> Interviewee #10 1863 – 1867

<sup>176</sup> Interviewee #10 1872 – 1874

<sup>177</sup> Interviewee #10, 02.22.25 – 02.33.10 (time)

<sup>178</sup> Interviewee #10 1931 – 1932

<sup>179</sup> Interviewee #10, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview 2378 – 2379

identity as a valid separate person being questioned. Wives, through their subjectified positioning in Fimonue as dependent licensees rather than equal tenants, experienced a diminution of self, rendered invisible against their husband's position as the head-of-the-household within Fimonue, the CoC and their own MQ.

Returning to Goffman's statement that on entering a total institution an inmate must become 'standard issue, uniform in colour', wives, as non-service members are not required to wear uniform; however, the quarters they are issued, and their ambiguous status, reflect this imposed standardisation. Their status becomes uniformly adjunctive to their husband in the eyes of the military, rendering them secondary to the service personnel. Whilst it is not the intention of this thesis to equate army wives with inmates *per se*, there are similarities to the requirement of conformity to the demands of the institution placed upon wives that warrants investigation. The wives expressed their lack of position on the tenancy agreement, the prohibition of the personalising of their MQ and their ultimate reduction of status in the eyes of the CoC demonstrating "how organisational structures shape the behavior of individuals through the *authoritative imposition of consequential identities* albeit mediated by routine, micro-level encounters"<sup>180</sup> (Scott, 2011, p. 18). Women behind the wire felt unable to contest the domination of the military organisational structure, positioned and shaped through the mundanity of their identikit houses, invisible on the tenancy agreement. Yet the 'consequential identities', as Gwen stated, rendered her feeling no longer her 'own person', especially in the eyes of the establishment; instead she was attached to somebody else. Taken individually such restrictions and adjunctive positioning, might be no more than an inconvenience or frustration, however, combined and coupled with the reduction of self, these supply further evidence of how the "self [becomes] socially shaped and reshaped by patterns of interaction which may be crystallised in the rules and practices of institutional settings" (Scott, 2011, p. 8). Despite army wives not being serving members, their narratives indicate how, due to

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<sup>180</sup> Original emphasis

their incorporation into Fimonue, an erosion of self and identity is required through obeisance to the various rules and practices of the institution.

### **Doxa and the Army Wife**

Having arrived in Fimonue, adjusting to their dispossession from both physical and familial possession, transitioning into adjunctive incorporated overseas wives, attention can now be turned to the ontological construction of Fimonue and its intersections onto overseas army wives. An overseas army garrison is a distinct environment, isolated from the wider community, separated both linguistically and by its imposed set of militaristic rules. Goffman distinguishes a total institution as containing “a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from wider society” (Goffman, 1961, p. 11). For the interviewees, removal from the external community meant, “don't speak to anybody, don't tell anybody that you're from [Fimonue], don't tell anybody anything”<sup>181</sup> when travelling around wider Fimonue or speaking to the local community<sup>182</sup>. This enforced isolation was visually represented by “guards stood at the gates, armed”<sup>183</sup> providing security to the inhabitants but embodying the physical separation from their former civilian lives and identities. The inhabitants of the garrison are nominally ‘free’ to come and go, with many women leaving Fimonue to go shopping, visit other towns/villages and to holiday elsewhere. However, when living behind the wire there are certain rules and restrictions that must be adhered to with regards to revealing too much of one’s purpose in Fimonue.

To understand the conditions of such a living environment, and its impact on the wives, Bourdieu’s theory of fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; 1980) can be called upon. For Bourdieu, a field

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181 Interviewee #23 658 – 359

<sup>182</sup> On arrival in Fimonue all spouses and service personnel must attend a mandatory Security Briefing where they are made acutely aware of the risk associated with making friends outside of the wire and to not reveal that you are either married to, or are, service personnel. It is a ‘no holds barred’ briefing explicitly outlining the risks involved in becoming too close to members of the community and the threat of being exposed to bribery and blackmail (if not worse) of sharing sensitive information.

183 Interviewee #23 605

“defines the structure of the social setting in which habitus operates” (Swartz, 1997, p. 117). Reflecting on the field of Fimonue directly alongside overseas wives’ incorporation facilitates a detailed investigation as to the parameters in which these women have become situated alongside the wider militaristic environment. Overseas wives, learning to adjust to the fields of Fimonue, be these the wider socio-spaces of the garrison, or the smaller fields of the various clubs and activities such as the wives’ coffee morning or the toddler groups, must acquire the “the tacit agreement of the rules of the game” (Swartz, 1997, p. 125). The wives had to learn and adjust to the specific rules, frequently not knowing exactly what these rules were. Bourdieu calls these rules *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1984), with the doxa of a particular field representing an “agreement on the struggle between those advocating heterodoxy and those holding orthodoxy” (Swartz, 1997, p. 125). The orthodoxy behind the wire is the supremacy of military dictate which, in many instances directly impacts on wives.

Wives were cognisant of how certain members of the establishment viewed them, notably articulating the perceived difference between officer and enlisted wives. Bea recounted the welcome address from the Bear’s Welfare Officer.

"All wives are the same, [...] we don't deal with cat fights, you'll be sent back [...] everyone is bitchy, the toddler groups are run by officers' wives so you won't be able to get into that very easily “[...] Welcome to battalion life.<sup>184</sup>

Bea mused that “it's not something I ever expected, [...] not a lecture about how to behave”<sup>185</sup> on her arrival. Bea, a young woman married to a corporal, was on her second military posting, her first in battalion and overseas<sup>186</sup>. Receiving this lecture from a commissioned officer with the implication that only officers’ wives demonstrated respectful and acceptable behaviour, worryingly implied that the hierarchy<sup>187</sup> viewed enlisted wives as aggressive and violent. The UWO’s division between the behaviours of army wives reinforces the historic class divide between middle and working-class

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<sup>184</sup> Interviewee # 24 1756 – 1763

<sup>185</sup> Interviewee #23 1065

<sup>186</sup> On marriage Bea accompanied her husband on an individual posting before relocating overseas.

<sup>187</sup> As represented by the UWO

women. Smith (1973) and Finch (1983) argue “that middle class women are oriented to an externalised order” (Finch, 1983, p. 127; Smith, 1973) continuing the “realisation of [the] ruling-class[es] moral order” (Smith, 1973, p. 20; Finch, 1983, p. 127). The officers’ wives, according to the UWO, are thus demonstrating their commitment to the established doxic order of the army’s classed system, that they are the right type of army wife, sustaining the ‘moral order’ presupposed of them, managing the enlisted wives as their husbands manage the enlisted soldiers, continuing the historic tradition of wielding “control, albeit informal and unofficial, over the wives of the men and the NCOs” (Trustring, 1984, p. 167). Ironically, despite the toddler groups being initially managed by some officers’ wives, this responsibility was passed onto a sergeant’s wife who became instrumental in ensuring that the toddler groups stayed open during the Bears’ Fimonue posting, somewhat refuting the UWO’s promulgated perception of enlisted wives.

The UWO’s threat of being ‘sent back’ indicates the potential for deviant behaviour to be monitored and likelihood of removal<sup>188</sup>. The CoC could take disciplinary steps against any soldier if overseas spouses were deemed to not conform to expected behaviours (see Figure 17).

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<sup>188</sup> During my two and a half years overseas, no wives were ‘sent back’

**PART 3 THE TREATMENT OF SOLDIERS WHOSE FAMILIES BRING DISCREDIT ON THE ARMY IN OVERSEAS THEATRES AND UKSC(G)**

**48.051. Introduction.** The circumstances of individual cases where the conduct of a soldier's family brings discredit on the Army in an overseas theatre can be so varied that a standard procedure cannot be laid down. Each case must be considered on its merits, thus this instruction is but a guide to ensure equity of treatment.

**48.052. Principles.** The following principles govern the policy on the treatment of soldiers in these cases:

- a. It is the soldier's responsibility to ensure that the conduct of his/her family neither interferes with his/her ability to carry out his/her full military duties efficiently at all times nor restricts his/her availability for posting worldwide.
- b. A soldier whose family's conduct is unsatisfactory is not to be given preferential treatment, but he/she should be given a reasonable opportunity to rectify the problem and/or shortcomings once these have been explained to him/her. In the case of drug abuse by dependants, however, see **para 12 of Annex F** to this Chapter.
- c. If, after warning, the conduct of a soldier's family remains such as to prejudice his/her usefulness to the Army and/or place additional duty or administrative burdens onto other members of his/her unit, he/she is to be discharged from the Army. No account is to be taken of how good a soldier he/she may be in other respects.

**48.053. Initial Action.** At the first sign of trouble concerning a soldier's family, the soldier is to be formally interviewed by his/her CO (or his authorized representative) and the shortcomings in the behaviour of his/her family explained. The soldier is to be given a written warning which he/she is to acknowledge in writing, that if, within a stated period (normally six months), his/her family's conduct does not improve to the satisfaction of his/her CO he/she will forfeit his/her right to have his/her family accompany him/her at that overseas station and/or the possibility of discharging the soldier will be considered. A specimen warning certificate is at **Annex G** to this Chapter. As soon as a warning has been given, a case file is to be opened and a record maintained of all events and connected correspondence. All correspondence including warning certificate, is to be copied to the parent MCM Div and held on the soldiers 'P' file.

**Subsequent Action**

**48.054.** During the warning period the progress made by the family is to be regularly reviewed and the soldier formally appraised of progress and in particular, of any continuing shortcomings. A formal written record is to be maintained and the APC MCM Div desk officer kept informed. At the end of the warning period the soldier is again to be interviewed by his/her CO. If his/her domestic problems have been resolved, the warning is to be withdrawn and the APC informed. The paperwork held by the unit can then be destroyed.

**48.055.** If the conduct of the family does not improve, to a satisfactory standard, or there is a significant additional incident the CO must immediately again interview the soldier and judge if the soldier is likely to remain a liability to the Service and whether discharge should be applied for, in accordance with the warning.

**48.056.** If it is decided to retain the soldier the problem posed by his/her family may remain. In dealing with this the following courses of action, details of which are given at **Annex F** to this Chapter, are open to commands:

- a. Return of the family to the UK without the soldier, either:
  - (1) *Voluntarily* - by voluntary anticipated passage, or
  - (2) *Compulsorily* - by termination of licence to occupy married quarters.
- b. Premature Reversion to Home Establishment (RHE)<sup>1</sup> of the soldier.

**48.057.** It should be noted that these courses of action are in the normal order of preference. As a result of his/her family's unsatisfactory conduct, the soldier forfeits the right to be accompanied overseas, and **para 48.056a(1)** and **(2)** provide for the family to return to the UK, whilst not interfering with the soldier's ability to complete his/her overseas tour. If the soldier is not prepared to apply voluntarily for his/her family to return to the UK under **para 48.056a(1)** the family can be compelled to return under **para 48.056a(2)**. **Para 48.056b** should be resorted to only when it is impracticable to adopt either of the alternatives, and the authority of MOD(DMA(A)) is required in each case. In special cases the CO may request a SSAFA report to justify the RHE of the soldier with his/her family.

Figure 17 - The treatment of spouses bringing discredit on the army<sup>189</sup>

Wives overseas were aware of their status under military jurisdiction which this proforma makes explicit, yet nowhere was it directly articulated at to what was and what was not expected behaviour. Wives were consciously aware of the panopticon monitoring their behaviours, their position vulnerable, subject to confirming to "obedience test" (Goffman, 1961; Branaman, 2006, p. 57). This explicit document and monitoring, intersects onto wives, underlining their quasi military-civilian status whilst overseas.

<sup>189</sup> Source not disclosed

### Field Struggles and Rules of the Army Wife Game

Bourdieu acknowledged that “new arrivals must pay the price of an initial investment for entry, which involves recognition of the value of the game and the *practical knowledge of how to play it*” (Swartz, 1997, p. 126)<sup>190</sup>. This is of vital importance to overseas army wives. Soldiers experience twenty-six weeks basic training, inculcated with a myriad of rules, stripped of individuality, reworked into the soldier model, understanding the formality of rank, learning their place in the hierarchy; the standard process of dispossession that recruits undergo on entering a total institution. Overseas wives have not participated in basic training, and they arrive into this environment, perhaps knowing no other wife, with minimal support network, forced to quickly adapt, deciphering the rules of the game with no handy guide, often with a husband who may be away on duty, or perhaps unsympathetic to her struggles. Tabitha stated how she felt “figuratively stripped naked and dumped”<sup>191</sup> on first arriving behind the wire. She lost her family network, leaving home for the first time, thrust into an alien world. Women entering this field found themselves subordinated to the institution of the army where “field struggles [...] put[s] those in dominant positions against those in subordinate positions” (Swartz, 1997, p. 124). Subordination to the army reminds us of Papanek’s consideration of the “three-way relationship between employers and two partners in a marriage, in which two sets of relationships are of the ‘secondary’ type and one is of the ‘primary’” (Papanek, 1973, p. 93). Wives were aware that their needs were seen, and experienced, as subservient to the dominating force, becoming secondary in their marriage against army-imposed demands.

A wife has to accept her positionality overseas, “accepting the rules of the game” (Swartz, 1997, p. 125) or if not, live under the threat of being ‘sent back’. Recounting her first posting, an overseas posting where she was confronted with the prospects of her husband’s combat deployment, Tabitha admitted “having difficulties, and I didn’t have a clue about [...] this life”<sup>192</sup>. She felt entitled to write

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<sup>190</sup> My emphasis

<sup>191</sup> Interviewee #21 2042

<sup>192</sup> Interviewee #21 462 – 4636

to a senior Member of Parliament regarding his deployment. Having made the decision to write in her capacity as a 'civilian' and that as such, "I could write to the government if I wish"<sup>193</sup>, she narrated that,

before he got deployed, [...], he got pulled in by the CO, and I got pulled in, we both got pulled in as a couple to the Welfare Officer and everyone had an opinion about it.<sup>194</sup>

Tabitha viewed writing this letter as acceptable in her position as a civilian. Yet, in the act of questioning the CoC, her identity as a civilian woman became conflicted, her positionality as army wife rendered her mute, disallowed from questioning (out loud) the overarching military doxa. Tabitha indicated that she subsequently learnt to "wind my neck in"<sup>195</sup>. In contesting the doxa whilst inhabiting the uneasy role of army wife, she experienced first-hand what it meant to live under military jurisdiction. Both she and her [non-letter writing] husband were 'pulled in', indicating that, in the eyes of the CoC, there is no distinction between husband and wife, further confirming the reduction of her identity into that of her husband's position as head-of-the-household. Hyde similarly evidences a husband being disciplined for a wife's behaviour (Hyde, 2015, p. 104). Tellingly, disciplining a soldier for the actions of his wife demonstrates how domination through marriage, thereby creating the subordinated dependent army wives, is ubiquitous across the overseas army structure. Domination in marriage will be considered in greater detail in the third analysis chapter however where Tabitha's experience is relevant in this discussion is in her lack of understanding of the rules of the game, how as a dependent overseas army wife, she was bidden by the military jurisdiction to accept the military's doxa and decisions in the deployment of her soldier husband. In the use of her terminology of being 'pulled' in, there is a sense of her physically being brought into line conforming to the rules of the game as predetermined by the military hierarchy.

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<sup>193</sup> Interviewee #21 494

<sup>194</sup> Interviewee #21 487 –489

<sup>195</sup> Interviewee #22 505

The rules of the game impacted differently on the two groupings of wives. Daphne, an officer's wife interpreted the opaqueness of these rules positively, consciously participating in battalion and wider garrison life. On one level it was a way to keep herself busy,

having gone from what I did in the UK, you know working sixty hours a week in a really stressful job. [...], you get the panic that you're not gonna fill every minute of every day.<sup>196</sup>

However, coinciding with keeping herself busy she admitted "play[ing] the army wife game"<sup>197</sup>. Playing this game was an active way of supporting her husband and his career,

Des was like [...] "You need to be seen to be [...], you could be good for my career". You know [...], sort of "Look at what my wife's doing".<sup>198</sup>

Des indicated that he was consciously aware of having a wife working on his behalf, demonstrating her emotion work being commoditised by his career and appreciating the value of her contribution to his career trajectory. Daphne actively chose to follow her husband overseas,

I think in some ways I'm really lucky because I was ready to give up my job, because I didn't feel like it was a hardship.<sup>199</sup>

Despite viewing it as the ideal time to start their family, she admitted initially it was not an easy decision.

There's never a right point to pick up your life and become an army wife [...] there comes a crunch point where [...] you've gotta say "Right I am gonna be this army wife" who sort of follows my husband around.<sup>200</sup>

Having determined that she would be a trailing wife, she happily assimilated herself into life behind the wire, gaining a status from her involvement in volunteering activities

it was quite funny, [...] because an event at the church or Welfare [...] we'd [...] get asked to make tea or coffee<sup>201</sup>

consciously aware that she was playing by the rules, "being good little army wives"<sup>202</sup>, conforming to the perceived military doxa, as articulated by her husband, that she could actively help and promote his career.

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<sup>196</sup> Interviewee #14 275 – 278

<sup>197</sup> Interviewee #14 237

<sup>198</sup> Interviewee #14 292 – 273

<sup>199</sup> Interviewee #14 2372 – 2373

<sup>200</sup> Interviewee #14 712 – 725

<sup>201</sup> Interviewee #14 231 – 233

Veronica reinforced the sense of enhancing her husband's career, deeply conscious of not impacting negatively on Jonny's chances of promotion.

I didn't want to have him sat at the board<sup>203</sup> and them say "Jonny is a great officer, but my God what a wife. He is not going to go far with her".<sup>204</sup>

Despite the refutation that wives are no longer seen to impact directly on husband's career, the sense of the wife being an asset is demonstrably still part of the militaristic attitude wives have internalised. Veronica reinforced this sense of imbrication between husband's career and wifely performance

[i]n a closed community like this, who your wife is and what she does and what she says becomes talked about. Definitely.<sup>205</sup>

Veronica admitted that she even asked Jonny about his expectations for her during their posting in Fimonue.

I kept saying "what do you want me to do, is there anything you do or don't want me to do? You know, I don't want to embarrass you". That was my main concern. He is so passionate about his job, and how he gets on and how his role is seen that I didn't want to be [...] I didn't want to let him down or embarrass him.<sup>206</sup>

This helpmate role of "traditionally and voluntarily" (MoD, 1976, p. 56; Finch, 1983, p. 154) supporting the husband is regarded as the archetypal role of the officer's wife. Enacting this "socially approved" (Finch, 1983, p. 151) persona indicated that they conformed to the traditionally patriarchal expectations placed on their particular (officer) class within the army's hierarchy. They demonstrated they understood the rules of the game and how to play it.

It is relevant at this juncture to turn briefly to Foucault and his later work on the "technologies of the self" (McNay, 1999, p. 96) which probes "how identity is not simply imposed from above but is also

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<sup>202</sup> Interviewee #14 230

<sup>203</sup> Promotions at senior enlisted and officer level are discussed at board level which reflect on the soldier/officer's potential for career advancement

<sup>204</sup> Interviewee #3 891 – 892

<sup>205</sup> Interviewee #3 898 – 899

<sup>206</sup> Interviewee # 886 – 891

actively determined by individuals through the deployment of ‘practices of the self’” (McNay, 1999, p. 96). Even though mores of army wifehood have been imposed ‘from above’, Daphne and Veronica actively determined that they constructed their identity within the given framework. Daphne was reflexively aware that she was playing a role, presenting herself as how her husband wanted her to be viewed, the willing helpmate. Through this “self-stylisation” (McNay, 2004, p. 96) she demonstrated the “practice of liberty” (McNay, 2004, p. 96) viewing it as a way of empowering her husband’s position, “[b]eing Vice Chair of SSAFA makes him look good”<sup>207</sup> giving her a sense of place in the community which “was great for me [...] because we met everybody, we knew everybody”<sup>208</sup>. Both wives demonstrated “primary adjustment” (Goffman, 1961, p. 172), becoming co-operators, demonstrating, outwardly at least, that they were prepared to live “in a world that is congenial to [her]” (Goffman, 1961, p. 172). This primary adjustment further demonstrated acceptance of the rules of their positionality through supporting their husband and the embodiment of the military’s unwritten doxic expectations of army wives. Both acceptance of doxa and of primary adjustment could indicate a dominance, however there is potentially another reading in how both women constructed a purpose and role within the community, seemingly “self-fashioning” (McNay, 2004, p. 96) a role useful to their husbands’ career aspirations, simultaneously providing a purpose outside of the MQ for themselves.

Enlisted wives revealed feeling they had “a little bit of duty”<sup>209</sup> to participate and be active in the community. Jackie recounted that she attended “the wives’ things and I’m doing [...] my side of what you feel you have to do”<sup>210</sup>. In Jackie’s case she felt that she needed to provide visible support to her husband when “he goes away”<sup>211</sup> through being involved in the community. Charlene admitted,

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<sup>207</sup> Interviewee #14 297 – 298

<sup>208</sup> Interviewee #14 265 – 266

<sup>209</sup> Interviewee #8 1653

<sup>210</sup> Interviewee #8 1648 – 1649

<sup>211</sup> Interviewee #8 1646

I am part of the SSAFA<sup>212</sup> committee [...], I try to help out where I can, just to be part, I enjoy the community spirit, and I like being part of that.<sup>213</sup>

Involvement in the community ranged from attending or running coffee mornings, active membership of the SSAFA committee or wives' committee (sometimes both) which organised social functions for the battalion's wives. Wives who supported the community were however questioned by their peers within the enlisted ranks and judged negatively. This leads to an interesting reflection that it is those holding the heterodox view of army wife rules, not playing the game and refuting the community spirit, that dominate the enlisted wives ranks. Enlisted wives perceived as promoting their husband's career were disparaged and commented on. Jolene recounted how,

I've heard wives [...] say "Well people only know who my husband is because of me". And I mean they don't have a job, it isn't because of their job, [...] I think the way she was meaning it is she goes out of her way to be a part of certain circles.<sup>214</sup>

Charlene, a senior enlisted wife, contested her positionality and how her behaviour invariably caused negative comment. She reflected on providing support for younger wives in her capacity as an experienced wife.

It's not because I have to or it's Scott's job, it's because I genuinely care, there is a 19 year old girl [...], with a new baby in a foreign country away from her home, why aren't we being told as the older wife, [...] "do any of you girls want to go over and see 'em?"<sup>215</sup>

She was aware that if she were to knock on this new wife's door then it would "be perceived [...] [as being a busy body] going round knocking on doors with a fruit basket."<sup>216</sup> Charlene's response to this criticism was that she wanted the wives in her husband's company to be "a Company[sic] family as it should be, [...] we should support each other"<sup>217</sup>. In both instances, she perceived her actions as doing something for the wives [of men] under her husband's control yet despite his seniority she is still an enlisted wife and thus she was judged, as she was aware, negatively. This judgement of her

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<sup>212</sup> Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association - the Armed Forces charity, is a UK charity that provides lifelong support to serving men and women and veterans from the British Armed Forces and their families or dependents. Founded in 1885, SSAFA is the UK's oldest national Armed Forces Charity (Wikipedia, 2019).

<sup>213</sup> Interviewee #18 644 – 646

<sup>214</sup> Interviewee #15 2729 – 2731

<sup>215</sup> Interviewee #18 1751 – 1755

<sup>216</sup> Interviewee #18 1776 – 1777

<sup>217</sup> Interviewee #18 1802 – 1804

by the community, despite having been a wife of some twelve years standing, differs from that experienced by Daphne, an (officer's) wife for five. This difference conforms with Finch's assertion that the conferred status of an enlisted wife does not imply the equivalent status (Finch, 1983, p. 127) that somehow an officer's wife is automatically granted. Thus, "a wife's incorporation is given a particular character" (Finch, 1983, p. 128) and the different positioning of officer wives and enlisted wives becomes apparent. Daphne, in her visible activities behind the wire and Veronica, in her conscious attempts not to embarrass Jonny, demonstrate true "role models" (Finch, 1983, p. 156) for *officers' wives*. Through their activities they are seen positively by the CoC, unofficially enhancing their husbands' careers as they sustain the "moral status which the corporation requires" (Finch, 1983, p. 126) of him. They are a team, she supporting him. Charlene, however, is consciously aware of the negative views of her helpmate activities, considered a busybody by other enlisted wives. She viewed her aspirations to help maternalistically rather than as a promotion of her husband's career simultaneously acknowledging that they were not perceived as such by her peers.

A further strand of the helpmate discussion is that through performing this role women are "placed in a position in which her labour can be extracted through her husband and under patriarchal relations" (Finch, 1983, p. 129). Whilst the concept of dominated social space of army marriage will be developed in subsequent chapters, it is worthwhile acknowledging that the role of army wives overseas is contested in multiple different ways and women experienced various struggles within the fields of the army garrison. The conflicts over wives' involvement in garrison life demonstrates that the fields of play behind the wire "emphasise the conflictual character of social life" (Swartz, 1997, p. 120) highlighting the various arenas of dominance they face. These areas of dominance include the overall field of the army garrison and the more intimate social spaces of the army wife community, army wife friendship and army marriage, all will be developed further in the subsequent analysis chapters.

Evidentially Bourdieu's work on fields and doxa is of significant relevance to an investigation on incorporated women; however, Bourdieu's use of fields is not visible in any previous cognate studies of army or incorporated wives. Despite the relevance of his work for this research, it is necessary to reflect on the critiques of his theories not accounting for gender and the positioning of women within his fields theory. Thus, to situate his work as a theoretical framework, it is necessary to turn to where he has been used in consideration of marginalised women. Lawler considers two dichotomous media portrayals of different groupings of women which mirror the demarcation between officers and enlisted wives. Her focus was on the conferred identities (2004, p. 114) placed upon women from two widely different social groupings and their media representation. Lawler states how the media were "almost entirely sympathetic" (2004, p. 114) to the middle class group whereas the working class women "were consistently presented in disgusted and dismissive terms" (Lawler, 2004, p. 114). Accepting class difference between officer and enlisted which is encouraged onto wives occupying these ranks "because of the custom that women marry [...] and take on his status ranking" (Finch, 1983, p. 154)<sup>218</sup>, permits consideration of the different rules placed on wives through marriage. Enlisted wives seen to be promoting their husband's careers were viewed negatively. Lawler's statement that "there are less apparent rules at work here – rules about who is, and who is not, authorised to [promote and support their husband] – and these rules, in this case, hinge on class" (Lawler, 2004, p. 120) is pertinent, demonstrating that the army wifehood field is indeed one of struggle. Wives overseas struggled for legitimacy, promoting their husband, demonstrably supporting his career, arguably creating a role. However, this role as the vicarious helpmate reveals the field struggles between enlisted and officer wives and the acceptability of their involvement. The ownership of involvement (Lawler, 2004, p. 120) is a contested space and questions the promulgation of army wife doxa and how this has been developed and imbedded into their ontology. To establish "doxic rules there must be sufficient legitimation granted" (Lawler, 2004, p. 123), demanding the question as to why there is still the ongoing acceptability for officers'

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<sup>218</sup> This concept will be developed further in Analysis Chapter Two – Patch Life examining how within the enlisted wives' cohort this assumption of husband's rank worked both upwards and downwards.

wives to be positively viewed, yet for enlisted wives performing the same type of supportive roles to be negatively judged.

In deconstructing negative positioning of enlisted women, McCall (2004)'s reflections on Bourdieu and feminism which probes positionality experienced by 'dominated' classes are relevant. She suggests that "Bourdieu illustrates the dominated classes' practical consideration of their lack of opportunity to join in the cultural and economic life of the dominant classes. Social divisions appear obvious and self-regulated by individuals and social groups" (1992, p. 849). Taking the dominated classes to represent the enlisted wives, Jolene when discussing enlisted wives' attempts to promote husbands, demonstrated policing and regulating other enlisted wives, that such behaviours should be considered "not for the likes of them" (McCall, 1992, p. 849). The emergence of dominance further demonstrated how enlisted wives were "victimised by the classifying scheme of others" (McCall, 1992, p. 850) indicating wives demonstrating supportive aspirational desires were condemned by their peers. This "panoptic discipline" (Jervis, 2011, pp. 19-20; Foucault, 1975) leads us to Goffman's argument "that everyone is under pressure to conform to socially approved standards of behaviour [...] even though they represent only a limited version of reality" (Jervis, 2011, p. 20; Goffman, 1959). Whilst identity and performance of identity will be discussed throughout this thesis, it is pertinent to consider how behavioural mores and their presentation are experienced within Bourdieu's field of struggles and that such mores for wives are nuanced and demonstrably dependent on which ranked class they belong to. These unwritten rules of the game are opaque and undefined, yet they are all pervasive and embodied by those living overseas behind the wire.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the nuanced nature of women's inhabitation of an overseas military garrison. It has evidenced how women become encultured in multiple different ways, through being

assigned to the service number of their husband, language permeation through the 'we-talk' of the 'institutional lingo', decoding and embodying (or not) the rules of the game.

Clear strands became audible in the wives' separate narratives, indicating experiences that coalesce, pointing to a collective response to their individual lived experiences. By applying Goffman's total institutions framework, the lack of choice and control over their positionality, and how they are viewed by the establishment, have become evident. Dispossession from their belongings represents a deeper sense of loss as wives relocate away from family, friends and previous identities. Through relocation, they became processed and shaped by their husband's service number and adjunctive positionality leading to a deepening sense of invisibility and loss of their previous self.

Negative experiences were the most audible amongst the interviewees. However, Georgia demonstrates that despite the fraught nature of her move, she arguably grew because of having to find her own way to overcome almost insurmountable problems. Rather than being cowed by the army's dictate, she proved that notwithstanding her position as dependent ostensibly restricted in multiple ways, she overcame these hurdles, self-styling herself into a capable (in)dependent woman who 'done good', not bowed by the restrictive levels of bureaucracy.

The restrictions in place in the overseas garrison are indicative of the fields of struggles as the women negotiated the myriad, opaque, oftentimes contradictory rules of the game. It is the conflictual nature of daily life and their varied ways of responding to the institution that cautions one against conclusively stating that these women moved to an overseas total institution. Bourdieu's argument is that a field is indicative of the conflictual nature of a situation whereas within an institution there is consensus. As we have begun to see, the women overseas contested their positionality, albeit through their response to being aligned to a service number or their perceived position as secondary to their husband.

Classed dichotomy between enlisted and officer wives was demonstrated through the varied responses to wifely involvement, further highlighting the struggles that the women face when learning the rules of the game. All women moving overseas are positioned as dependent on their soldier husband with officer and enlisted wives experiencing the same frustrations surrounding lack of choice and control. It is when the focus moves into the wider community and fields of the garrison that the stratum of officer and enlisted wives becomes noticeable. Wives within each grouping must grapple with the rules of the games but as was demonstrated through the Unit Warrant Officer's address, the coding of acceptable behaviour onto officers' wives, with unacceptable behaviours and the threat of being sent home the lot of enlisted wives.

This chapter also contributes to CMS, specifically developing Hyde's work on army wife mobilities highlighting the impact that overseas relocations have on women married to the army, of how positioning them into what they perceive as secondary positions, visible only through their husband's service number, is both harmful and damaging, stripping them of their sense of worth, contributing to lack of motivation to accompany their husbands overseas. As highlighted in the overall introduction, the MoD is aware that it must do more to engage their spousal population and initiatives have been undertaken such as the CTP Spousal Employment trial. These initiatives are in response to the MoD's developing awareness that spouses are fundamental in influencing employment decisions through monitoring spousal happiness in their annual quantitative Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey (MoD, 2016). Indeed, in times of limited recruitment and rising numbers of soldiers leaving the army<sup>219</sup>, wives' lack of desire to accompany their husbands overseas should stand as a salutary lesson to the army and MoD for, if a wife is unlikely to accompany her soldier husband overseas, then he is at risk of terminating his service arguably directly reaffirming Enloe's work on militarisation of wives. This claim can be substantiated by the drop in

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<sup>219</sup> Source not disclosed

accompanying spouses overseas from twenty-percent in 2014 to twelve-percent in 2018 (MoD, 2018, p. 16), indicating that spouses are no longer willing to accept the negative impacts of an overseas posting. Through drawing on women's actual testimony as to the lived experience of relocating overseas, this chapter begins to provide conclusive evidence as to why many women are no longer happy to accompany their husbands.

Loss, lack of choice and control, subversion of identities, have emerged as key themes that the women narrated when asked about their entry to the garrison. As this thesis continues, these will be reflected upon and explored as we follow the women into the next stage of their journey as they adjust to living within Fimonue's contested environment.

## Analysis Chapter Two – Patch Life

### Introduction

Fimonue is in the far south-east of the Mediterranean roughly three-and-a-half thousand kilometres away from the UK perched on a rocky outcrop separated from the civilian community by an imposing barbed wire fence (Figure 18).



*Figure 18 - Fence surrounding Fimonue<sup>220</sup>*

Geographically trailing wives are removed from family and kin communities, away from familiar ‘home’ living. Wives and soldiers jointly relocate overseas, however for soldiers,

“the mobile lifestyle has an inherent tread of continuity, precisely because each move is related to his work. For his wife, however, as a secondary participant in this process, there is inherent disruption rather than continuity” (Finch, 1983, p. 53)

Soldiers moving with the Bears relocate with men they live and work among, oftentimes for many years. The Bears arrived in Fimonue as a cohesive whole and for Ray, Annie felt that

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<sup>220</sup> Source Not Disclosed

he still had his same friends [...], they were still here, they were still around him and he was still in his career [...], he was still going out to work and going to the gym and doing everything that he wanted to do.<sup>221</sup>

Wives, adjunctly part of the community, must re-establish themselves within the new overseas location. Army wives are (dis)entitled to live behind the wire due to their 'status stamp'<sup>222</sup>; however, these civilian women are bounded into a militarised environment overarching their daily lives. Within this specific environment, the geography of their lives is dictated by Fimonue's physical structuring. The social spaces and their private homes are dominated by the camp's physical militaristic construction.

This chapter draws on feminist geography to probe the importance and impact of space in shaping the experiences of overseas army wives. It examines how wives experienced their positioning within this military-dominated socio-space as well as investigating the wider garrison environs, exploring wives' negotiation of militarily constructed social spaces available to them. It considers how the physical buildings and their human occupation underpinned wives' experiences of positionality within and against military doxa. This chapter reflects on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic domination (or violence), considered alongside cultural and feminist geography (Hanson, 1992; McDowell & Massey, 1984; Massey, 2007; Skeggs, 1999; Moran, et al., 2001; Blunt, 2005; Bunnell, et al., 2012), probing whether Fimonue's specific spatial arrangements encouraged the army's doxa of wifely behaviour and positioning onto the women behind the wire. My tripartite nuanced understanding of the military garrison, as wife, employee, and researcher enabled a detailed reflexive ethnography, drawing on field diary extracts and observation practice reflections, thereby facilitating an understanding of living within this militarised environment.

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<sup>221</sup> Interviewee #13 378 – 381

<sup>222</sup> See Figure 13 page 126

The women overseas inhabited the camp's more 'domestic' areas with military facilities juxtaposed against the mundane everyday world of the medical surgery, coffee shops and NAAFI<sup>223</sup> supermarket as can be seen in Figure 19.

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<sup>223</sup> Navy, Army and Air Force Institute – historically this was a charity-run shop located on all bases. In Fimonue it has been outsourced to a private company, but it is still known as the Naafi. In Fimonue goods from home such as baked beans and crisps, plus other sundries could be purchased as could household items, alcohol, cigarettes and perfumes.

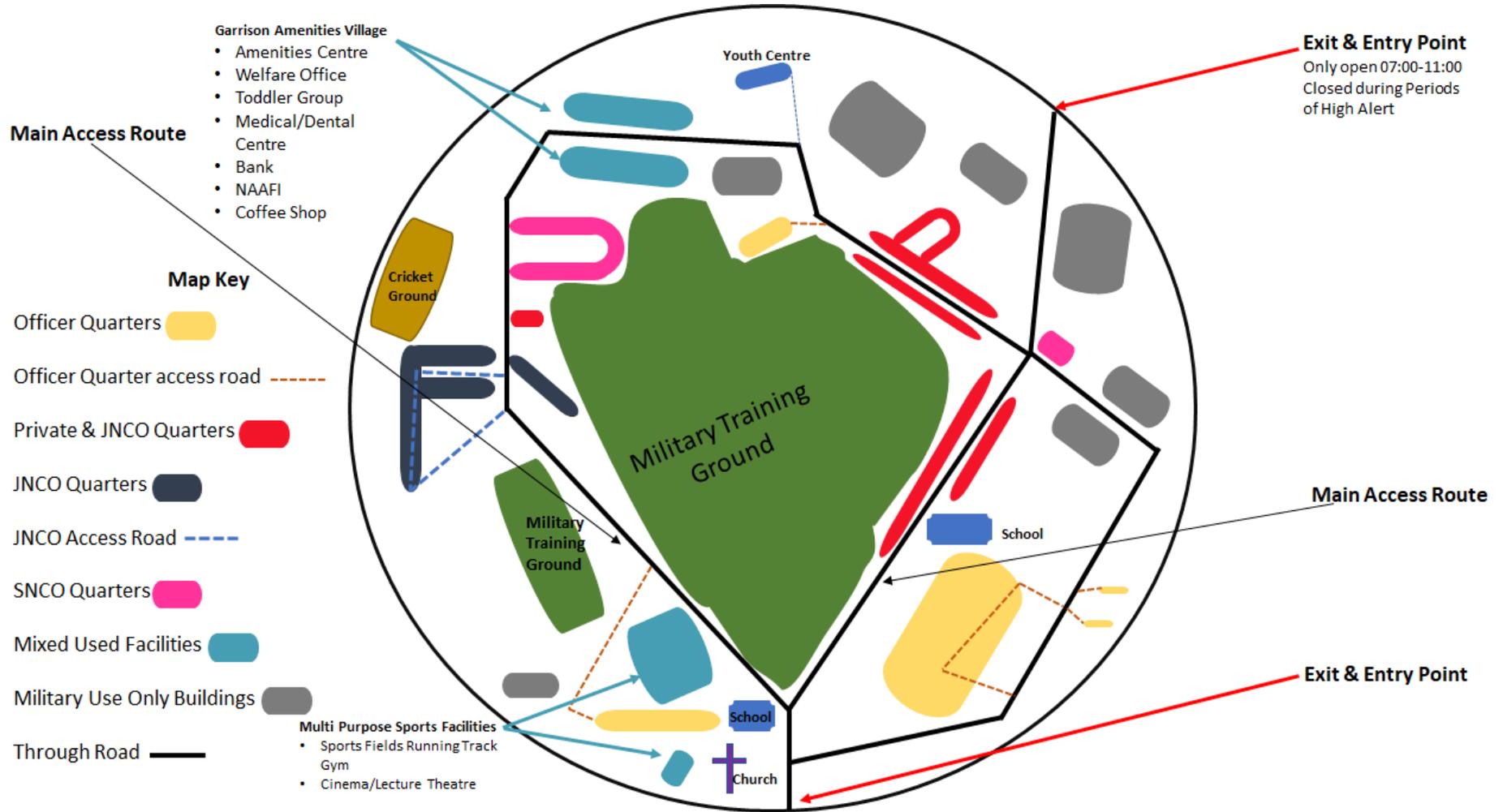


Figure 19- Fimonue's Environs

The context of the women's overseas location, the garrison's physical construction, their positioning within the quasi-civilian and non-military spaces of the 'Amenities Village', and within the military marriage itself, informs wives' views of the militarised world they inhabit. Arguably the context of the women's physical and ontological positionality becomes multi-layered and multifaceted, through rank, use of space and gendered roles within the garrison. This chapter explores sites of inclusion and exclusion through the use and access of socio-spaces, querying them as locations of multi-purpose civilian and military activity. By examining the private yet public space of MQ gardens and the ranked patches which the wives inhabit, the multiple ways in which these women are bounded (Moran, et al., 2001; Skeggs, 1999) behind Fimonue's constructed and organised spaces are drawn out. This analysis chapter probes how these wives experienced this invisible, inaudible but all-pervasive heteronormative hyper masculine dominating environment

#### **Fimonue – a dominated social space?**

Delving deeper into the elision between civilian and military within Fimonue's domesticated areas, brings us to Bourdieu's theory of "hierarchy and domination in social spaces" (Swartz, 1997, p. 57) as it is the very specificity of this environment which is so unique to these overseas women. Wives' every day was punctuated not only by the ranked social system inherent within the military garrison, but their use of socio-spaces was overlaid with multiple suppositions based on various identity markers. Therefore, whilst not only are hierarchy and domination in place within Fimonue but, as shall be demonstrated, symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001) is further embedded into the geographical environs of the wider garrison. Bourdieu's argument that "symbolic violence, a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition, [and] recognition" (2001, pp. 1-2) holds resonance for this group of women. Within Fimonue's physical geography, it is the communication

of the acceptable use of the socio-spaces and (mis)recognition of women's requirements from that space which are pertinent to this discussion.

Feminist geographers (McDowell, 1983; McDowell & Massey, 1984; Harding, 1990; Harraway, 1991; Hanson, 1992; Bondi, 1998; Booth, et al., 1996; McDowell, 1999) argue the need to understand the positionality and situated knowing of location, and how "women's location in the world shapes their view of the world" (Hanson, 1992, p. 573). The women of Fimonue occupy a unique positionality, overlaid by military demand which attempts to accommodate the varied needs of families and civilian wives. Whilst not forbidden from leaving the camp and able to spend the day in the local towns and villages, apart from doing the shopping or a lunch out, their days are passed predominately within Fimonue; their lives enacted within a ten-kilometre encircling barbed wire fence and their social interactions are conducted within the panoptic arena of the military socio-spaces. The overt military presence is not only visible in the uniformed personnel lining up alongside wives in the coffee shop but through road names commemorating hard fought (but ultimately victorious) battles. The women's lives are shaped through the prism of the militaristic world they perform inhabit which presents a militarised view of their positionality within the garrison community.

Fimonue is separated into distinct areas, with all battalion soldiers working in the separated barracks. Wives are visible dropping or picking up husbands from work, with minimal other reasons to enter this heavily masculinised environment. Yet the militarised world impacted upon the domestic one in small but symbolic ways with the families' post being delivered to the 'post bunk' in the barracks, a contentious issue as husbands were nominally responsible for bringing it home.

I don't let it go to Des's office, I say "Right, I want it here." [...] Because as soon as it gets in that bag, and saunters off towards his office, it's never seen again.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Interviewee #14, 2503 – 2505

The delivery of parcels and letters from home was a continuous source of angst, shipments could take weeks with Christmas and birthday presents not delivered in time<sup>225</sup>. The location of the post bunk in the barracks, its limited opening hours, plus mail addressed via the husband's service number proved unbearable for many wives. Rebecca reflected

my post has to be sent to him [...]. That, I mean, it is something small but really annoys me [...]. It kills me. [...] It kills me, why can I not get my own post?<sup>226</sup>

Daphne related how a medical letter for her, addressed in her husband's name delivered to the post bank became a source of embarrassment.

Oh, don't talk to me about the post [...] I found my smear test results under [...] From the med centre, under Lieutenant ... when [Des] was a captain ... under *Lieutenant* Clarke's desk, of A company. [...] Brilliant! He's not even got a wife. I was like "Great!"<sup>227</sup>

This incident, representative of the lived experience of many women, reveals the multiple intersections at play caused by Fimonue's constructed geography. Seemingly mundane, the (fraught) delivery of their post into the masculine world of the military barracks combined with it being located via the husband's name and service number, positioned the women into a particular context, giving them a "situated, partial and gendered" (Hanson, 1992, p. 583) experience of their location within the camp environs and how its militarised workings impacted upon them.

Another reason for women to enter this heavily masculinised world was to, "drive to work and drop off lunch."<sup>228</sup> Delivering my husband's lunch became a frequent site of contestation explored in my field diary.

*Another 'lunch' down at the barracks today, sat in his office for 45 minutes whilst he 'dealt' with things; issuing orders, disciplining soldiers and general everyday stuff. I was furious as I felt he assumed I could just sit there waiting for him to be done, rather than realising that I had stuff to be getting on with – not just able to hang around waiting for him.*

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<sup>225</sup> I waited three months for a package to arrive, discovering that it had arrived in Fimonue by way of Brunei – not a direct shipping route!

<sup>226</sup> Interviewee 11, 1176 – 1184

<sup>227</sup> Interviewee #14, 2496 – 2512. Not her real surname

<sup>228</sup> Interviewee #11, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview 602

Whilst it was a wife's choice to drive up and down the hill each day to the barracks, run errands for their husbands thereby fulfilling what Charlene termed her "list of jobs for today"<sup>229</sup>, there was an unspoken, doxic expectation and assumption that wives would undertake these tasks for their soldier husbands. The masculinised world of the barracks, while not off limits, is not a place for a civilian, yet bringing his lunch and providing a service to him legitimated a wife's presence. Such emotional gendered labour (Hochschild, 1990) of performing tasks on their husbands' behalf allowed women to step, briefly, outside the feminised MQ world, further illustrating their incorporated militarisation into their husband's career. By bringing lunch to the masculine world of the army barracks, wives are following in the footsteps of those who, like "Mrs Skiddy [...] was a devoted soldier's wife, a right good one, an excellent forager, and never failed to have something [...] when we were starving" (Bell, 1867, pp. 60-61).

Fimonue has two entry points, one that, at times of non-heightened security, is only open between the hours of 07:00 and 11:00, the other theoretically manned and open 24/7. On gaining their dependent's pass, wives are entitled to come and go via these entry points. However, if the pass is forgotten, they must pull over, obtain a temporary permit invariably triggering a reprimand from the pass-issuing security guard. Both sets of gates, in the period of the Bears' overseas deployment, were simultaneously locked due to security threats and Locally Employed Civilians' (LEC) strikes.

There are two pedestrian exits, one leading to the barracks and another leading, via a 40 minute trek down a steep hill, through thick bondu<sup>230</sup> (see Figure 20) across a main road, to the local swimming beach and café. Even the garrison pool was located in the wider military compound and not within the more accessible camp, requiring either a car journey or the long, aforementioned trek. Apart from these two locations, nowhere else was even remotely accessible on foot as the nearest town

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<sup>229</sup> Interviewee #18, 602 – 603

<sup>230</sup> Colloquial name given to the vast areas of shrubland within Fimonue

was a twelve-kilometre walk, and the nearest supermarket over five kilometres, away. No buses ran from within Fimonue to the civilian world beyond the wire.



*Figure 20 - The bondu scrubland*<sup>231</sup>

During a lockdown resulting from LEC strikes [over pay], wives were unable to leave Fimonue for the nursery run<sup>232</sup>, drive to the supermarkets or just ‘get off base’ by car during this period. Lack of information circulated from the CoC led to wives’ increasing frustrations, demonstrating civilian women’s uneasy positioning behind the wire. Whilst there was the option to ‘escape’ camp on public transport, the bus stop was located outside the front gate at the bottom of the hill. Thus, the realities of escape for the women within Fimonue involved a steep walk back up the hill, invariably with small children in over forty degrees of heat. The general frustration amongst wives during the strikes derived from minimal information circulated by the CoC regarding the reopening of the gates.

“The only way we know that the gates have been unlocked is through hearing the ice-cream man’s music”!<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Reproduced with kind permission

<sup>232</sup> Some battalion children attended day nurseries in surrounding villages

<sup>233</sup> Anecdotal comment during wives’ meeting with station commander at time of strikes – September 2015

A seemingly puerile comment encapsulated the bounded positioning of women living behind the wire. Whilst in civilian life, a strike can be a nuisance or infuriation, the constraining of movement due to living within this restricted locale, rendered wives subject to the military dissemination of information.

*Went to the Station Commander's 'Strike' briefing today. The frustration in the room was palpable, I am not sure the Colonel<sup>234</sup> had ever experienced anything like that before!! There was a very healthy turnout, everyone wanting their say. It was fascinating. The wives were **so** angry with the lack of information, feeling that they were completely disregarded by the CoC. They just want to be told what is going on and not be fed second-hand information, via the ice cream man! It's so hard for them as they feel shut off from information most of the time as husbands are the least reliable informers. To many the dispute is so abstract, they just see the LEC's as having taken jobs that they could do and don't understand why there is such an issue over their pay.<sup>235</sup>*

Wives wanted to be informed as soon as possible rather than waiting to be informed via husbands. Failure to do so left them feeling ignored as 'people', seemingly not to matter. They wanted to be communicated with as civilian adult women rather than just as adjunctive to the military whole. Whilst a soldier accepts that he will receive an order or information when the CoC deems it necessary to inform him, descending through the ranked structure from officer to enlisted men (Kirke, 2009; Kirke, 2010), wives are not, officially at least, part of this hierarchical dissemination of information. So, whilst superficially they were seen as 'just creating a fuss', this lack of communication is representative of the symbolic domination wives experienced whilst overseas, having to accept the military's doxa, and modus operandi. Through their position as adjuncts, low down on the military's hierarchical scale, wives found themselves "in a hierarchically structured social space" (Swartz, 1997, p. 57), through which they had to learn to "classify and construct their understanding of the social world" (Swartz, 1997, p. 57), in this case outside of the 'ingroup' of the military hierarchy.

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<sup>234</sup> Station Commander of Fimonue, a separate CoC operated Fimonue to the Bears meaning that there were two Lt. Cols in senior management roles of Fimonue.

<sup>235</sup> Field diary extract

The physical separation of the women 'at the top of the hill' or 'on the patch' is reminiscent of "the distinction between city and suburb [...] imbued with ideas about separate spheres for men and women, in which the public domain of the urban centre was both deeply masculine" (Bondi, 1998, p. 161) rendering the private sphere of the suburb or in this case, MQ, deeply feminine. McDowell in her reflections on "the origins of domesticity and its spatial separation" (1999, p. 73) contends that women "were encouraged (and in some circumstances forced) to identify with and restrict themselves to the home" (1999, p. 99). Separation of women into the domestic, men into the public world shaped by "heavy physical work which is often dangerous" (McDowell, 1999, p. 99) operated within Fimonue. Through positioning men preparing for battle into the public space and women into the private, enforces a supportive domestic role, running the house and facilitating his preparations. This not only privileges the soldier warrior through his public persona, it is indicative of the assumed private role of army wifedom, located into the domestic yet standing as emblematic of the physical embodiment of her militarisation as alluded to by Enloe in her work in CMS.

Confining women to the private space is further facilitated by the lack of job opportunities behind the wire and the patriarchal assumption that army wives' (unpaid) labour keep the home fires burning, supporting their soldier husband (Enloe, 1988; Enloe, 2000). Skeggs contends that it is the physical cityscape that is particularly gendered (1999, p. 215; Booth, et al., 1996). This gendering of the domestic sphere was evidenced by the morning male exodus. As soldiers departed for their working day, the patches became the preserve of army wives. Worryingly, the gendering of women located within the domestic quarter, not going to work, had implications on the next generation. One wife mentioned at coffee morning how her little girl said "Mummy, I can't be a doctor as only Daddies are doctors", highlighting how army children became aware of the garrison's "occupiable spaces" (Hammer & Maynard, 1987; Skeggs, 1999, p. 222), with women married to soldiers predominantly consigned to the garrison's domestic sphere. Placing the women within this

domesticated private environment reinforced Fimonue's systems of domination, with the patriarchal tradition of the helpmate army wife being imbued by the next generation.

Beatrice explored her enforced location within the domestic sphere. Having attended a meeting, she returned home finding

Norman on the phone saying, "I can't come in, my wife's not here and I wasn't expecting to have to [go into work]". "*What's she there for? That's what we ask for, where has she gone?*" God forbid that I should go anywhere else other than with my children<sup>236</sup>

Norman's sergeant, thus his direct CoC, implied her primary (only) responsibility as constantly available to provide support for the military's needs, firmly locating her within the domesticated space of the family. Beatrice experienced the CoC's perception regarding the role of wives behind the wire stating that,

the army lifestyle is best suited to the stereotypical housewife, 1950s, even before then, because women could actually go to work [...] we are still in that identity of being put, being placed into that.<sup>237</sup>

Thus, the hierarchical doxa towards women located within Fimonue's domestic sphere is reproduced onto the wives through their soldier husbands who are instilled with the attitude of 'what's she there for?', creating a positionality of dependence and restriction of movement. The limitations on wives attending meetings or events outside of the MQ, "accentuated by the fact that creche finishes at one"<sup>238</sup>, resulted in her sitting "with the children, dutifully cooking your husband's dinner to await his return"<sup>239</sup> physically bound her into the domestic sphere. Fimonue "reinforce[d] connections between the dichotomies city/suburb and public/private," (Bondi, 1998, p. 171). Due to lack of jobs and the peripatetic nature of their lives, women, were relegated to the private sphere of the married quarters, thus the camp's physical geography isolated the women into the domestic (and gendered) sphere of the home. Such positioning demonstrates the "central role that geography plays in

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<sup>236</sup> Interviewee #23 1560 – 1562, my emphasis

<sup>237</sup> Interviewee #23 1591 – 1593

<sup>238</sup> Interviewee #23 1586

<sup>239</sup> Interviewee #23 1587 – 1589

creating and sustaining gender[ed] divisions [...] of labour” (Hanson, 1992, p. 582). The perception of wives having little else to do, apart from ‘keeping house’, enforces the idea that it is the wife’s responsibility to manage the home, a task defined as “appropriate for women” (Hanson, 1992, p. 582) or, in this case, for army wives.

Thus far, this chapter has explored Fimonue’s physical environs as a dominated social geography. Consideration of their place within Fimonue’s physical spaces, reveals wives’ army-approved positionality within the military structure, placed in the ‘outgroup’ of information, bound into the domestic sphere. Through the delivery and collection of post, it probed how wives are subsumed into their husband’s service number, placed into the gendered hegemonically feminine domestic space of the patches, unidentifiable outside of their husband’s positionality with the military structure. These various strands indicate how the army’s doxa concerning wives’ positionality intersects onto wives located into the domestic space of the garrison, revealing how the social map of distinction placed them into a gendered location. Undeniably these experiences are not unique to army wives. However, the geographically remote setting of Fimonue and its distance from the UK<sup>240</sup> reinforced their situatedness within the military structure, bounded into a gendered socio-spatial creating an overly domestic and feminised physical and ontological world located within a heteronormative hyper masculine environment.

### **“Can’t they just meet in the parks?”<sup>241</sup>**

Investigating wives’ use of the garrison demands a reflection on the various types of involvement available behind the wire<sup>242</sup>. Sixteen of the interviewees were involved in different activities or clubs, the Bears’ Wives committee/community, SSAFA and in the sports clubs; a further sixteen were actively involved in different groups within Fimonue, however only two were employed and

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<sup>240</sup> Further for the F&C community

<sup>241</sup> HCSO comment on wives’ requirement for a socio-space for them to meet outside of the CoC. See page for 186 for further discussion.

<sup>242</sup> For a visual break-down of activity and involvement please see Appendix Five, page 335 – 340

participating in 'formal' community activities as outlined above. The actively involved interviewees were not the only women to be community engaged but were part of the main group involved with organising (and participating in) events. Their involvement in my research project is perhaps indicative of willingness to participate in community activities. Of the eight women who worked within Fimonue, only Sandra and Tabitha were actively involved in the community from a volunteering perspective. Tabitha and Esther both worked as well as played in the local netball club. Tabitha was actively involved in an Outward-Bound activity group and was a regular attendee of the running club. From the remaining employed group, only Megan undertook any form of extra-curricular activity, participating in a distance study course.

Camille and Amelia<sup>243</sup>, both F&C community wives, were active within this sub-community, neither worked, both had children. Whilst involved in various F&C community activities, these were low level events more aligned to their friendship group rather than organised garrison wide F&C community events. Camille was also involved in the church community and volunteered with a support agency. Caroline, a non-British woman married to an F&C soldier, had children, worked, and was involved in her husband's country specific F&C community, yet this cannot be designated as a formal<sup>244</sup> activity. Tasmin, previously active within the community, had prior to the research period decided to remove herself from the community at large. Married to an F&C soldier; she and Kenny were involved in his country specific F&C community albeit less actively than previously. "I just stay away. I am friendly with people at school, I'll chat to people if they want to chat to me."<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Amelia was an F&C origin wife married to an English soldier; Camille was an F&C wife married to an F&C soldier.

<sup>244</sup> In this instance formal means battalion or garrison run events, these interactions were organised interfamily and were private affairs.

<sup>245</sup> Interviewee #1 390 – 391

There were five women who neither worked nor were involved in any form of community engagement. Of these, Candice was the only woman who had a baby; she was aware that she needed

to take Ria because otherwise she, she's at that age now where she is interested in stuff and people [...] and obviously I've got people, friend with babies but it's not enough. So, I will start taking her to things but that's what I mean, I'll go to things for Ria but not for me [laughs].<sup>246</sup>

Angel an actively involved woman, mother of three, two of pre-school age, commented that going to the toddler group was "quite good for like going out and meeting people if you've got children and stuff"<sup>247</sup>. Angel developed a small social world of her own, building a network of wives whose

husbands are in the same company so they're often away at the same time, we've all got young children, so we always are like "Ah it's half-term, what are we gonna do with no husbands?"<sup>248</sup>

Indisputably I did not observe all the toddler groups or clubs during my time in Fimonue (as participant, researcher or AFF employee), however I was exceedingly conscious of those women (and children) not visibly participating in activities. Interviewees were aware of social isolation amongst many wives: a recurrent theme in the interviews was where were those not involved in the community or attending the various children's activities. Fiona reflected

that's what I also find *really* strange. That you can turn up to ... where did we go? Was it at the school? ... Went to something quite recently and I was like "My God, I hardly know *anybody* here [...] it was definitely a school event. [...] It suddenly makes you realise that actually we know the thirty people that are very vocal and active on camp. [...] And there's another 200<sup>249</sup>. [...] And that's a lot of people that you never see."<sup>250</sup>

Social isolation was of concern to the support charities and Fimonue's SSAFA social services team; whilst not the specific focus of this chapter, follow-up research investigating further the causes of social isolation amongst current Fimonue wives would be a valuable undertaking.

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<sup>246</sup> Interviewee #5 299 – 303

<sup>247</sup> Interviewee #15 437 – 438

<sup>248</sup> Interviewee #15 573 – 575

<sup>249</sup> Across the whole of Fimonue garrison not just the Bears'

<sup>250</sup> Interviewee #17 2666 – 2880

Having established the community involvement (or lack thereof) of the wives and the wider wifely community as intimated by some of the interviewees, it is necessary to consider the socio-spaces available for wives within the garrison. The 'amenities village' is Fimonue's commercial hub (see Figure 21) with the medical centre, the amenities building housing various welfare offices, the children's space, the NAAFI, the coffee shop, a curio shop and a bank.

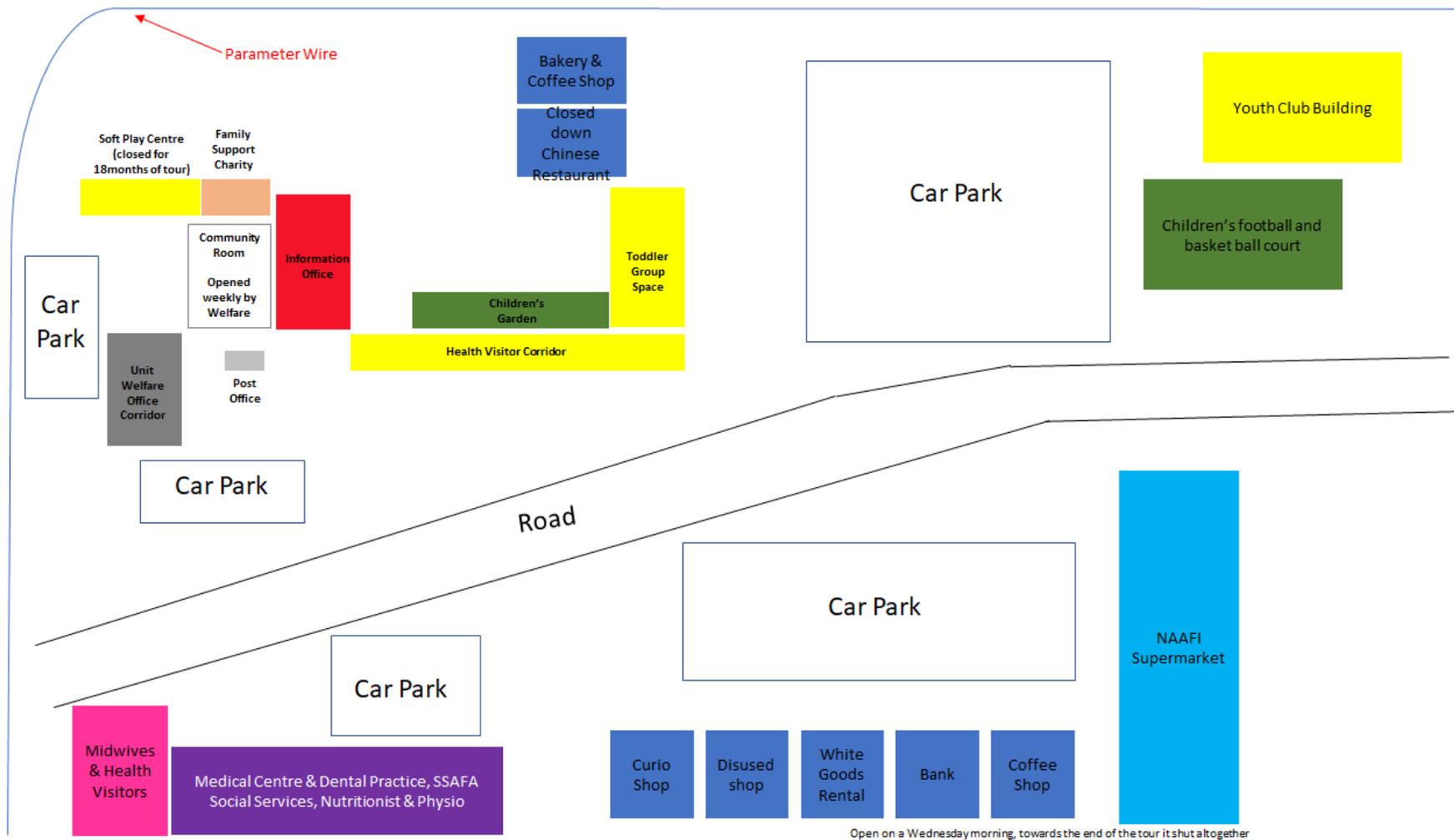


Figure 21 - Facilities within the Amenities Village

However, even within the amenities village where wives could socialise, the reality of the militarised environment remained omnipresent. Nowhere was this presence starker than in the med centre where the GPs and nursing staff wear military uniform, juxtapositioning the civilian wives against the militarised world. Returning to Bourdieu's theory of systems of domination, the medical staff dealing with civilian patients wearing their military uniform reinforced wives' imbrication within the garrison. Such reinforcement of their location within a hierarchically structured social space could render the wife as patient nervous and unwilling to disclose her full condition. Worryingly, if a wife wanted to disclose any potential domestic abuse, she might feel inhibited because of the risk of repercussion on her husband's career

I haven't spoke to anyone. That's why I think I've probably just burst out here because I haven't been able to speak to anyone, because it would screw [his] career up.<sup>251</sup>

Through my work with AFF I was aware that this was a real concern of the CoC who were at pains to stress medical/welfare confidentiality; however, wives were seemingly conditioned to question the distance between their husband's career and their own accessing any form of welfare support. It is these continual intersections between the civilian women and the militarised world that they inhabit, conditioning them obliquely to not make a fuss, to just 'crack on'. The ever-present fear of impacting on their husband's career, exposed through Carrie's feeling of 'bursting out' during her interview, demonstrates that the interview space created between 'sister army wives' provided her with the safety and confidence to reveal significant problems at home which she felt unable to discuss in the militarised world of Fimonue. The orthodoxy of the militarised world becomes consumed and reproduced within a space that should in fact be a place of safety and refuge for these women.

The amenities village was noticeably busy after the morning school run, as temporarily childless women had a couple of hours in the morning which they wanted to fill. Wives invariably descended on the coffee shop where they divided into friendship groups for a drink and a catch up. The other

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<sup>251</sup> Anonymous Interviewee 1319 – 1320

users of the coffee shop wore some form of uniform. Doctors and medical staff having their morning coffees, visiting military personnel using the free Wi-Fi, soldiers ‘popping in for a brew’ before returning to work down in the barracks and frequently a [uniformed] soldier and his wife having a quick coffee after attending an appointment at the med centre or amenities building. Whilst undeniably a place for all service personnel and family, the coffee shop was the only adult-centric socio-space wives could occupy outside of a designated activity. This social space is a mixed-use space reflecting the militarised nature of the military garrison.

Several wives reflected on the lack of social space or community room within the garrison, citing the well provisioned facility at Glyndon<sup>252</sup>. Sandra narrated that

sometimes you would go there in the morning and there would be 3 people there. [...] And other times [...] there would be 30 [...]. I think [the] focal point, of something like that was really good.<sup>253</sup>

Candice a woman who barely left the house in Fimonue, commented that she

liked the community, I liked it there [Glyndon], I made loads of friends and I literally went down to the community centre every day<sup>254</sup>

Angel too reflected on the lack of community centre similar to Glyndon.

It was really good [...] I think that like every day [...] everyone would go or you could even pop in [...] [a]nd somebody would be there, like “Hello”. [...] It was a massive hall so for the children it was awesome, you had the bouncy castle. [...] Yeah, so it was a good place to get your worries out or just go and relax<sup>255</sup>

Contrastingly, Fimonue amenities’ centre had a multipurpose room that Welfare opened for two hours once a week for the wives’ coffee morning advertised in Figure 22.

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<sup>252</sup> Anonymised name of the Bears’ previous posting in the UK

<sup>253</sup> Interviewee #4 1100 – 1108

<sup>254</sup> Interviewee #5 186 – 187

<sup>255</sup> Interviewee #25 384 – 422



Figure 22 - Wives' Coffee Morning poster<sup>256</sup>

The room was a dark cold space filled with uncomfortable sofas, discarded toys and a fridge housing some long since perished food substances (Figures 23 and 24).



Figure 23 - Fimonue's community room

<sup>256</sup> Image taken from a private social media group – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019



*Figure 24 - A multipurpose room with little inducement for families<sup>257</sup>*

A handful of wives would congregate weekly, mostly volunteers from the wives' community committee and me in my AFF guise. At times, 'talks' were organised. When the new station commander and new battalion Commanding Officer arrived, they held 'meet and greet' sessions. The attendance would be significantly larger but when asked why they did not regularly attend, women attested to the fact that the room held little appeal for small children, that no one could really 'be bothered' and the cliquy nature of those attending<sup>258</sup>.

Outside of the coffee mornings, the room was used to host the monthly (mandatory) new arrivals security briefs, SSAFA ante-natal and early years sessions, and military lectures. It was not, as Georgia intimated, a space where wives could drop in during the day. Unlike Glyndon,

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<sup>257</sup> Both pictures from personal collection

<sup>258</sup> This concept of cliquy behaviour amongst wives shall be considered further in the final analysis chapter – Motherhood, Friendship and the Army Wife

If you was having a really bad day, [...] there'd be someone in there that you could sit down [...]. Yeah, just pop in. Erm not like Welfare [...]. Like there'd always be someone sitting there having a brew.<sup>259</sup>

For wives previously based in Glyndon, the community centre became the focal point with its

fully working kitchen [...] it was open [...]. You could use it. Erm play area, art room, IT suite [...]. Everything was there that you needed. And like I said, it was never ... right it's open here and here, this activity<sup>260</sup>

The wives could use the community building throughout the day, not just at designated times. It was somewhere friendly and welcoming with kitchen facilities, space for children to play, for interaction away from an overtly militarised influence. Conscious of this lack of separated space for the wives in the community, the chairwomen of the Bears' Committee and I (as AFF) highlighted to the CoC the specific need for an area outside of the MQs and the coffee shop. We were invited to a meeting with the Housing and Community Support Officer (HCSO), a female civil servant (and an army wife herself) employed in Fimonue to liaise between the military families and the CoC.

*Back from meeting about the Community Room. I cannot believe her attitude towards trying to find a space for wives to socialise. Her response was 'well can't they meet in the parks on the patches'? Like children??? She completely infantilised the women utterly missing the point – she does not think that wives need to have a designated space, that there is no problem with not having a focal point for the wives' community.*

Suggesting that the wives should 'meet in the park', rendered them childlike, reducing them from legitimate adult occupants of a social space. This representation of women not requiring a space of their own arguably further socially reduced army wives into unentitled inhabitants within the garrison locale. Indeed, such a representation maintains the "symbolic perpetuation of the social order" (Bahloul, 1992, p. 129; McDowell, 1999, p. 72) as perceived by the military hierarchy. Wives, as dependents, perceived by the HCSO in her capacity of representing the interests of the garrison's CoC, firmly positioned army wives not only into the domestic locale of the patches, but in the playparks within them.

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<sup>259</sup> Interviewee #19 973 – 985

<sup>260</sup> Interviewee #19 998 – 1003

Whilst limited in number, there were daily activities scheduled for wives to attend (see Table 3). The activities are colour-coded with blue representing children/mother and child-based activities, purple denoting adult only activities and red marking an activity that was specifically for wives but where children were often present.<sup>261</sup>

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07:45	School Drop Off	School Drop Off/Wives' PT	School Drop Off/Antenatal Swim	School Drop Off/Wives' PT	School Drop Off
08:00	Early Years Parental Classes Toddler Group		Health Zone		Baby Bistro/Wives Watersports
09:00	Early Years Parental Classes	Wives' Coffee Morning	Toddler Group		
10:00					
11:00					
12:00	Nursery Pick Up	Nursery Pick Up	Nursery Pick Up	Nursery Pick Up	Nursery Pick Up
13:00	Bouncing Bears	Bouncing Bears	Bouncing Bears	Bouncing Bears	Bouncing Bears
14:00	School/Nursery Pick Up	School/Nursery Pick Up	School/Nursery Pick Up	School/Nursery Pick Up	School/Nursery Pick Up
15:00		Toddler Group	Netball	Toddler Group	
18:00		Wives' Running Club		Wives' Running Club	

Table 3 - Time table of Fimonue's wives' activities<sup>262</sup>

Whilst not extensive, the timetable indicates a weighting towards child-centric activities. Some women enjoyed participating in these battalion-run events, Angel saw these positively, an opportunity to get fit after having her third baby, and to socialise with others:

I mean it's good as well because you can take babies as long as they're in their buggies. I'm like "Result! I can go to that". So, I like keeping fit anyway but it's a good way to socialise.<sup>263</sup>

These events facilitated Angel's getting out of the house and being social, indicating that she was comfortable in belonging to the community.

Noticeable in the weekly schedule is the dearth of activities for wives and families after two o'clock when the school day finished. The Fimonue garrison staff's (as opposed to the Bears'<sup>264</sup>) working

<sup>261</sup> Women did bring their children to the Wives' PT sessions in buggies, but they were specifically designated as adult only activities.

<sup>262</sup> Bouncing Bears was the soft play space that mothers could take children to, but this was not a formally organised daily activity. Mothers could access the key and the space at will, prior to it being shut down due to health and safety concerns approximately eighteen months into the tour. It was not reopened during the remainder of the Bears' time. Similarly, the Toddler Group was a volunteer managed group with different women taking responsibility for hosting the group and organising the activities such as 'Rhyme Time' etc.

<sup>263</sup> Interviewee #15 465 – 467

day finished at two o'clock, resulting in the coffee shops, the medical centre<sup>265</sup> and the curio shop all closing mid-afternoon. There was thus nowhere for wives to socialise or to take their children within Fimonue. In the summer months the (open air) pool was open and there was the beach at the bottom of the hill but for the winter months there was nowhere family-orientated within the garrison for the children and nowhere for nonmothers (McMahon, 1995) to socialise apart from their MQs or indeed the playparks. The café within the wider military compound opened until five o'clock in the warmer months but during the winter closed at three. Thus, these women had many hours to fill after the daily life of the garrison ground to a halt, having to leave camp and drive to the local town to find activities<sup>266</sup> or the afternoons in their MQs. Driving round Fimonue in the afternoon, the sheer dearth of people was striking but not ultimately surprising given that there was absolutely nothing to do and the frequent refrain was that it was like 'a death town'.

Prior to deploying, the CoC had emphasised how Fimonue was a family posting, that husbands would "be home from half one every day, you'll have set leave, lots of family time, lots of family days"<sup>267</sup>. However, the 'pace of life'<sup>268</sup> resulted in minimal family time, wives were very much left to their own devices, having to look inwards, finding and creating their own social groups and activities based around their children. Whilst mothers being on their own until the end of the working day, is not an unusual phenomenon, the reality of Fimonue was that without organised activities within the camp and minimal child-centric groups in the wider community (or at least ones that army families could access<sup>269</sup>), combined with no family support or wider friendship group outside of the battalion

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<sup>264</sup> The Bears, nominally supposed to finish in the mid-afternoon, were often down in the barracks until the early evening.

<sup>265</sup> This was a significant issue for women who worked at the schools as given the early closing of the medical centre they struggled to get medical appointments during term time. Towards the end of the tour, the medical centre did stay open until 4pm on a Monday so teachers and Teaching Assistants (the role of most wives employed in the school) were able to book in to see a doctor/nurse on Monday afternoons.

<sup>266</sup> As Fimonue was a holiday destination there were activities to do during the summer months however between October and April most amusements closed leaving minimal options for entertaining children.

<sup>267</sup> Interviewee #11 101 – 102

<sup>268</sup> Common colloquialism employed by CoC to indicate the heavy workload of the battalion

<sup>269</sup> Even though English was spoken widely outside of Fimonue, the local nurseries and sports club were all held in the native language which proved a barrier for integration for army families either British or from F&C

community, mothers had long hours to fill before bedtime. Whilst no one explicitly focused on this, Bea did comment how she got herself “into a weird cycle of nothing really, and Health Zone is on Wednesdays and that's your lot”<sup>270</sup>; consciously aware that she wanted to “[s]timulate the children, like the life that I chose to live [...] isn't available here in the same way”<sup>271</sup>. Bea felt the lack of socio-space available for spouses directly impacted on her children, that she was unable to provide stimulus for them in the same way if based back in the UK. This lack of stimulation for her children was a metaphor for how she experienced her positioning as viewed by the army

stay at home and look after children, not doing much else, have any plans, never do anything just in case you're needed.<sup>272</sup>

Her role was to provide for the children and in her opinion having aspirations to be out of the house directly contradicted how she felt the army perceived wives' purpose whilst overseas. If a woman was childless then to try and find other such women with whom to pass the time, hoping to find something in common, proved difficult as Rosie articulated, stating “that no-one here seems to even remotely like me”<sup>273</sup>, so as not to be entirely on their own waiting (endlessly) for their husband's return.

It was within Fimonue's self-contained environment incorporating domestic living, work and social spaces, that the women negotiated their response to the “spatial expression of patriarchy” (Valentine, 1989, p. 385; Skeggs, 1999, p. 216). Whilst Fimonue's *raison d'être* is undeniably as a militarised environment, the expression ‘trailing wives’ encapsulated the women's experienced positionality as an additional burden carried along in the baggage carts (Figure 25).

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countries. One wife who did send her children to a local nursery found it hard to make friends with other mothers due to language and cultural differences.

<sup>270</sup> Interviewee #23 1210 – 1211

<sup>271</sup> Interviewee #23 1301 – 1302

<sup>272</sup> Interviewee #23 1600 – 1601

<sup>273</sup> Interviewee #9 1527



Figure 25 - Historic army wives in baggage carts<sup>274</sup>

Carrie even stated that

I've always classed myself as nothing to do with the army. I've always classed myself as the excess baggage. That's what wives are really. [...] wives have to come second, job first.<sup>275</sup>

A woman entering the mixed social spaces could struggle adapting to her position as an army wife and her secondary subjective positioning as perceived by the military (and some wives') hierarchy and their entitled use of the military's buildings. Skeggs' view of coded space is pertinent here:

“the coding of the [garrison] as belonging to certain groups who have a greater claim on the space is historically produced through struggles for legitimisation, struggles that become institutionalised in the control of the space” (1999, p. 216).

As the example regarding the development of a designated community space demonstrated, the lack of military imperative (and motivation) for the creation of such a space indicates the institutionalised and gendered control of the socio-spatial use of the garrison. This lack of acknowledgment for the wives' desire to have their own space could furthermore be said to essentialise army wives into the position of 'other'. Wives were thus forced, through lack of alternatives, to occupy militarily constructed and designated spaces, placing them continuously

<sup>274</sup> Reproduced with thanks (The Army Children Archive, n.d.)

<sup>275</sup> Interviewee #20 544 – 547

under the panoptic gaze of the army's might. It was through occupying these social areas that they were engaged "in a continual struggle to be recognised as a worthy respectable citizen" (Skeggs, 1999, p. 216).

### **Ranked Patches**

Moving from the public spaces of the amenities village, the concluding sections of this chapter examine the private spaces of the patches, investigating the geographical locations of the estates and their implications for those inhabiting Fimonue. The physical surroundings of individual MQs, even within the nominally private space of the family home, rendered symbols of military domination ever present for the quasi-civilian female occupants.

Bourdieu believed sociology's fundamental task was "to disclose the means by which systems of domination impose themselves *without* conscious recognition by society's members" (Swartz, 1997, p. 56)<sup>276</sup>. Within a military garrison, rank, the system of domination imposed on the serving soldiers, is all-pervasive. Soldiers are housed according to rank with wives situated within the same rank structure. Rosie reflected on assimilation of rank by wives and its infiltration onto their behaviour towards others, "there are so many wives who don't associate with others because their husband's of a lower rank".<sup>277</sup> Bourdieu further suggests that "agents classify and construct their understanding of the social world from particular positions in a hierarchically structured social space" (Swartz, 1997, p. 57). The wives were civilian women, their only allegiance being to their husband, yet they were positioned in a social world and into the collective of army wife through this system rather than as individual agentic beings. The army's formal and informal structures enforce a housing system, a social milieu and a set of beliefs of acceptable and expected behaviours, or *doxa*, which become instilled in wives behind the wire. Rosie in her narrative considered how through the

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<sup>276</sup> My emphasis

<sup>277</sup> Interviewee #9 897 – 898

ranked locale of her husband being a private she lived in what was known as “the ghetto”.<sup>278</sup> This section probes how wives absorbed their physical position within these patches, thereby returning us to Bourdieu’s theory of domination. Furthermore, it continues probing how this domination occurs, whether it was through the social arrangements in which they lived (Swartz, 1997, p. 57), their positionality as constructed by the army, alongside their military marriage.

The married quarters are zoned into ranked estates with the officer estates hidden in the south east of Fimonue or on non-through roads isolated from enlisted soldiers (See Figure 26). The impression highlights the ranked patches indicating how the subgroups within the ranks<sup>279</sup> are isolated within and amongst themselves.

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<sup>278</sup> Interviewee #9 913

<sup>279</sup> See Table 1 in in the Introduction, page 33. The ranking of MQs is specific to Fimonue and certain other overseas garrisons for enlisted soldiers. In the UK it is based on family size (enlisted) whereas for officers it is still allocated by rank entitlement. See the ‘Housing Entitlement’ table Appendix Ten, page 348 for further information.

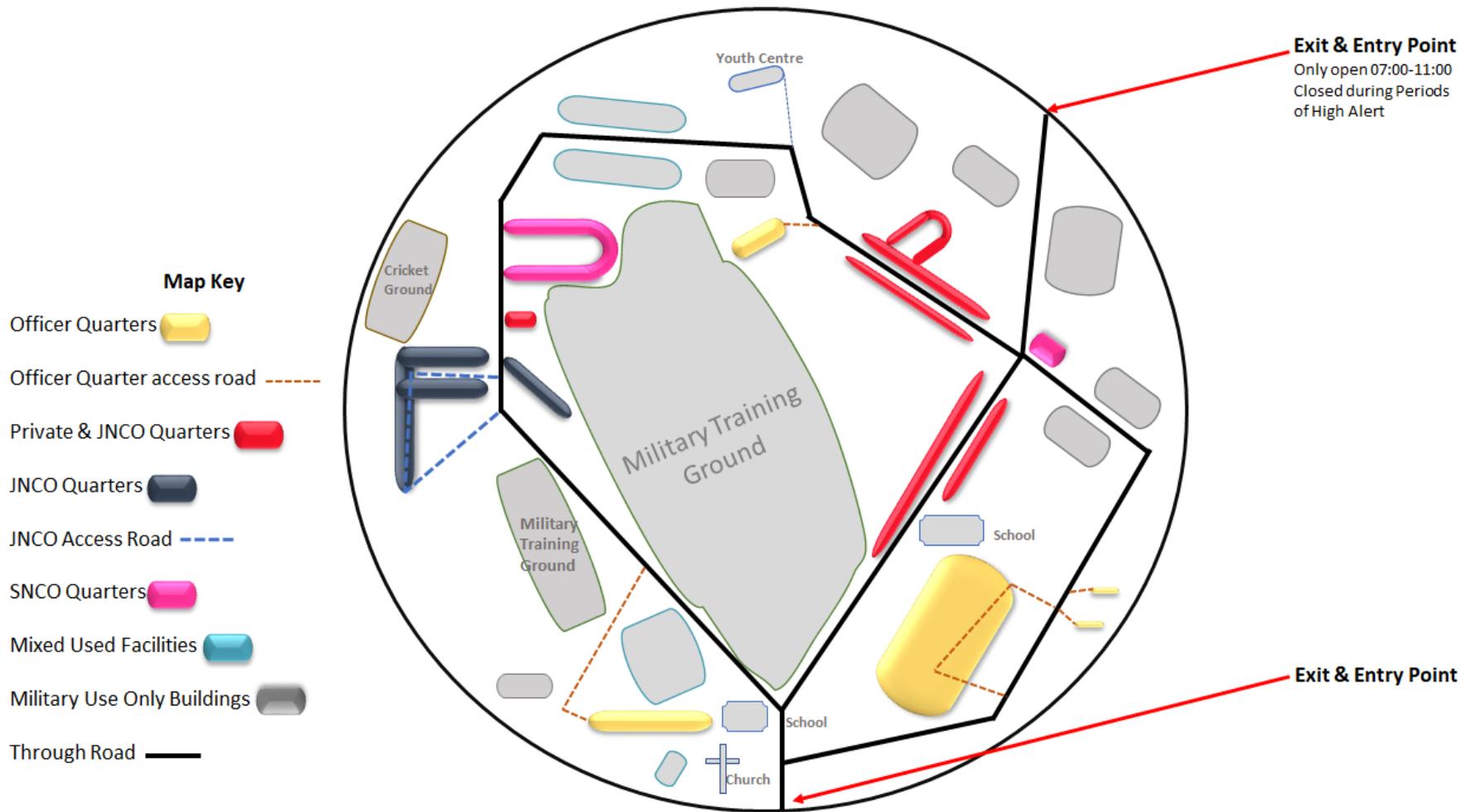


Figure 26 - Location of ranked patches within Fimonue

Heavy scrubland surrounds the main officer patches (Figure 27) indicating the separation imposed, creating officer enclaves within the wider camp.



*Figure 27 - Physical isolation of officers' MQ<sup>280</sup>*

By virtue of their husband's rank, officers' wives occupy the upper middle-class echelons of the military classed rank system and, through being located away from the enlisted ranks, the boundaries of their social networks can thus be protected. The boundary between enlisted families and officers facilitated a demarcation that some officers' wives were keen to maintain. Reflecting on SFA allocation following a housing briefing, Daphne commented that she was very "glad of the line in the sand between us and them". This conscious separation between the two different classes of families points to the hierarchy's (and demonstrably some officers' wives') perception of keeping the ranked cohorts of enlisted men and officers separated.

Daphne's response to this physical distance between living quarters is further indicative of symbolic domination, of socio-spatial subjugation placed upon enlisted wives (by other wives as well as the

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<sup>280</sup> Reproduced with kind permission

military itself), ensuring their restriction to one part of the garrison, not infiltrating the protected socio-space of the officers' patch. Probing deeper into Daphne's 'line in the sand', arguably she legitimated her position as a different class, set apart from enlisted families, institutionalising her claim for recognition and belonging (Skeggs, 1999, p. 221). She reflected on her desperation for separation between herself and enlisted wives admitting that "she was more working class than some enlisted wives"<sup>281</sup>. Her desire to be recognised as officer wife material indicates a position of relative power as "[t]o be recognised as something always invokes systems of knowledge classification and disciplinary power" (Skeggs, 1999, p. 220). She acquired the rules of the game expected of a wife in her position, embodying the doxa she believed expected of her. Daphne (who freely admitted to 'playing the army wife game' in the previous analysis chapter) conformed to the disciplinary power of rank placed upon officers' wives by the overarching institution. Through her desire to be the right type of wife, she demonstrated willing acceptance of her positionality behind the wire, continuing the pathologising of enlisted wives into the militarised doxa of unruly, violent, 'other' to the more acceptable officer wife.

Unlike the officer patches hidden away from view, the private and junior ranks' housing was on the main drag through Fimonue. Many women living in this location, felt stigmatised for where they lived, automatically located in the military's hierarchical ranked lower class. Rosie held a Masters degree, yet her marriage to a private and her home address located her into the lowest section of the army's structure. She reflected how this positioning left her feeling "like you are kind of nobody, and you keep yourself to yourself, see you later"<sup>282</sup>. She felt unable to make friends in her imposed social setting and that she was far removed from others like her,

I'd say those who are sort of degree educated do tend to be like the officers' wives and stuff like that<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> During an informal discussion at coffee morning

<sup>282</sup> Interviewee #9 918 – 919

<sup>283</sup> Interviewee #9 1788 - 1789

Rosie was not alone in feeling isolated; however, the enforced physical location of women into ranked patches stands as indication of husbands' social status being placed upon them. This 'marrying down' (as predetermined through the army's ranked system) is opposite to the "conventional class hierarchy, because of the custom that women marry a man of higher status than themselves and take on his status ranking" (Finch, 1983, p. 152)<sup>284</sup>. Rosie finding herself lost within the ranked system developed depression and anxiety standing in stark contrast to Daphne who willingly embodied the hierarchical domination of rank through the legitimising of her status.

Daphne and Rosie's differing responses increase understanding of how the MQs' classed or ranked location reinforced onto women the social map of distinctions militarily established and reinforced. Thus, the distinctions the arbitrary ranked system placed on women highlighted their symbolic militarised domination through their husband's army and, by extension, social status. For Daphne this was empowering, whilst Rosie and other women who similarly struggled with their assimilation into their ranked (classed) positioning, found themselves forced downwards into a social milieu outside their ken. It is salient to consider that it is both the physical geographical location combined with the ontological lived experience of rank and social interactions that impacted onto the women living in Fimonue.

### **The Importance of a Back Fence**

During my time in Fimonue I reflected on the symbolic importance of a simple back fence. Figure 28 reveals how the back gardens of the officer quarters were separated from their neighbours with either solid wooden fences or brick walls demarking their private zone, allowing them and their families to relax in the walled privacy of their garden, within the isolated location of their patch.

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<sup>284</sup> See also Goldthorpe on the male head of the household providing the family their social status (Goldthorpe, 1980; Goldthorpe, 1983).



*Figure 28- Privacy afforded by solid wall<sup>285</sup>*

The physical demarcation of their gardens removed the prying eyes of both the curious and the military panopticon, allowing the officer the opportunity to unwind without the ‘fear’ of someone walking past and overlooking their activities. Enlisted gardens however did not afford their occupiers the same level of privacy as Figure 29 demonstrates with a chain linked fence separating the two, portraying the proximity between the military and the overseas wife.

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<sup>285</sup> Reproduced with kind permission



Figure 29 - Proximity between 'private gardens' and the military world<sup>286</sup>

These gardens, whilst having a beautiful view of the Mediterranean, were bordered and overlooked by the military training ground. It was not an infrequent occurrence to have squads of men holding guns marching or tabbing past the back garden<sup>287</sup>. As I noted in my field diary

*Just back in from hanging the washing out. Gary walked past with the dog and we said hello, then one of the companys popped out of the 'bondu'. This all accompanied to the sound of the range firing away since first light. It's such a funny world, doing something normal as hanging out my washing (obviously mainly military kit), something so feminine, in the supposed privacy of my own garden yet I am still completely exposed to the military. It feels as if there is no escaping it, either audibly from the range or from the realities of seeing soldiers even when in the garden. The two worlds really are completely entwined.<sup>288</sup>*

The elision between the domestic and the military within the MQ, hanging out the washing, hearing the firing ranges and seeing the training soldiers, demonstrates the intersectionality (and lack of escape whilst behind the wire) of the overseas army wife.

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<sup>286</sup> Reproduced with kind permission

<sup>287</sup> From personal experience!

<sup>288</sup> Field diary extract

As these pictures demonstrate, it could be surmised that officers (and their families) needed a separated back garden removing him<sup>289</sup> and his family from the panopticon of the garrison community which the military establishment were happy to pay for, whereas for the enlisted man, a lack of privacy was not deemed as a requirement nor considered important or necessary by the CoC. Enlisted families are viewed as a homogeneous whole without the need for a private family sanctuary and at the same time, by having linked fencing, the panopticon had an unfettered gaze on the military family within the nominally 'private' setting of the domestic quarter.

Figure 30 demonstrates attempts made to afford some privacy from neighbours and military by erecting bamboo fencing, offering the illusion yet still leaving the family exposed to the passer-by and the gaze of the panopticon.



*Figure 30 - Bamboo fencing an attempt to create privacy<sup>290</sup>*

Annie reflected on how the lack of privacy between the gardens enabled a neighbour to comment on her childlessness.

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<sup>289</sup> At the time of the fieldwork, all officers both within and attached to the Bears' were male

<sup>290</sup> Downloaded from private social media site – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019

I found one person very offensive, [...] “Oh I saw you on your sun lounge by your pool at the weekend, it’s alright for some isn’t it? We’ve got kids, we can’t do that”. [...] And I find that quite offensive, because I think, well you’ve made that decision in your life, that’s down to you. [...] You can’t judge me for it.<sup>291</sup>

The lack of privacy and thus potential for judging each other is emphasised by this interchange. Annie had been married for two years when interviewed, with this her first married posting. At this point she had no interest in starting a family but due to her married rank location within the enlisted cohort, the perceived doxa (and role) for wives was to have children. She is not alone in experiencing comments like this. I noted after an event at the Sergeants’ and Warrant Officers’ Mess,

*Couldn’t believe last night, Mia came up to me and said, ‘how do you find it being the only woman in here without children?’ I was so shocked, not that I might be the only one (at least of my age and married to a CSM) without children but the fact that she asked me to my face. I can’t believe I am judged for it, is that the only way to measure being a proper army wife, as if you have kids or not???? My response was that ‘I am perfectly fine with doing AFF and my PhD’, but I could see that she thought I was mad, not ‘right for the job’.<sup>292</sup>*

Thus, lack of fecundity seemed to make me and other childless wives, or nonmothers, subjects of particular scrutiny, calling into question our ‘femininity and domesticity’ in ways reminiscent of Bondi’s (1998) patterns of inequalities. This contextualising of women into childless/nonmother (McMahon, 1995) by other wives, worked in parallel to the contextualising of women by the soldiers and the military occurring behind the wire. Thus, the open back gardens could indeed stand for the lack of privacy experienced behind the wire and the perceived ‘judging’ of childless Annie’s choice to sit on her sun lounge, both indicative of the myopic panoptic world that some of the newer<sup>293</sup> (and often younger) wives related during their interviews.

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<sup>291</sup> Interviewee #13, 1074 – 1079 Many families invested in ‘pools’ for their own gardens ranging in size from little bigger than a paddling pool to quite substantial structures.

<sup>292</sup> Field diary extract

<sup>293</sup> On my arrival overseas, I had been married to my husband for four months so whilst older (at 34) than most of the recently arrived wives interviewed, I was still a ‘new’ wife.

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided clear insight into the physical setting of Fimonue as a garrison-scape and how location, both physical and ontological, is experienced by the interviewees. It demonstrated how in Fimonue women lived within a nuanced gendered environment, impacted by multiple intersections. By using a gendered spatial perspective to probe the military-constructed physical geography's impact on these women's inhabitation behind the wire, it has made creative use of insights from feminist geographers. It has done so by proving how, having moved behind the wire, these women are physically located through the use of certain spaces of the garrison alongside and against the militarily predetermination of these socio-spaces.

The combining of feminist geography and Bourdieu's work on symbolic power and systems of domination has not hitherto been undertaken when investigating army wives' overseas positionality. This combination has facilitated a deeper understanding of how women's ontological experience was shaped by their physical positioning within and against the military garrison. It has further revealed how women experienced the prevailing militaristic doxa through the specific designation of use of the public socio-spaces and the perceived private space of the MQs. The army's exertion of doxic power over wives is perpetuated by the lack of recognition of the need for a wives' social space as articulated by the HCSO. Her assertion that wives could just 'meet in the playparks' is indicative of how women were cast out from the public spaces of the garrison into the private world of the MQ and ranked patches. Framing their requirement to have a central meeting space outside of the patches or away from their offspring, if indeed they did have offspring, as not legitimate or valid, instead offering 'the parks' reinforced their lack of positionality and inclusion as adult members of the community. Whilst not herself a direct serving soldier, as an employee of the MOD and representing the CoC in Fimonue, this degrading and negative attitude towards wives could arguably be interpreted by the wives' community as indicative of the wider military attitude, reinforcing their positions as nothing more than adjunctive and dependent on their husbands.

The chapter further contributes to CMS by arguing that more attention must be paid to the socio-spatial dimensions of women's overseas experiences. Not only are wives placed into the private domestic MQs isolating them and leading to potential vulnerabilities, through the performing of tasks on their soldier husband's behalf (such as bringing lunch into the militarised garrison), they continue to privilege his status as public warrior incorporating her domestic endeavours into his militarised duty and privileged status. The perceived and experienced perception of women's positionality as being content to remain in the military quarters needs to be adjusted, ensuring that the CoC works alongside the women to legitimise their roles and positions within the wider garrison. This curious positioning of civilian women, living within and under military hierarchy and 'lawful orders', was evidenced throughout the chapter, demonstrating the myriad systems of domination and symbolic violence at work. Their positionality is overwritten by wider military jurisdiction, indicating how they are indeed imposed upon by the army's systems of domination. Nowhere was Bourdieu's channel of communication for symbolic violence more audible than in Beatrice's narrative requiring women to remain located in the domestic/feminine space. This seemingly reinforces the army's [unwritten] doxic truth that it is the soldier husband who is entitled to occupy the public/military space of the camp, providing stark evidence of the army's delegitimising of overseas army wives from a public identity into that of the helpmate in the married quarter.

The women's experiences narrated in this chapter are indicative both of how they perceive their position against the military geography of Fimonue and how they embody this positionality. Daphne embraced the social status that such ranked location gave her. The lack of privacy in the gardens of the enlisted MQ as related by Annie, reinforces the myopic panopticon of the garrison (and of other army wives) impacting on how women are perceived, querying the line between public and private within the family home of the enlisted soldier and his family. As with Georgia in chapter one, there are pockets of positive reflections in the narratives, such as Angel with her 'result' in discovering the

Keep Fit class, but the seemingly ontological experience of overseas army wives is of restriction, seemingly 'excess baggage', not having a validated position beyond the MQ and their military marriage. The evidence thus suggests that wives experienced the geographical confines and militarily constructed garrison as an expression of patriarchy, confining them to the feminised private space of the married patches.

The gendered location of women in Fimonue has emerged as a key theme in this chapter whilst continuing to reveal the adjunctive position women experienced whilst living overseas. They are positioned within the army's fields of play whilst struggling to legitimise their positioning behind the wire. These themes will be continued as we now turn to the intimacies of military marriage.

## **Analysis Chapter Three – Marriage and the Army Wife**

### **Introduction – Analysing Army Marriages**

Army marriages need to be placed in their unique context. The specificity of overseas military marriages must be identified and grounded against relevant recent sociological literature on heterosexual marriage. This chapter directly address the first research question; utilising extant research within the sociology of marriage and the sociology of intimacy, it probes how wives experienced overseas military marriage. It further contributes to the sociology of incorporated wives and continues the discussion of overseas army wives' militarisation. With relevant research on the sociology of (specifically heterosexual) marriage, and the sociology of incorporation being minimal, this is the first project which seeks to understand the day-to-day realities of women's lives in overseas military marital spaces.

The literature review put forward arguments suggesting that marriage was historically (for Western cultures (Lupton, 1998; Hochschild, 2012; Smart, 1984; Smart, 2011)) constructed to offer “more to men” (Clulow & Mattinson, 1989) than women, with some even arguing that the world of marriage “[w]as a potential and actual prison in which women might be physically and emotionally incarcerated” (Clark, 1991, p. 140). Such rigid gender patterns locating women into the domestic space of the marital home, embedding the “normative ideas of marriage” (Lauer & Yodanis, 2010, p. 65) are indicative of the gendered expectations of marriage (Tichenor, 2005, p. 26) still placed on marriage in the early twenty-first century. Even though army wife is not synthesised to the extent as housewife (Oakley, 1970), it is still emblematic of the “master signifier” (Nayak & Kehily, 2006, p. 466) positioning of dominance exerted on civilian women married to soldiers, both linguistically subordinated and physically positioned into the domestic private sphere of the MQ.

Parallel to these somewhat negative views of marriage stands Giddens' (1991), Plummer's (2003) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2004) work focusing on the profound changes (Lewis, 2001, p. 69)

occurring in the world of intimate relations. These are relationships between more equally based partners (Plummer, 2003, p. 26), where individualisation has encouraged more choice (Giddens, 1992) and that individualistic adults are “less conscious of duties owing to one another, to children” (Lewis, 2001, p. 83). These developments result in the pure relationship which is “not anchored in external conditions of social or economic life” (1991, p. 89), rather it is “one in which external criteria have become dissolved” (1991, p. 6).

Having established the oppositional stance between the historic gendered positionings within marriage and intimacy, we should establish their relevance for an examination of army marriage. In order to understand military marriage, the doxic structures embedded into the physical and material construction of these intimate relationships are of significance. As demonstrated, army wives’ location into the domestic sphere of the MQs and their associative responsibilities of running the house and raising the children is culturally expected by the military. Thus whilst army couples are free to choose whom they married, (a key component of Giddens’ theory (1991; 1992)), the equality that he claims as fundamental to this transformation of intimacies must be explored within army marriage to ascertain whether wives experience their positioning as adjunctive and dependent or as equal and therefore transformative.

This chapter investigates the emotional meaning of army wives’ incorporation, how women ontologically experienced this incorporation and their responses to their exceptional positionality as (temporarily overseas) dependent incorporated women. It demonstrates that whilst wives may appear seemingly complicit in their own domination, this view needs to be qualified through an analysis of the specific parameters and constraints of Fimonue life. Hyde (2012) briefly considers army wives’ emotional labour (Hochschild A. R., 1979), however this chapter goes further by exploring how these women experience the [un]private space of the military marital home, locating them in the personal sphere of the domestic yet still within the panoptic public sphere of the ranked

patches. The chapter examines the nature of emotion work undertaken or refused by these army wives, its commodification by their husbands and thus ultimately by the army.

The thesis did not set out to investigate the intimacies of military marriage – in part due to my own insider position. Throughout the interviews, many did not disclose personal details on their marriage. Given my imbrication as both a wife, AFF employee and researcher, I did not pursue intimate revelations; what was audible, however, was the uneasy truce between wife and army. Interviewees reflected on whatever they chose in relation to their army marriage. Frequently, they posed their situatedness as army wives against the chronology of their husband's career, charting their incorporation alongside *his* postings, *his* promotions and *his* purpose within the army itself. Where women did reflect on intimacies between husband and wife, they requested these be anonymised, or, in one case, removed from the transcript. In a world where both interviewer and interviewee were intimately connected, explicitly sharing intimacies within the military-constructed world, such revelations were costly. Unlike Hyde, with my privileged insider status, over-familiar involvement between the researcher and the researched made us both vulnerable. For those who *revealed* too much, subsequently questioning whether I would inadvertently betray their confidences, or for me who *knew* too much, becoming a holder of dark secrets, ethically conflicted both with my duty of care and, more significantly, as a sister-army wife.

In a century marked by a gradual levelling in gender relations, such total incorporation can seem hard to understand. To an outsider, the realities of contemporary overseas military marriage and wives' perceived lack of agency seems to run counter to much current thinking about Western marriages and partnerships as a union between more equal partners (Lewis, 2001).<sup>294</sup> However, as this thesis argues, wives occupy Fimonue's MQs not as the legal equal of their soldier husband but as his *dependent*; located three-and-a-half-thousand kilometres away from the UK, often without

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<sup>294</sup> Whether this is actually the case is beyond the scope of this thesis

access to their own economic resources, they are only cardholders on the joint bank account, potentially with no money of their own in a UK bank account<sup>295</sup>. Irrespective of the CoC's assertions to the contrary, women believed that if they reported domestic tensions, including violence, this could culminate in the soldier being publicly removed from their MQ home into the 'block'<sup>296</sup> or the 'mess', directly impacting on his promotional chances. A significant number of interviewees, and representatively across the wider army, had moved from their family/childhood home into their SFA without previously co-habiting with their soldier boyfriends or even having lived independently. Once they had children, as many soon did, their dependency and potential vulnerability was increased by the complications of any potential return, as commercial flights back from Fimonue for most of the year were expensive and, during the summer, booked months in advance. The army will only pay for the cost of relocation if "a break up of a marriage or civil partnership that has resulted in a change of PStatCat and has been formally recorded on JPA<sup>297</sup>" (MoD, 2018, pp. 6-3-9), the military acronyms/jargon further indicating how the private marriage is infused with military oversight and control indicative of overt militarisation.

One wife<sup>298</sup> informally made me aware of her personal situation. This extract from my field diary encapsulates overseas women's difficult and vulnerable position ensuing from their dependency on the military system, their remote location and their husbands' structural dominance.

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<sup>295</sup> Whilst day to day they are 'free' to come and go as they please, if a wife was to return to the UK for longer than 28 days, Welfare was supposed to be informed. This would then impact on the soldier's allowances as whilst overseas there is an additional allowance for a soldier if he is accompanied by his family. This is known as the Local Overseas Allowance (LOA). Please see Appendix Eleven, page 349. Interestingly you will note the difference in the allocation for corporal and below allowance for accompanying children and from Lt Col upwards.

<sup>296</sup> The block is a colloquialism for single (or unaccompanied) soldiers' Single Living Accommodation (SLA)

<sup>297</sup> Personal Status Category (PStat Cat) are the definitions of Personal Status into which personnel are placed for the purpose of determining entitlements to benefits are entitled to. This includes denoting what marital status a soldier has. PStatCat1 denotes the soldier as married or in a registered civil marriage (MoD, 2007). For further clarification please access

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/49016/20071008Personal\\_Status\\_Categories\\_LandHIVE\\_IMU.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49016/20071008Personal_Status_Categories_LandHIVE_IMU.pdf). JPA is the Joint Personnel Administration database used by the Tri-Services to track this information.

<sup>298</sup> Not a participant

*Spoke to a wife yesterday, even though not a participant was happy for me to use her as an example of incorporation and supposed 'passivity'. Things have been 'pretty bad' at home between her and her husband, really big big rows, bordering on the abusive (his to hers). From what she says, it stems from the questioning of his authority, not automatically doing as she is 'told'. Worryingly, she is pregnant and wants to get out but doesn't even know where to start. He kicks her out, she packs her bags and then goes to leave. He then begs her to stay saying he will get help. Each time she gets so close to leaving but then is faced with the reality of the situation. She would have to drive straight to the airport, pay for the next flight at significant cost, find somewhere to hide given he might follow her, and then when she gets back to the UK, where will she go? Everything she has is tied into being over here and even though desperate to go, she realises that she can't just up and leave. She cannot go to Welfare and ask for help because it could impact on his career and also for her to be entitled to any help in moving back, they have to formally separate<sup>299</sup>. She feels trapped into this situation which is seemingly abusive yet for her to ask for help she risks his career and then potential repercussions. Life is completely tangled here, women feeling that they have no means of escape, that they are bound into this world and if they want to get out then it is nigh on impossible.*

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<sup>299</sup> On declaration of formal separation, a soldier's legal status on JPA is changed from PCatStat 1 to PStatCat2 revoking his entitlement to occupy an SFA. The soldier then moves into the block/mess and the wife is issued with a 93-day Notice to Vacate (NTV) form which is proof of forthcoming homelessness (AFF, 2019). The SFA passes into the possession of the spouse for those 93 days (who then ironically becomes the licensee (AFF, 2019)) however it is the soldier who is liable for the cost of the house and rates with his pay being deducted at source. It is only through following this procedure that the wife becomes entitled to a paid move home – as the UWO explaining this to me so succinctly phrased it “we control bloody everything”. Once the wife has been issued with the 93 days NTV she can then apply to her Local Housing Authority (LHA) to be put onto the waiting list for accommodation as she is faced with potential homelessness. Given the peripatetic nature of army wives however, they might not have a 'home' LHA and will have to nominate one and according to correspondence from Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) (see Appendix Twelve, page 350 for full correspondence) “the council will not grant housing to divorced wives if they have no ties within that area”. The AFF does caution that “the allocation of an SFA to an estranged spouse/civil partner after change in PStat category may be seen by Local Housing Authorities (LHA) as re-housing and may prejudice LHA housing allocations. For this reason, try to delay the change in PStat category until you return to the UK and are allocated an SFA” (AFF, 2019) which arguably reinforces the vulnerability of women overseas through an institutional encouragement to remain in the marriage and SFA. The MoD does provide temporary transit accommodation for separated spouses however the emphasis in the documentation surrounding this facility is on its temporary basis and not a permanent home for returning separated families (MoD, 2018).

Whilst to outside observers she is arguably passive to her situation, reinforcing her ultimate subordination to the dominant soldier husband despite her temporary refusal to do 'as she is told', her narrative is indicative of the complexities of this situation for a woman pregnant and vulnerable overseas. Implicitly husbands, and by extension the CoC, are in charge. This chapter seeks to elucidate how intimate authority is exerted over women deployed overseas, and their negotiation of this. To do so it must be cognisant of these twenty-first century army wives' specialised living conditions.

Rippling beneath the surface of this woman's experiences, is the soldier husband's position as privileged warrior, brought into greater focus, at least whilst overseas by his head-of-the-household status. During the fourteen years preceding their Fimonue tour, the Bears had participated in some of the most brutal ground warfare since World War Two as demonstrated by the medal bar in Figure 31<sup>300</sup>.



*Figure 31 - Medals from a much-decorated Bear<sup>301</sup>, visible representation/reminder (worn on all formal occasions), of the warrior husband's raison d'etre, and of the state's plaudits and recognition when the mission is accomplished.*

Nineteen interviewees' husbands had completed at least one combat tour, fourteen had completed multiple deployments. But, as Atherton suggests, the expectations placed upon soldiers and his

<sup>300</sup> Replicated across infantry battalions in the wider British army

<sup>301</sup> Reproduced with kind permission Captain C.M. Earl

purpose in fighting for queen and country obliquely ties the woman to hearth and home (Atherton, 2009, p. 826). Obedience to orders is drilled into and demanded of all soldiers. It is therefore hardly surprising that they carry expectations of being obeyed into the domestic sphere, expectations generally although not always fulfilled. Chloe, a rare (audible) disobeyer, was alone in expressing her refusal to give credence to her soldier husband's warrior status. She reflected on his current menial position within the barracks stating that

at the minute in my eyes he cleans the bloody bins and works behind the bar, he's not a typical soldier<sup>302</sup>

leading her to probe how he addressed her within the MQ.

[H]e'll walk in and like "Where's my pop?" And I'll be like "is it not in the fridge?" "What can't you see there's none left, and didn't you think to get me some today"? And I'll be like, "don't speak to me like you talk to the lads [...] if you are going to come in and row with me over some pop, then you can get in the car and go to the shop yourself, oh wait a minute – they are closed!"<sup>303</sup>

She demonstrated that despite (or perhaps because of) being spoken to as if she is 'one of the lads', she will not defer to his demands. Geoff's attitude that it is her responsibility to get his 'pop' indicates the "dominant cultural norms" (Hawthorn K. , 2018, p. 2) at play within Fimonue, as the woman at home, this is *her* responsibility. The positioning of women into the MQ's domesticated space, running the house and attending to her soldier husband's needs, embodied by Geoff's demand for 'pop', illustrates the institutional coercive control (Atherton, 2009; Anderson, 2009; Gray, 2014), encouraged through the army's doxa, experienced by overseas wives. Geoff's expectations of 'pop' awaiting his return is indicative of wives' dominated status, seemingly answerable to their husbands' bidding, just as their husbands are answerable to the army. Yet, unlike a soldier, Chloe questioned his right to issue instructions, potentially thus diminishing his self-perceived status and 'worth' (Rubin, 1976; Jamieson, 1998). Furthermore, she refused the army's orthodoxy of the dominated domestic partner within the military marriage. It is possible, albeit

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<sup>302</sup> Interviewee #6 1288 – 1289

<sup>303</sup> Interviewee #6 1044 – 1047

unlikely, that if Chloe had perceived Geoff as a ‘typical [warrior] soldier’ she would have acceded to his demands.

She explored her refusal noting that

if he comes in and is in a foul mood [...] [t]hen I know he has had a really bad day at work [...] I just think, I am not going to walk on *egg shells*<sup>304</sup>, we just won’t talk till he’s ready [...] If you talk to me, or if you come home and say “Oh no we’ve got no pop, Babes would you mind going to the shop today”, I will then turn around and say “You know what, I’ll go to the shop for you now. I’ll go get some pop, you go and have a shower, sort yourself out, you’ve been at work all day, I’ll go shops”. But if you are going to come in and row with me over some pop, then you can get in the car and go to the shop yourself [...] So I am the sort of person, if you ask politely, I will do it for you. If you bark at me then I won’t.<sup>305</sup>

Chloe indicated not being intimidated, that she is ‘not going to walk on egg shells’, refusing his hyper-masculinity formed in the gendered behaviour social environment (Peralta & Tuttle, 2013, p. 256) of the military to coerce her into performing certain tasks. Chloe’s forceful response to Geoff’s demands is notably absent in many narratives. A strong character, she demonstrated how, within the patriarchal structural conditions of Fimonue, she is at a microlevel an active participant against her own subordination (Issacs, 2002, p. 132). Because of Chloe’s lack of “willingness of one individual to be obedient to another” (Atherton, 2009, p. 824), she deviates from the expected standard “within a strict military hierarchy [that] of power and subordination” (Atherton, 2009, p. 824).

Rebecca also conducted low level refusal of the traditionally expected role within the household, unprepared to sacrifice herself even further to the demands of her husband’s career.

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<sup>304</sup> My emphasis

<sup>305</sup> Interviewee #6 1033 – 1054 my emphasis

[S]acrificing my career, I think he [...] realises that he actually cannot ask me to do anything more. [...]. He would like to come home to a spotless house, dinner ready on the table. He would. But I'm just not prepared to do that.<sup>306</sup>

Aware of Issac's expectations, she is nevertheless unwilling to enact the required role, intimating that she sacrificed herself enough through her double relocations as an F&C wife. Rather than performing housewifely duties as a replacement or removal activity (Goffman, 1961), she constructs these tasks as further sacrifice on his behalf. Consciously aware of the traditional role seemingly expected of her and of soldiers' prevailing attitude towards wives' domesticity, she was not prepared to perform this role.

### **National Averages and the Army Marriage**

To better understand army marriages, it is important to place them in their local and national context. Many interviewees married their childhood sweetheart, almost half of the women either pregnant or having their first child prior to marriage and moving into their SFA. However, only seven interviewees cohabited prior to marriage: of these, two enlisted<sup>307</sup> and two officer couples<sup>308</sup> cohabited prior to their husband's joining the military; the enlisted men in the remaining three couples<sup>309</sup> were already serving soldiers. According to Lewis, twentieth century marriage underwent "profound changes" (2001, p. 69) with women "no longer obliged to marry in order to survive economically, although the wages of many are extremely low" (Lewis, 2001, p. 69). As marriage necessity declined due to "the collapse of the assumption that childbirth will take place inside marriage" (Lewis, 2001, p. 74), there has been significant increase in cohabitation with eighty five percent of women cohabiting prior to marriage (ONS, 2016) with the national average age on marriage rising to thirty-five (ONS, 2019). Despite such a statistic the military's views on cohabitation are unequivocal.

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<sup>306</sup> Interviewee #11, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview, 638 – 642

<sup>307</sup> Jolene/Jack and Chloe/Geoff

<sup>308</sup> Daphne/Des and Fiona/Luke

<sup>309</sup> Gwen/Kevin, Jenny/Robin, Beatrice/Norman

“Under no circumstances may Service [...] personnel co-habit with a partner (who is not their legal spouse/civil partner) in SFA or SSFA. ‘Cohabitation’ describes a situation where the accommodation becomes the home of another person” (MoD, 2017).

Lack of cohabitation proved significant for the newly married interviewees who reflected on finding themselves learning to live as an army wife with the man who was now their husband. Annie related how,

we agreed to marry and then we got married in the May 2014, three weeks later I was out here [...] - So it was all a bit much. [...] I think that's why I struggled because it [...], it was like a whole new life of being married and living, we hadn't lived together before [...] [a]nd then I am introduced to this whole army life style [...], it was quite a lot to take.<sup>310</sup>

Rosie, too, had a similar whirlwind experience, having met her husband in February she relocated

[j]ust at the end of August because I had to be [in Fimonue] fourteen days before we get married, because of the banns at the church and stuff. [...] So legally I had to be [here] two weeks before the wedding. [...] So it was right at the end of August that I came out. [...] And then we got married out here in the church.<sup>311</sup>

Rosie admitted that she “had no idea what to expect. I had no military friends, I didn't ... literally nothing”<sup>312</sup>.

Both these young women agreed to move overseas without having cohabited with their husbands or understanding the realities of life as an overseas army wife. During her first year Annie admitted

really strugg[ing], to the point where I felt like I had made a huge mistake coming out here [...] I am used to living the way I want to live.<sup>313</sup>

Annie had to negotiate a myriad of changes in a short period of time, becoming wife to a man that she had never lived with, previously seeing him infrequently at the weekend and during his leave, army commitments dependent. Concurrently, she had to contend with moving overseas under military jurisdiction. As she noted, she was used to living as a civilian with little idea of what life in

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<sup>310</sup> Interviewee #13 192 – 200

<sup>311</sup> Interviewee #9 130 – 137

<sup>312</sup> Interviewee #9 159 – 161

<sup>313</sup> Interviewee #13 253 – 261

Fimonue would involve. Her husband meanwhile was little equipped to deal with the mundanity of everyday life. She reflected that Ray had

never, [...] apart from living in the block, he'd never moved out. He had never privately rented, he had never done anything like that. [...] Because when we moved in, he didn't understand what it took to keep a home going and changing a light bulb was just hard enough for him [laughs].<sup>314</sup>

This reported lack of knowledge how 'to keep a home going', of the day-to-day repetitive tasks of housework "something so mundane and familiar, but yet so widely disliked" (Davis & Greenstein, 2013, p. 65) led Annie to become territorial over the house, viewing it as 'her' as opposed to 'their' field of play.

I am in that house more than he is, I've got it exactly how I want it and then he comes in and does silly little things which are really silly in a normal person's mind but to me, I am like, you have totally come in disrespected this house.<sup>315</sup>

Annie is consciously aware of what she invested of herself into the house which had become an extension of her, with Ray's apparent lack of respect for maintaining it as she wanted standing as an analogy for his attitude towards her. In her first few months overseas, Annie, underwent a number of significant changes: she left her job, her family, married and moved in with a man with whom she had been in a long-distance relationship, becoming responsible for a home that was not of her choosing, all whilst living within a closed garrison community. This was compounded by a husband who had seemingly not adapted to his newly married status.

I think it was the whole thing, we hadn't lived together, then we'd got married so this massive commitment and then we'd come out here, he's used to this lifestyle, [...] He's not used to coming home, you know you've got a wife waiting for you at home, you can't just go to the gym and do as you please, somebody is sat at home waiting for you and has been sat at home all day bored.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Interviewee #13 205 – 213

<sup>315</sup> Interviewee #13 472 – 475

<sup>316</sup> Interviewee #13 369 – 373

For most newlyweds, the initial period of marriage is a time of adjustment; however, many women married to soldiers, undertake this transition on their own. Annie related how Ray “wasn't around very much when he got here either, he was away a lot in the beginning”<sup>317</sup>. Like many newlywed army wives, she was isolated into a married patch knowing two women, finding her way without the supportive presence of her husband. Annie was not alone in remarking that although many of her civilian friends informed her that,

you knew what he did for a living before [you] married, you knew what you were letting yourself in for but actually I don't think you really do until you experience it. I think you've got to experience it to understand it.<sup>318</sup>

On arrival overseas, Annie felt isolated, located in the domestic and private sphere of the house, waiting for her husband to return home. As Finch (1983) argues, mobile husbands have a purpose despite their relocation whereas following wives are at risk of isolation and atrophy. The myriad of specific changes that newly married army wives (unlike their civilian counterparts) undergo specifically on overseas postings, moving behind the wire and living under military jurisdiction are crucial to an understanding of their narratives.

Unlike Annie and Rosie, Gwen and Kevin had cohabited in the UK prior to marriage. Like Annie, she had been employed in a career that she was passionate about, sacrificing it to follow Kevin. Interestingly, Gwen earned substantially more than Kevin prior to moving overseas yet, through her marriage and relocation, she demonstrated that she was prepared to give up her career in exchange for her dependent status. Gwen recounted how prior to moving in together, the general attitude amongst Kevin's (military) friends was that

they think we're mental and that we should do it<sup>319</sup>, but we rented just for a year and four months out [...] which cost us an absolute fortune [...] But, we, like I was not prepared to even consider marrying someone that I hadn't lived with.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Interviewee #13 261 – 262

<sup>318</sup> Interviewee #13 435 – 437

<sup>319</sup> Get married without living together

<sup>320</sup> Interviewee # 10 303 – 307

Whilst for Gwen cohabiting was the natural precursor to marriage, Kevin's friends' attitude replicates the prevailing outlook that as SFAs are available for married but not cohabiting couples, marriage is the easiest (and cheapest) option and of course the one sanctioned by the military as evidenced by housing being available immediately a soldier changes their PStatCat on JPA. This results in young army couples not being subject to potential monetary restrictions, or lack of available affordable housing in the civilian world<sup>321</sup>. Thus, while there are restrictions as to the type of house or its location, one is provided. Gwen reflected on the mentality behind the provision of military accommodation

But [...] are you making a social environment where you get, [...] where you get your house, you get married to get your house because it's cheaper than renting<sup>322</sup>

encouraging young couples to potentially marry quickly without knowing each other.

Not only do army wives marry young, as a cohort, they bear children at a younger age than their civilian counterparts. The UK national average age at which women marry is thirty-five (ONS, 2019). By contrast, the average age at which the interviewees in this study married was twenty-four. This eleven-year gap warrants investigation. From the twenty-nine wives, twelve had children at the time of their marriage. The average age of this subgroup was twenty-three, twelve years younger than the national average at primigravida (ONS, 2017).

The ONS further states that the average age at primigravida of either unemployed women or women in intermediate or routine occupations as defined by the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) (ONS, 2010) is between twenty-one and thirty years. Of the twelve women pregnant before marriage, nine correlated with the national average within the NS-SEC bracketing of

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<sup>321</sup> In Fimonue, their entitlement as has been discussed is based on rank restrictions. In the UK it is based on family size entitlement. See Appendix Ten, page 348 for further clarification.

<sup>322</sup> Interviewee #10 1007 – 1009

in education, recently left school or undertaking intermediate and routine occupations<sup>323</sup>. Tabitha, unexpectedly pregnant at nineteen, intimated that James enlisted specifically to provide security for his young family, stating that he was “joining the army, I want to provide for our new baby”<sup>324</sup>. The *quid pro quo* of his providing for the baby was that in order to live together as a family, they had to be married. Amy (19) and Carrie (20) both found themselves pregnant when their then boyfriends were at Catterick, they were married immediately after their passing out parades<sup>325</sup> and within a couple of weeks living in SFA. Angel (20) also became pregnant prior to marriage as did Georgia (20) and Candice (22); however, all three husbands were already serving. From the remaining four who had children prior to marriage with pre-serving soldiers, two were tertiary educated: Amelia (28) worked in a professional role, Beatrice (20) undertook two years of tertiary education before becoming a full-time mother<sup>326</sup>; Tamsin (32) was employed in a professional capacity and Jenny (32) worked in a managerial role<sup>327</sup>, neither were tertiary educated. Undeniably this is a small interview sample with a much smaller subgroup of women, however the requirement to be married (or in a civil partnership) to be allocated SFA contributes to the lower than national average marital age of army wives. Chloe being twenty-three at primigravida stands alone within this group as Geoff was not serving nor did he join the army until much later.

Kefalas et al argue that “[t]he transition to adulthood is the staging ground for decisions to marry, cohabit, or bear children: as such statuses are often seen as certifying one's passage to maturity” (Kefalas, et al., 2011, p. 850). Some of the women reflected on this passage to maturity (or lack thereof). Candice, herself a young mother, had spent some time living in rented accommodation

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<sup>323</sup> In the statistics provided by the ONS, there are significantly higher number of younger mothers falling within the intermediate or routine occupations in the Under 25 age category, with both those married (64%) and unmarried (67%) of the total population.

<sup>324</sup> Interviewee #21 163

<sup>325</sup> The celebration parade marking the initial sixteen-week training course at the Infantry Training School

<sup>326</sup> Camille had a child by a different father almost a decade prior to marrying Richard. Thus, while she belongs in this latter category, given the specific circumstances she stands somewhat apart. The rest of this cohort had children within a 12-18month period before marrying the child's father, the serving soldier to whom they were still married during the interview stage.

<sup>327</sup> The remaining two women Camille and Charlene who had children prior to marriage chose to not disclose any further information as to their personal circumstances.

prior to marriage. Ross had been on active duty overseas during the time she had lived in rented accommodation so even though married they had not permanently lived together outside of SFA. She explained how, in Fimonue, she found exposure to younger wives challenging,

there are way too many young people that have no clue. Because they have come out here and got married and they are like 18, they are kids [...] and they have no idea about life in general and they come here, and they act like kids and they are idiots, that's what it is. [...] [P]eople down there<sup>328</sup> just umm, gone from Mum's house to their married home which is just not normal. [...] [L]ike teenagers, [...] married with kids and its weird.<sup>329</sup>

Sonia similarly reflected on some Battalion's wives' immaturity,

I find it really difficult [...] in briefs<sup>330</sup> [...] these 19 years old that have no life-experience asking stupid questions, it infuriates me because I just want to say to them, "wake up, you know, how old are you?" And then you stood back and you think, "hang on a minute, you've not done this. You've obviously been childhood sweethearts, possibly your first boyfriend, you've now married, live away from your parents where you have relied on your parents for everything, you probably don't know how to cook a roast dinner properly and you've got a child" and I am thinking, "oh my God, how scary must that be for you".<sup>331</sup>

In relating her frustration with the immaturity of the questions, Sonia acknowledged the difficulties these young women face. They have assumed responsibility for running the house, bringing up children, living within the militarised environment where attending wife briefings is an expected (if not mandatory, see Figure 32) part of daily life, all without kinship support thousands of kilometres away from home.

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<sup>328</sup> Due to her growing family, Candice and Ross had moved from one married estate to another

<sup>329</sup> Interviewee #5 224 – 253

<sup>330</sup> Wives' Briefings were held at both company and battalion level during the Bears' time in Fimonue as a way of communicating with wives – providing them with information as to the rotation of duties, deployments, the Unit Move. Wives were not compelled to go to company briefs however during the preparation for the Unit Move, if wives did not attend the main briefings then they were not provided with their new address in the UK – they had instead to go to Welfare and explain their lack of attendance.

<sup>331</sup> Interviewee #7 1521 – 1527

Unit Move 17 Final Unit Soldiers and Families Presentation - Thu 30 Mar  
1630- 1800.

All families and personnel leaving [REDACTED] must attend this mandatory briefing as directed by the CO. The brief will provide the most up to date information for all leaving [REDACTED] over the summer. Speakers include:

A. Unit move plan in detail, Wives Recce feedback, Pay & allowances, Carillion Amey UK Housing, March Out procedures, Removals, Customs & Immigration, AFF and more.

Entertainment and snacks provided for children.

New address list release will be linked to attendance.

Please engage and support this activity as a lot of work and effort has been produced for your benefit.

Please share with friends and those not on this site from the Bn.

Thank you.

*Figure 32 - Social media post<sup>332</sup> advertising the 'mandatory' briefing in which release of future housing details were directly linked*

What one might term a precocious passage to maturity, relative to the general population, even though alleviated by the cheap cost of housing is one that is institutionally sanctioned and conditioned. Any consideration of the high number of younger women married overseas within Fimonue must be cognisant of the institutional conditions encouraging young couples into marriage and parenthood without prior cohabitation, imposing a passage to maturity and responsibility nuanced and influenced by the institutional hierarchy to which their unmarried counterparts outside of the wire would not be exposed.

### **The Army Wife and her “jobs for the day”**

In order to understand the implications of military marriage for army wives, it is necessary to examine interviewees’ day to day realities and how they negotiated the expected performance of their army wifhood. Nowhere is it explicitly stated that these tasks should be performed, yet on first arriving a wife becomes imbued with such expectations. The lived realities were that women’s default locale became their MQ, maintaining the family, providing succour to their soldier husbands, positioned into the socially guided, militarily acceptable, feminine helpmate role. A minority of interviewees indicated willing acceptance of this role. Their activities reconfirmed “a complex of

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<sup>332</sup> Private social media group

socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine ‘natures’” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126).

Charlene, an experienced wife, recounted how her husband provided her with a daily list of errands.

Scott said to me today, ‘I need to pay my mess bill, can you get me some newspaper’, so I had my list of jobs for today<sup>333</sup>

Despite working part-time, active on various committees and sports club within Fimonue, Charlene, articulated that having a list of chores and running the household was her way of supporting her husband,

I believe [...] that if he can come home, if he hasn't got to worry about the children, he hasn't got to worry about dinner [...] as long as everything at home is ticking, he knows that he can come home, take his boots off [...] supper's provided, he should never have to worry about what is happening in this house because that is *my job*, that's for me. I am like a blue arse fly, taking the children here, taking them to the library, to the theatre club<sup>334</sup>

She is demonstrably underscoring “the assumption that wives are essentially responsible for their husband’s production” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 144). Charlene dedicated herself to working on Scott’s behalf, despite paid employment during their various postings. She demonstrated her full incorporation into his career and the acceptance of the army’s doxic expectation of her position within it assuming “responsibility for whatever ‘needs’ doing” (Finch, 1983, p. 82). Charlene willingly placed primacy on her husband’s career aspirations admitting that “[t]he army comes first, your family is a close second, but the army do come first.”<sup>335</sup> Her belief was that “Charlene and Scott are a really good team”<sup>336</sup> and her behaviour mimicked this sentiment. Notwithstanding her willingness to enact this role on his behalf, I believe it is worth considering how Charlene and other such wives are arguably “deep acting” (Jamieson, 1999, p. 487; Hochschild, 1979). Not only does Charlene legitimate her role behind the wire, but in enacting these tasks, stressing the solidity of her and Scott

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<sup>333</sup> Interviewee #18, 602 – 603 She was not alone in having to pay her husband’s mess bill; one of my regular tasks ‘because you have more time’ was to pay my husband’s monthly mess bills!

<sup>334</sup> Interviewee #18, 631 – 636

<sup>335</sup> Interviewee #18, 482

<sup>336</sup> Interviewee #18 751

as a team, her willingness to support his career, facilitated a way for her to “maintain a sense that their relationship and her role within it is ‘ever so happy’” (Jamieson, 1999). Arguably for some women, faced with the multiple dislocation of relocation, reiterating the strength of their relationship and fervent belief in the importance of his militarised role, legitimated her sacrifices; vicariously living through husbands’ ever more senior positions provides her *raison d’être* within her incorporated life.

Other interviewees did not display deep acting in embracing the domestic role of army wifehood whilst employed outside of the MQ. Gwen reflected upon her domestic burden when first arriving in Fimonue which despite returning to work had not rebalanced.

[W]hen we moved here the balance tipped because he was going to work and I was staying at home, [...] I can't really expect him to do anything, [...] I just started doing it all. [...] when I started the job [...] “you will need to pick up some of the slack and help me” [...] that lasted about a week [...] we just never got that balance back.<sup>337</sup>

Gwen, though initially happy to perform the traditional domestic army wife role whilst unemployed, shouldered the second burden of domesticity after returning to work. Continued assumption of this secondary burden demonstrates tacit agreement that wives reproduce “not merely the activity and artefact of domestic life, but the material embodiment of wifely and husbandly roles, and derivatively, of womanly [...] conduct” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 144). Rebecca reflected on this womanly conduct,

They *do* wanna come home and be taken care of, whereas for me who does an eight-hour day, then comes home, you know, I’m not gonna wanna pander to him. [...] And that’s what Isaac wants. And I mean we see it with our friends, and you know, Issac must think sometimes, well you know “Why isn’t Rebecca doing it?”<sup>338</sup>

Despite Rebecca’s full-time job within Fimonue, Isaac presupposed it to be the woman’s role to run the house and provide succour. Whilst this concept of the wife enacting emotional labour or the

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<sup>337</sup> Interviewee #10 542 – 566

<sup>338</sup> Interviewee #11, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview, 611 – 615

second shift (Hochschild, 1979; Hochschild, 1990) is not exclusive to the army, it is nevertheless the “habit forming force” (Swartz, 1997, p. 103) of the army wife.

Whereas newer wives like Rebecca contested their position within Fimonue and the MQs, Charlene accepted her helpmate role, performing it to the best of her ability. By stylising herself into the traditional army wife, supporting her husband, placing the army first, she embodied the symbolic domination the military hierarchy imposed upon her. Through accepting her domestic positionality she legitimated her position not only behind the wire but within her MQ and military marriage. This enactment of the helpmate role conforms to West and Zimmerman’s statement that “[r]oles are *situated* identities” (1987, p. 128) and in Charlene’s case facilitated her identity creation and purpose alongside her husband’s external, public career. Whilst to some, it might be the continuation of the patterns of inequality (Bowlby, et al., 1989, p. 18) for Charlene it is a validation of herself as a crucial contributor to her husband’s career, and by extension, to her family’s well-being.

Wives, through doxic expectation rather than any codified manual, become responsible for the domestic private sphere of the MQ. This doxa locating women into the domestic performing the wifely duties is indication of masculine domination (McNay, 1999, p. 99) at work in Fimonue. This inscribes itself onto the “objective structure of the social world” (McNay, 1999, p. 99) which in turn becomes “incorporated and reproduced in the habitus of individuals” (McNay, 1999, p. 99). Arguably the habitus of army wives is thus created and for some, such as Charlene and Daphne in her willingness to participate in committees, furthering Des’ career as we saw in chapter one, seemingly happily performed.

For Rebecca and Gwen, being positioned behind the wire, unwillingly shouldering the domestic burden such habitus is consciously refuted. Indeed, exposure to the rules of the game left these women finding themselves lost and cast adrift. In learning the expectations of army wifehood and in

reflection upon their appropriation of this role, they were aware of the demanded performance and seemingly refused to conform. If more women such as Gwen, Rebecca and Chloe, in her refusal to go and buy Geoff pop, worked to shape the habitus of army wife (a key part of Bourdieu's theory), then perhaps the overseas field habitus would develop into more acceptable roles that these women would be willing to inhabit (Bourdieu, 1977a). It could however also be argued that for as long as many women who follow their soldier husbands accept living under the total institution of the army, (thereby demonstrating their militarised incorporation), the army wife habitus will endure, enabling the institution to attain full realisation (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 57)

This division of roles between the sexes, achieved by continual privileging of soldier husbands and the domestically incorporated army wives, potentially creates not only patterns of inequality but highlights traditional, patriarchal, masculine and feminine natures, reinforcing stereotypical socially guided perceptions (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). Through reflecting on whether women married to soldiers readily or perforce accept their role within the private domestic sphere, this section has evidenced that women's positioning within MQs reveals the continuation of the dominated social spaces, regardless of their supposed privacy, as the military hierarchy effectively delegitimises army wives into a very specific domesticated locale.

### **Emotion Work of Army Wives**

The battalion year is punctuated by commemorations of the Bears' ancestor regiment's former battle glories, invariably these are stag<sup>339</sup> dinners, interspersed with parades in which wives and children are invited to participate. One such honours the 1759 Battle of Minden during which wives and children walk through the ranks of soldiers handing out roses as Figure 33 shows<sup>340</sup>.

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<sup>339</sup> Stag is military parlance for 'soldier only' events taking place in the mess involving elaborate dinners honouring specific heroic acts by forbear soldiers and regiments.

<sup>340</sup> For further insight into this particular battle and homage please see <https://www.royalhampshireregiment.org/about-the-museum/timeline/battle-of-minden/> (Royal Hampshire Regiment, 2016)



Figure 33 - Battle of Minden Roses Parade<sup>341</sup>

Nominally these events are advertised as an opportunity both for wives to applaud their soldier husbands and for the battalion to express its thanks for wives' invaluable support. These wifely performances, often ritualising glorification of historic battles, facilitate her incorporation and as Callan argues this incorporation is a "condition of *wifehood* in a range of settings where the social character ascribed to a woman is an intimate function of her husband's occupational identity and culture" (1984, p. 1; Fechter, 2008, p. 195)<sup>342</sup>. Implicitly, an army wife participating in these rituals is demonstrably supporting her husband in his warrior role, explicitly condoning and continuing his historically privileged status.

These opportunities to visibly support one's husband (and the battalion) were, during the time of the research project, thinly attended by the same core group of women.

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<sup>341</sup> Personal collection

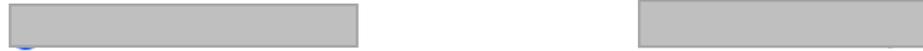
<sup>342</sup> Original emphasis

Minded Day Parade Mon 1 Aug 0800 hrs

The battalion will come together to celebrate the battle of Minden in the form of a parade [redacted] As per tradition all ranks will be presented roses which will be worn throughout the day in remembrance of the battle.

Families are welcome, encouraged to attend and to issue roses. A shaded area and water will be provided.

Happy Minden Day for Monday.



Like



Comment



[redacted] Guted, I'm in the UK. If anyone hasn't been before I'd recommend it- it's a really nice one to go to and see a bit of regimental tradition.

*Figure 34 - Welfare social media post inviting wives and families to attend the parade<sup>343</sup>*

Whilst wives were not officially instructed to be present, simply 'encouraged to attend' (see Figure 34), an unwritten audit of attendance was kept by attendees, non-attendees and by the battalion itself. Those regularly participating in such rituals were viewed as being pushy by less conforming wives yet constructed by the battalion as the 'right kind of wife', demonstrably an asset to her soldier husband, assisting his career. Conversely, non-attendees were perceived as unsupportive, not playing the game, her commitment to his career questionable. Such expectations, the unwritten doxa governing army wives, is the demonstration of the institutionalisation of army marriage, where "social processes and commitments take on a rule-like status reflected in regulative, normative, or cognitive structures that come to govern a particular set of social behaviours" (Lauer & Yodanis, 2010, p. 60)<sup>344</sup>. In Fimonue, a unique set of social behaviours were expected of women married to the army, governed (and policed) by invisible doxic rules imbued onto them through marriage.

For the Bears, Minden Day is just one parade amongst many, albeit overlaid with the tradition and history dear to all regiments of the British Army. For women married to soldiers, such symbolic

<sup>343</sup> Taken from private social media page

<sup>344</sup> See also Meyer and Rowan for an interesting discussion on institutional structures and how "[i]nstitutional rules function as myths which organizations incorporate, gaining legitimacy, resources, stability, and enhanced survival prospects" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 340).

events place in public view their loyalty and thus incorporation into their husbands' battalion and whether they are conforming to expectations which, of course extend far beyond appearing at a parade to distribute roses. Jolene reflected on such expectations placed on women as soon as they arrive on Planet Army.

You're not conforming to the kind of cookie kind of mould that they have set out for you. [...] So their pre-ideas [...] kind of just revolve around these [...] methods that they've instilled to conform. So where you live, what's your husband's rank, it's like these [...] cards [...] you quickly have to have up your sleeve.<sup>345</sup>

Agreeing with Callan who suggested in 1984 that "it would be quite wrong to conclude that the incorporated wife is on the brink of extinction" (1984, p. 4), I contend that army wives are still positioned as incorporated within the context of their overseas deployment through the emotion work that they perform on their husbands' and army's behalf.

Only a small number of the women interviewed discuss this incorporation in explicit terms, making overt reference to the work undertaken on their husband's behalf. Charlene was comfortable with her role supporting and providing emotional labour for Scott, completing her list of errands and ensuring that he did not have to concern himself with running the house. Sandra, another experienced wife, revealed how Bryan, struggled to cope when she returned to the UK.

[H]e was like, "they went to bed and I couldn't just sit down because I had to do the fucking kitchen! I had to do this," and I was like "welcome to my world!!" [laughs]<sup>346</sup>

Even though light-hearted, this narrative is indicative of how Sandra in her army wife capacity assumed the responsibility for the children and running the house. This domestic burden is not unique to army wives, either in the UK or overseas, the assumption that she will dedicate herself to these tasks is still implicitly expected of many wives and female partners. Prior to having children, Sandra found employment at each posting, yet since having her second child, sacrificed any potential career enabling Bryan to pursue promotional chances, accompanying him on postings,

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<sup>345</sup> Interviewee #15 1426 – 1433

<sup>346</sup> Interviewee #4 1732 – 1733

facilitating *his* advancement. With Bryan approaching the end of his twenty-two-year contract<sup>347</sup> they had decided to go 'married unaccompanied'.

I have had a series of jobs, trying to have a career as an army-wife is, yeah, a bit more harder isn't it [...]? Are you going to keep moving round with them [...] I think, you know, moving to the house next year, I am quite nervous about it, but I kind of think, Claudine deserves it, and I do. [...] "[Y]ou've had eighteen years of me following you around!"<sup>348</sup>

Sandra had been career-orientated; leaving school with GCSEs, gaining a professional qualification prior to having children. Yet, she acknowledged that she was unable to develop her career because she continuously followed Bryan, supporting his endeavours, enacting this emotional labour on his behalf, freeing him to pursue his career, compromising her own goals. Nominally, a committed army wife, keen to participate in the community, it is salient to consider the personal cost of this emotional labour. Hochschild suggests that making "feeling and frame consistent with situation is work in which individuals continually and privately engage. But they do so in obeisance to rules not completely of their own making" (1979, p. 563). Sandra is consciously aware of the parameters of the world that she exists within, she has been married to the army for eighteen years, living in nine different houses at the time of her interview. The rules that she follows are not of her own making, yet through her obeisance to the privileging of her husband's role as soldier, she demonstrated her willingness to undertake emotion work, eventually leading to providing emotional labour commoditised by the army. Sandra's commitment to run the house frees Bryan to be a soldier, maintaining his privileged position of warrior.

Arguably emotion work of army wives is exerted through their overt enactment of traditional army wife presentation. Chloe considered the school run<sup>349</sup> as a site of demonstration of army wife performance.

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<sup>347</sup> Standard maximum time an enlisted soldier can serve regardless of rank

<sup>348</sup> Interviewee #4 1633 – 1671

<sup>349</sup> Hyde in her work examining military mobilities considers the school bus stop however despite the wives of her researched battalion similarly discuss wearing their pyjamas the similarities in our focus there ends. She investigates how the "bus stop is host to the fluctuations of everyday intimacies between women, becoming a

Well really we are just normal wives, we want to lounge in our jamas, and if we do the school run in jamas then we will do the school run in our jamas. If I don't want to do my hair or make up that day, I shouldn't have to do my hair or make up that day because it's going to reflect on him. "Oh, your wife wasn't looking her best today". So what?<sup>350</sup>

Whilst ostensibly this extract centres on entitlement to dress and look as she sees fit, the implicit inference goes much deeper. Not only does she refer to the constant panopticon that women experienced whilst enacting their daily lives within Fimonue, she indicated how even her dress and performance during the school run reflected onto her husband, questioning her visible work on behalf of his career. This intersectionality between the personal world of taking her children to school and the public world of being an army wife demonstrates the unique positioning of an overseas army wife where seemingly there is the expectation on her to look her best at all times indicating her suitability as an incorporated wife. Whilst the emotion work of being correctly presented cannot be directly converted into commoditised emotional labour on behalf of the army, such expectations regarding dress indicate the conformity expected of wives whilst living within a garrison community.

The concept of wives performing/not performing emotion work on their husbands' behalf leads to the concept of the hidden power that Tichenor argues "is exercised through individual decisions, institutional procedures and dominant values that shape interaction. [...] allow[ing] us to assess how cultural expectations regarding gender at the institutional level affect both the interactions between spouses and their attempts to construct meaningful identities" (Tichenor, 2005, p. 26; Davis & Greenstein, 2013, p. 67). In such an analysis attention must be paid "to [how] hidden power can sensitise us to the subtle ways in which gender expectations shape the power dynamics within marriage" (Tichenor, 2005, p. 26; Davis & Greenstein, 2013, p. 67). The specificities of performing on

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site that forces but also facilitates their compromise between public and private lives and performances" (2015, p. 112). She similarly discusses how bus stops are sites of "gendered and classed visibility" (2015, p. 113) drawing on Skeggs work on pathologising the 'other' both up and downwards in the wives' rank system pejoratively denigrating each other against the expectations placed on wives' ranked positioning made visible through dress (2015, p. 113).

<sup>350</sup> Interviewee #6 1415 – 1418

one's husband behalf, sacrificing a career, assuming domestic responsibility or ensuring that one is properly attired for the school run, indicates how these wives have had cultural expectations of the army, battalion and potentially their husband impressed upon them, reminding us of Beatrice's husband's CoC who queried what wives were there for there for if not to look after the children<sup>351</sup>. Thus, the emotion work expected of overseas army wives can be constructed as a continuation of symbolic domination, implying that for her husband to succeed and for her to be considered the 'right type of army wife', she must commit to the emotion work of supporting her warrior-husband, privileging his status above her own.

### **Lost within the Army Marriage**

Privileging the soldier husband's status above her own took different forms of enactment behind the wire. Whilst this thesis does not have a specific focus on domestic abuse or violence within military marriage, it is worth briefly noting and reflecting upon the research conducted by Gray (2014; 2016) and Williamson (2012) acknowledging its presence behind the wire and within MQs. Arguably through the positioning of wives into the domestic and private sphere of the MQ, overseas wives were at risk of increased vulnerability due to being located within the quasi-private space of the patches fearing the implications of seeking help and advice.

There is a paucity of research examining domestic abuse and the British military; only Gray (2014; 2016; 2017) and Williamson (2012) have investigated this subject. North American researchers have considered domestic abuse within the military communities and, like Gray, suggest that "domestic abuse in the military must be understood in relation to the gendered culture of militarism and that the patriarchal nature of military communities is a causal factor in such abuse" (Harrison and Laliberte, 1994, pp. 13, 52; Gray, 2014, p. 47). As the introduction to this thesis discussed, overseas

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<sup>351</sup> See page 176

army wives are married to soldiers provided with weaponry and trained how to kill (Atherton, 2009, pp. 824-825)<sup>352</sup>. Gray suggests that

“while individual perpetrators exercise agency in making a choice to abuse their partners, these choices are, in diverse and intersectionally-mediated ways, produced within and enabled by women's disempowered structural position in [military] society relative to men. Importantly, this means that the roots of domestic abuse are firmly identified in the *normal* gendered arrangements of social life, and not in out of the ordinary, the disordered, or the pathologised”<sup>353</sup> (2014, p. 40).

Gray's argument indicates how positioned into the subservient domesticated sphere of the MQ, reliant on the soldier-husband financially and for her very positioning behind the wire, women become disempowered and disenfranchised. Furthermore, this concept of woman running the home, raising the children facilitating the soldier-husband to maintain his position within the army, maintains the normalisation of positioning women into the domestic, pathologising them into the subservient feminised other (Hale, 2012, p. 703), ultimately controllable by the soldier and thus the institution. Therefore, as Pain argues, the particular cultural expectation placed on the army wife resulting from the “predominant forms of [military] masculinity and [domestic] femininity [...] both create and sustain abuse” (2015, p. 18; Gray, 2014, p. 40). Two wives mentioned in their narrative abuse that they had experienced, one physical (historic)<sup>354</sup> and one psychological (ongoing). With the latter, I ensured that the interviewee felt safe in talking to me about her experiences and we also discussed support services she could go to in order to safeguard herself and her family. She was unwilling to seek support as she believed by seeking help she could negatively impact on her husband's career.

This concept of negatively impacting on husbands' career was discussed by many of the interviewees, indicative of the overarching control of wifely behaviour that many experienced

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<sup>352</sup> See also page 18 – 20

<sup>353</sup> Emphasis in original

<sup>354</sup> The interviewee assured me that abuse was no longer taking place and that she was happy to discuss her experiences with me as part of the 'formal' interview.

behind the wire. Carrie, an older wife, reflected on her lack of participation in battalion-run events including not attending mess functions. Her position was contrary to the standard attitude encouraging wifely attendance, concerned instead about negatively impacting promotional chances. Carrie is consumed with fear that saying or doing the wrong thing could have a detrimental effect.

I obviously didn't want John to look stupid. Because wives talk, [...] it would get back to John, so I was worried about if I went and done something I shouldn't of, or said something I shouldn't of [...] he'd get into trouble.<sup>355</sup>

She articulated that she and some other women choose to not attend, anxious that

their husband could get in trouble, worry about their promotion, [...] you know, not feeling safe to talk to someone.<sup>356</sup>

Carrie withdrew from life stating that she made the right decision by "staying in, not socialising"<sup>357</sup>.

In very few modern professional environments is a wife's behaviour so directly linked to potentially impacting on a husband's promotion or career progression. Carrie's non-attendance is representative of the imbrication onto a wife's personal life that the army can impose. This positioning against her husband, her personal perception of her behaviour being judged not only by other wives but by the institutional hierarchy, raises questions about whether overseas army marriages, can be considered as companionate rather than institutional. Lauer and Yodanis state that on "entering marriage, the institution constrains, enables, and provides meaning to social behaviours associated with marriage" (2010, p. 61). In Fimonue's hierarchical and militarised environment, (in)audible institutionalised expectations form the everyday backdrop to wives' lived experience. Their external social life, bounded not only by the barbed wire fence and their isolation away from the civilian world, is further restricted by how and with whom they socialise at a given event, with some acutely believing that unintentionally they can impact negatively on their husband.

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<sup>355</sup> Interviewee #20 356 – 359

<sup>356</sup> Interviewee #20 3215 – 3217

<sup>357</sup> Interviewee #20 3252

Outside of battalion-hosted activities, couples are nominally 'free' to socialise with whom they choose. However, this socialising is imbued with hidden context, becoming a further contested space for the wives to negotiate. Several interviewees reflected on the limited pool of friends they had, referring to the ranked stratigraphy they found themselves within. Gwen even asked Kevin "if could you not have just commissioned so we would be around some like-minded people"<sup>358</sup>. Despite not wearing his rank, Gwen was bounded by social conventions of her hierarchical setting preventing her from making connections with similar people to herself. Wives reflected on how they were limited to socialising with their husband's friends' wives, seeing the same people regularly. Jolene narrated how

the people that you're kind of forced into this environment with, and you're like "Mm, would I particularly hang out with you? No, but our husbands are friends".<sup>359</sup>

indicating that despite minimal commonality, the expectation was that she would develop a friendship with another wife purely based on their husbands' friendship. There were minimal cross rank friendships amongst women, only a handful of enlisted wives developed close friendships with officers' wives. Such ranked friendships proved difficult as the friendship could exist between the women but social events, such as hosting dinner or spending time together at the weekend, were not acceptable as the formal command structure between the officer and the soldier always took precedence. The friendships thus occurred in feminine isolation quietly dominated by the ranked expectations in place behind the wire. Whilst friendship is considered in more detail in the final analysis chapter, it is worth briefly considering how these social expectations, of women socialising within their husband's status group, amongst the wives of his friends, is reminiscent of earlier marriage where women assumed their husband's social status (Goldthorpe, 1980; Goldthorpe, 1983) indicating that overseas army marriage are set with certain institutionalised parameters, remaining "an institution [with] a set of rules and assumptions that govern social behaviours" (Lauer & Yodanis, 2010, p. 60).

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<sup>358</sup> Interviewee # 10 1864

<sup>359</sup> Interviewee #15 2092 – 2094

The evidence in this chapter supports the argument that many wives experienced oppression within their military marriage. In his work on the transformation of intimacy and pure relationships Giddens (1992) considered that “the relationship exists solely for whatever rewards that relationship can deliver.” (1991, p. 6; 1992). It is questionable whether, hierarchically bound into certain positionalities within Fimonue’s domestic sphere, many army wives received any significant rewards. Megan stated that she

dedicate[ed] my whole self to his schedule [...] kind of like a puppy waiting at home for their owner to come back.<sup>360</sup>

Megan, undertaking a distance postgraduate course, achieving something in her own right, articulated feeling bound into a subservient, adjunctive position. Angel too commented that, “they’re used to us being on their call, aren’t they? We’re always available”.<sup>361</sup> This revealing remark demonstrates the level of expectation wives felt placed upon them. Despite having three children, Angel intimated that Shane’s expectation is of her availability to answer his needs. Whilst not implying that Shane exercised coercive control, it poses the question as to whether such “structural inequality facilitat[ing] coercive control” (Anderson, 2009, p. 1450) is in place within an overseas military garrison. Furthermore, when enacted behind the wire, these structural inequalities recreate “the structure of gender inequality by constraining women’s power” (Anderson, 2009, p. 1450). Angel, like other wives, indicated a feeling of constraint placed upon her deriving directly from the garrison setting and the superior status that the soldier husband held within their marriage.

Ruth, reflected that since becoming a “proper army wife”<sup>362</sup>,

everything I do revolves around supporting Noel in his career really. [...] I don’t choose where I live, I don’t choose where my children go to school. I can’t work, even if I want to<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Interviewee # 27 984 – 989

<sup>361</sup> Interviewee #25 306

<sup>362</sup> Interviewee #27 361

<sup>363</sup> Interviewee #27 2843

evidencing her disempowerment from making fundamentally important decisions. She is held hostage to Noel's career progression, bidden by the army as to when and where she will move, packed up with the rest of the baggage, moved at the army's behest. As with Hochschild's stalled revolution (1990), Ruth is mired into a state of being unable to contest where she is moved, further dislocating her from her sense of self as woman, career woman and wife.

Returning to Giddens' statement that a "pure relationship is not anchored in external conditions of social or economic life" (1991, p. 89), where "external criteria have become dissolved", (1991, p. 6) the nature of life behind the wire does not facilitate such dissolution. Sonia, a woman who had a successful career before her army marriage, reflects on the shift of financial power.

To earn my own money, will be a bonus again [...] To have my own life, will be bonus again and for me to go out [laughs] and buy Martin a birthday present.<sup>364</sup>

Sonia, who had owned her own sports car prior to marriage, an asset for which she had worked hard, "my bloody nice car! [laughs] [...] I had a brand new umm, Mercedes"<sup>365</sup> became dependent on her husband for money, even to buy him a birthday present. This financial dependency, mimicking historic and traditional relationship is indicative of the "everyday differences in power and privilege" (Jamieson, 1999, p. 485) inherent in heterosexual marriage. Jamieson suggests that "the man's wage as his expression of care [...], and the woman's matching gift of housework as expressing her tender loving care" (1999, p. 485) confirms her dependency onto the husband for his benevolence. Wives' wage opportunities whilst in Fimouze were negligible against their husbands' higher salaries.

Issac is earning almost triple my salary, whereas if we were back in the UK, I would be earning a lot more than him so that's like another punch in the stomach. I have got all these qualifications that I studied incredibly hard for and as I said, I put myself through university, umm, to then get paid what I do, it's depressing.<sup>366</sup>

Tellingly Rebecca felt this viscerally, experiencing this change in circumstance as another physical blow, linguistic evidence of the internal battles she experienced during her time overseas. Ruth too

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<sup>364</sup> Interviewee #7 1631 – 1634

<sup>365</sup> Interviewee #7 1800 – 1802

<sup>366</sup> Interviewee #11 277 – 280

considered how her current unemployed and thus dependent financial status led her to infer that Noel

is really keen for me to go back to work. [...] I almost feel sometimes like he thinks [...] “You’ve sponged off me for enough”. [...] Sometimes he thinks I should be earning my keep. And he’s not mean with me at all and if I spend money, he doesn’t begrudge me anything. [...] You know, he lets me spend a generous amount on clothes. It’s not limited, [...] as long as we’ve got enough money, I can spend what I want really.<sup>367</sup>

Prior to becoming an army wife and mother, Ruth was a successful professional; since relocating, the balance shifted with her now financially dependent on her husband. Her choice of expressions, ‘not mean with me at all’, ‘lets me spend a generous amount on clothes’ indicate *her* sense of *his* benevolence towards her spending money. Such benevolence is indicative of how un(der)employed army wives in Fimouze are seemingly wholly dependent on their husband’s financial support.

This dependency, though encouraged by the institution, is not protected by that institution and soldiers are not obliged to financially support their wives.<sup>368</sup> This structural inequality between serving soldiers and army wives’ financial dependency undermines Giddens’ work. Jamieson suggests that as men “continue to exercise more power than women in the partnership” (1999, p. 484), the equality required for pure relationships remains allusive. This reinforces Mulinari and Sandell’s argument that whilst the “‘natural’ location of family and women” (2009, p. 496) remain bounded into the private underemployed sphere of the domestic SFA, women will continue to be dependent on their soldier husband, not confirming the “profound equality” (Giddens, 1992; 1999, p. 479) that Giddens sees emerging.

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<sup>367</sup> Interviewee #27 2302 – 2316

<sup>368</sup> During my time with AFF I was made aware of soldiers who were not providing enough money to their wives resulting in ‘empty cupboard syndrome’. Undeniably, although the battalion and SSAFA social services did step in to work with the family, it is concerning that women are at risk of being in such a financially vulnerable position.

The implicit imbrication onto the dependent woman's married position tied to the domestic space becomes enacted in multiple ways, further suggesting the extent to which the doxa of the garrison exerted itself onto wives. Sonia reflected on the prospect of earning her own money once back in the UK.

I want to get a job. That is my number one priority is to get a job. I'd go stack shelves at Tesco, I'll be a cleaner. So I am not proud. I would do anything if needs must I will do.<sup>369</sup> Her return to work would facilitate a transition away from the predetermined role seemingly available to women overseas, that of army wife. In becoming financially independent, Sonia might then feel less dependent on Martin, able to buy his birthday present "with my own money"<sup>370</sup>. Departure from Fimonue may allow her and Martin to move closer towards Giddens' concept of a 'pure relationship'.

The geographical space of Fimonue and the intimate space of their marriage became representative of wives bounded into a subjectified positioning in which they felt dominated by, and elided into, their husband's world, there at his beck and call, aware of their position in the house (and marriage) as that of being dominated rather than of holding equal status within the partnership. For those interviewed, any levelling between soldier husband and army wife seemed unachievable given the Fimonue-imposed constraints. I am not alone in refuting the concept of the pure relationship (Jamieson, 1999; Mulinari & Sandell, 2009; Van Hoof, 2013) for the interviewees; the evidence suggests that, during their time overseas the very construction of their dependent status meant that neither they, their husbands nor the institution consider them their husband's equals.

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<sup>369</sup> Interviewee #7 1630 – 1631/1634/1645

<sup>370</sup> Interviewee #7 1631

### Marriage, Symbolic Domination and the Army Wife

Given pride of place in many Fimonue MQs was a framed picture of the couples' wedding day. The soldier wearing Number Ones with medals (where awarded)<sup>371</sup>, his sword the ultimate reminder of masculine power, the bride a white wedding dress, both smiling proudly for the camera (Figure 35).



*Figure 35 - A traditional 'army marriage' photo<sup>372</sup>*

As she welcomed me into her MQ, Sophie pointed to her photograph, ruefully laughing, "Get the man, get the medals, get the army"<sup>373</sup>, reinforcing the three-way dominated marriage to which army wives unconsciously sign up. Such pictures are visual representations and reminders of the dominant warrior who, attired in his dress uniform, imbricates his wedding day and potentially marriage not only with his military masculinity but with the traditional expectations placed upon the army wife, an intersection that continues long after the photographs have begun to fade.

A wife of many more years standing than Sophie, Veronica was aware of the cost of following her army husband to Fimonue. Settled in her home life prior to relocating, she knew

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<sup>371</sup> Formal ceremonial uniform

<sup>372</sup> Reproduced with kind permission

<sup>373</sup> Interviewee #12, field diary notes

what I was giving up [...] I was so busy giving up everything at home, giving up my job, giving up my friendships, giving up my house.<sup>374</sup>

Throughout her narrative, she recounted what was 'given up' due to the peripatetic nature of army wifehood. She reflected that she "loved my job, absolutely adored it but we figured that it was more important to be a family"<sup>375</sup> and that she "accepted at that point that there wasn't another option."<sup>376</sup> Veronica felt unable to negotiate outside of the expected, prevailing militaristic attitude of following her soldier husband, that 'to be a family' was more important than pursuing a career she loved. Whilst not specific to army wives *per-se*, the lived realities of following her husband were exacerbated due to the particularised nature of being married to the army and located in Fimonue. Veronica stands as emblematic of the struggles army wives contend with as their life is repeatedly packed up, effectively sacrificing career ambitions in support of their husbands and in the interest of being a family. This is indicative of the interplay and ultimate dominance that the soldier husband exerts over his wife in the particularised field of the army marriage, revealing how the symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1977b; Bourdieu, 1989) of the warrior-husband's supremacy is indeed at play within an army marriage.

Veronica was personally aware of what she was sacrificing by relocating in support of her husband's career. Like Carrie who believed that her 'performance' within Fimonue's social spaces directly impacted on John's career, Veronica also conforms to the widespread belief that "those who refused to play this role might find themselves in danger of harming their partners' careers or of being seen as disloyal" (Ware, 2012, p. 207; Enloe, 2000). Sadly, whilst believing in this doxa Carrie was conscious of how she had not "focused on me for, what, nearly twenty-one years"<sup>377</sup> stressing that she needed to

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<sup>374</sup> Interviewee #3 284 – 288

<sup>375</sup> Interviewee #3 155

<sup>376</sup> Interviewee #3 272 – 273

<sup>377</sup> Interviewee #20 2659

get out of it somehow because I'm just sinking further and further and it's just getting me nowhere.<sup>378</sup>

Reiterating that her "whole life has been all about John, it's never really been me"<sup>379</sup>, she demonstrated that "the features of her husband's work so significantly structure her life [...] to be accommodated, responded to and assisted" (Finch, 1983, p. 161) meant she lost sight of who she is, not focusing on herself or what she wanted from life. Her admission of removing herself from the socio-spaces of the garrison and her fear of negatively impacting on his career is perhaps indicative of prevailing attitude inherent within the militarised world ascribing "parameters of acceptable behaviour associated with being married to a soldier" (Ware, 2012, p. 207) onto a wife. Carrie and Veronica both demonstrate an acute awareness of the sacrifices they have made to follow their husbands, Carrie poignantly commenting that 'it has never really been about me' and Veronica's litany of things 'given up'. This sense of sacrifice is rank agnostic, applicable to women married across the rank structure, consciously aware of what they had lost.

Sacrifice also featured in newer wives' narratives as they struggled with adapting to no longer being career women but dependents, enmeshed into a pattern of inequality. Rebecca experienced subjugation into her husband's positioning, reflecting that prior to Fimonue she was

very political, very outspoken, and then I have come here and it's you can't do this, you can't do that. [...] I get a bit panicked when Danny speaks to me [...] I don't want to get Issac into trouble.<sup>380</sup>

Rebecca felt that in encounters with the CoC she was judged as representing Issac, indistinguishable from him, her behaviour reflecting onto him. Rebecca was aware that this "is not who I am and so I feel like I have completely changed as a person"<sup>381</sup>, consciously embodying a code of behaviour that was alien to her, experiencing it as a sacrifice and reduction in self.

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<sup>378</sup> Interviewee #20 3755 – 3756

<sup>379</sup> Interviewee #20 2153

<sup>380</sup> Interviewee #11 1209 – 1213

<sup>381</sup> Interviewee #11 1213 – 1214

To fit in to being a soldier's wife [...] it goes back to how much are you willing to sacrifice of yourself to be their partner? I think it's a lot to ask to give up everything, to give up who you are completely.<sup>382</sup>

This concept of fear, iterated by Carrie and Rebecca and implicit in Veronica's reflections, is worryingly indicative of some women's response to a hierarchically structured environment and their struggles negotiating their position within it. These women indicated that their husband's role in the wider public environment intersected their marriage. Rebecca struggled coming face-to-face with the CoC despite being a civilian woman outside direct military command, perceiving herself unequal. Carrie's subordination to John's career, consciously not leaving the house in case of negative repercussions, Veronica accepting there 'wasn't another option' is symptomatic of the coercive control, power and subordination implicitly at work within Fimonue. These women inferred a sense of domination, both implicitly and explicitly at play within their military marriage. The researcher must question whether this symbolic violence is indeed a form of conscious (institutional) abuse on the part of both the army and the husband. It could be argued that such dependent status both within marriage and Fimonue's wider ranked environment, is a form of symbolic domination, with wives seeing themselves as unequal partners unable "to understand and act upon the world [behind the wire] in similar terms" (Swartz, 1997, p. 57).

This section has drawn upon the multiple ways army wives experience symbolic domination within their marriage. From the central role of the army itself within the marriage photograph, the litany of loss caused through sacrificing a career in order to remain a family, supporting the soldier husband's career by relocating every two years, being too scared to leave the house or interact with the CoC, and the expectation that the soldier husband and his career occupies the central positioning within the marriage, evidence has emerged as to how army wives are unequally situated within their marriage. Whilst undeniably it is not the exclusive preserve of army wives to be thus dominated,

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<sup>382</sup> Interviewee #11 1216 – 1217

their dependent overseas location within the military institution, contributes to these women's subjectivity and potential vulnerability.

A discussion focusing on army marriage necessitates a consideration of the space of welfare and its multifarious position behind the wire. Welfare is a CoC support service assisting families in time of difficulties. The welfare office (WO) comprises the (commissioned) UWO and his support team (male SNCO, JNCO and private) with a female civilian clerk. The UWO's primary role is to support soldiers, ensuring their military effectiveness, maintaining the battalion's overall deployability and operational effectiveness (MoD, 2018). To do so, the UWO provides a twenty-four-hour service working with families to resolve issues on the domestic front. At the same time as performing a quasi-social worker role, the UWO is responsible for organising coffee mornings, holiday activities for the children, social events for wives and (approximately) every two years the unit move. The UWO and his team occupy a difficult position, liaising with the CoC to ensure operational effectiveness whilst providing succour to families (to ensure a soldier's ongoing efficacy). Despite WO staff wearing civilian clothing<sup>383</sup>, all are cognisant this service is provided by the army, part of the CoC; users fear becoming known to Battalion HQ<sup>384</sup> (BHQ) and ultimately becoming a 'Welfare Case'. In the WO as well as in the Med Centre, rank and hierarchy are visible. Regardless of his civilian attire, the UWO's primary function is that of military officer indicating hierarchy and dominance over the military family. When a family presents to Welfare, the serving soldier, himself addressed by rank, addresses the UWO as Sir<sup>385</sup>, ranked positioning in this hierarchically structured yet domestically intimate social space (Swartz, 1997, p. 57) impacting upon families at their most vulnerable moments.

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<sup>383</sup> Unlike the medical team, see page 182

<sup>384</sup> Battalion HQ is where the senior officers of the battalion work, the Commanding Officer,

<sup>385</sup> There are exceptions to this, in the case of a bereavement the soldier would be addressed by his first name, however, he would address the UWO as 'Sir', at least initially and granted permission to use first name terms.

Welfare occupied a contestable ground for the wives, for to access it was perceived as a weakness. Gwen's reflection demonstrates how her perception became infused by her husband's.

[Y]ou all know of that one person that's constantly in Welfare, and we're [wives] all like "God", and you know that the lads are saying like "If I was him, I'd get a grip on my wife"<sup>386</sup> This statement thus reveals multiple aspects of domination embedded in and around the use of the UWO<sup>387</sup>. In her negative reflections on women accessing welfare, Gwen arguably demonstrated how she assumed the paternalistic "imposed set of constraining norms" (McNay, 2000, p. 25) of 'the lads' demonstrating the ontological and semantic domination of women by other women within the garrison community. Gwen's final sentence that husbands should 'get a grip' on their wives is worrying. Whilst there is no evidence that this is meant physically, the apparent prevailing attitude is that husbands dominate (and control) wives to such an extent that they can (should) prevent wives seeking help through the dedicated channels. Tabitha in her narrative indicated that she did not "think it's healthy to become reliant on that Welfare side of things".<sup>388</sup> Calling on welfare was interpreted as not being able to cope as Caroline commented, "[w]elfare's not there to fix your problems"<sup>389</sup>. Unhealthy and fixing, intimating something was broken or unwell in those who regularly accessed welfare, indicates that users were seen to fall short of the militaristic ideals expected of army wives. These women's language demonstrates their unconscious embodiment of the systems of domination flourishing behind the wire, the language and knowledge of the military's doxa (Bourdieu, 1989; 1977; Swartz, 1997; McDowell, 1999). Ruth reflected on this domination by husbands.

[I]t depends whether the husbands have any influence over their wives, because I remember Noel had [...] to bring a husband in to talk to them about their wife. And I was thinking, but

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<sup>386</sup> Interviewee #10 2585 – 2591. This attitude of the serving soldiers could be deemed unfair as whilst overseas a wife has minimal official channels of support and if she is experiencing difficulties then oftentimes there is nowhere else for her to go to seek guidance or help. This is especially relevant if her husband is away on a course, deployed or inaccessible due to work commitments.

<sup>387</sup> There is also a Welfare Office for the battalion when back in the UK, not just specific to overseas locations

<sup>388</sup> Interviewee #21 2016 – 2020

<sup>389</sup> Interviewee #29 1914

it depends whether she's a very strong character and actually, he may not be able to influence her.<sup>390</sup>

Despite using 'influence' rather than the more physical 'get a grip', the sense of control in these narratives is audible. This control, coupled with some wives' sense of fear of letting husbands down, intimate that for some army wives, marriage behind the wire is dominated in multiple ways through being located within the militaristic world of an overseas garrison.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has reflected on emotion work undertaken by women within overseas army marriages; it has revealed how the militarised world these women experience remains traditional and patriarchal. It has argued that, notwithstanding progressive attempts to encourage empowerment of women married to its soldiers, the army's doxa is demonstrably archaic in its ongoing positioning of overseas women into the private space of the MQ. It has also argued that husbands' expectations overtly assist the imposition of the performance of army wifehood onto overseas women, seemingly prolonging the historic (mis)conception that army wives' function is to provide unpaid domestic labour to facilitate his army career.

Narrative from experienced and new wives demonstrates that wives of all tenures struggled to locate themselves within Fimonue's bounded space. Some resisted their positionality, railing against the confines of the structuring structures in place. Nevertheless, overseas army wives' roles are determined in many ways by the institutionalised patriarchal setting both inside the MQ and the wider garrison environs, within which they find themselves. Although some wives contested their embodiment of this doxa, for Charlene it was a way of consolidating her role both within the MQ and within Fimonue. She has, I believe, consciously embodied the predetermined gendered expectations of army wife, acknowledging how she is there to facilitate her husband's position and as such strengthen her own standing within the garrison community, by being known as 'wife of'.

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<sup>390</sup> Interviewee #27 172 – 175

The placing of women into the domestic sphere, encouraged to perform traditional housewifery roles, answerable to their husbands' bidding, is one the army seemingly condones. Whilst the army and MoD have made attempts to empower wives with CV and career training<sup>391</sup>, it is the day-to-day lived realities which are of focus and concern. The publicly private setting of the army wife in the MQ encourages the continuation of the helpmate role and until more employment opportunities are provided within Fimonue, the subjugated positioning of the army wife will continue to locate women into the delegitimated unequal partner within the relationship

The impact of the institution on overseas marriage was examined, demonstrating that within such an institutionally constructed environment as the wider garrison and the private space of the MQ, the concept of companionate marriage is not visible, suggesting that whilst living in such a specified overseas location, marriages are institutionally bounded by the overt doxa in place. Whilst the intimacies of each marriage were not researched and, unless specifically volunteered, the state of individual marriages was not discussed, Giddens' work on transformations of intimacy has been reflected on within this unique marital environment. As has been evidenced, women behind the wire did not experience a sense of equality within their marriage, consciously aware of being at their husband's beck and call, waiting like a puppy, being allowed spending money. For this cohort of overseas army wives, external criteria had not dissolved and still impacted upon their traditional marriage. Evidentially, the military masculinities of the warrior soldier husband and his dependent army wife remained enmeshed within the very fabric of the lives of women married to soldiers behind the wire of Fimonue.

Various methods of symbolic domination were explored, incorporating multiple experiences of loss. Wives articulated a sense of fear of the wider institutional environment, frightened to leave the home or talk to the CoC, indicative of these women experiencing coercive institutional control. The

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<sup>391</sup> See page 39

sense of the soldier husband occupying the dominant space within the MQ was reflected upon, themes which continue to place women in the subjugated unequal position within the marriage and the wider institution. Acknowledging that there is risk of symbolic domination within all marriages, the women of Fimonue are particularly vulnerable due to their remote overseas location, financial dependency, lack of employment and secondary positioning within the MQ.

Emotion work and emotional labour of army wives highlighted how within the traditional militarily constructed space of the overseas army garrison, the expectation is still on the subjectification of wives into their husband's career. This emotion work stretches from running the house to a woman's physical appearance matching expectations as to how an army wife should be dressed. Furthermore, some wives' willingness to subsume themselves into their husband's career as evidenced, allowing him to commoditise her commitment to his progression by being the right type of army wife. I have suggested that this ongoing incorporation (or sacrifice) is a continuation of the symbolic domination of a wife living overseas behind the wire.

Given the lack of cognate research on the specificities of military marriage, and indeed on heterosexual marriage in the wider sociological discipline, the contributions that this chapter makes to a greater understanding of marriage are manifold. The analysis in this chapter contributes to research on heterosexual marriage and the sociology of marriage in an institutionally created environment. Despite suggested changes in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century concerning the roles and performance of tasks within marriage, this chapter evidences how the positioning of overseas military wives into that of the traditional helpmate role further continues the ongoing gendering in marriage. Finally, it highlights the worrying revelation that overseas army wives arguably experience systematic institutional abuse, developing Enloe's arguments in her work in CMS. Through being positioned into the domesticated helpmate role, firmly located into the private space of MQs and experiencing enforced social isolation, institutional abuse can be

perpetrated on an army wife through her soldier husband's dominant position as head-of-the-household.

## Analysis Chapter 4 – Motherhood, Friendship and the Army Wife

### Chapter Introduction

Previous chapters have established the constraints and dispossessions of wives' lives in Fimonue. This chapter focuses, by contrast, on how the interviewees established their own modes of belonging through their various positionings as mothers/nonmothers<sup>392</sup>, employed and underemployed, friends, and participants within Fimonue's community of wives. It specifically addresses the second research question probing what shapes and governs incorporation into, and negotiation of, military life. This chapter opens with an analysis of friendship and belonging before turning its attention to wives' underemployment and how this directly impacted onto their sense of self and their assimilation (or not) into life behind the wire. It closes with a consideration of the identity marker of motherhood/non-motherhood before finally reflecting on how the interviewees answered the question, 'what makes an army wife?'

To explore these themes we must reflect briefly on army wife scholarship acknowledging that there is minimal research directly examining these social relations and their implications for army wives as Hyde (2015, p. 149) recognised in her conclusion. The most recent and relevant studies (Jervis, 2011; Hyde, 2015) consider overseas communities, citing various social activities. This study goes beyond a consideration of social involvement, probing instead the construction and day-to-day lived realities of the overseas wives' community. The context of friendships (Adams & Allan, 1998, p. 3) occurring within Fimonue must be scrutinised rather than simply considering the dyad of individual friendships. This chapter draws on studies of female friendship (Hey, 1997; O'Connor, 1998) to place and locate this research. It also considers the space of friendship amongst mothers (Cronin, 2015) and scholarship, examining whether motherhood provides social capital in turn enhancing belonging

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<sup>392</sup> I have taken this term from McMahon (1995) and her articulation that non-motherhood is an active choice at a particular point for a woman to not (yet) be a mother. All the nonmothers of the interview sample were in their twenties and intimated, even though not a formal part of the discussion, that at some point they would like to have children with Rebecca even suggesting that she might have a child to fit in. I have consciously used the term nonmother throughout this thesis as these women might move from nonmother into motherhood and thus I do not want to pre-determine their subsequent decisions.

(Mulcahy, et al., 2010) and thus assimilation, into the army wife collective. Probing army wife friendship reveals the implication of rank on these dyads forcing us to reflect upon whether within the bounded stratum of Fimonue civilian women can negotiate the militarised imposition of the army's hierarchy, thereby breaking new ground in CMS as this thesis queries the impact of militarised incorporation on women's friendship. This chapter addresses gaps in the sociology of friendship, revealing not only the positives of friendships established behind the wire but likewise the potential damage that can be inflicted on women living in such an institutionally constructed and determined environment.

A further social positioning experienced by the interviewees was their employed/underemployed status. Underemployment (Morrison & Lichter, 1988) dominated the narrative for a small subgroup of five women, indeed providing the basis for much of their interviews. This chapter investigates whether underemployment removed recognisable identifiers, increasing their perception of further militarised restrictions eradicating their status as equal citizens (Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2001, p. 1) maintaining the power balance "of subordination and domination" (Smith, 1983, p. 3). Furthermore, it demonstrates how this erosion of their sense of self, based on their own prior achievements, resulted in assimilation challenges behind the wire and a questioning of their army wife positioning.

Emerging as a key theme alongside underemployment was motherhood (and contrastingly non-motherhood) as a further frame within which wives' negotiation of military life and their incorporation can be investigated. This exploration, whilst cognisant of motherhood as a form of oppression (Bailey, 1999, p. 335; Rich, 1977; Oakley, 1979), seeks to question whether motherhood provided an alternative identity marker for wives behind the wire. This builds on Letherby's (1994) and Bailey's (1999) work and is ground-breaking in CMS as no other scholar examines the alternative identity construction of motherhood as a means of shaping and governing army wives' incorporation. Paralleling motherhood is non-motherhood. This subjective positioning within a

community of mothers impacted in different ways upon those who, at the time of interview, had no children. Nonmothers tended to experience this as a form of social isolation, marked as outsiders within this community of women. This designation of inside/outside through motherhood facilitates a consideration of how motherhood can be utilised as a form of social capital developing Mulcahy et al's work (2010) examining women incorporated into mothers' groups in Canada.

The final consideration investigates 'what makes an army wife' and how the interviewees responded to this single structured question. Querying the concept of 'army wife' reveals how those interviewed wear, perform or refute this identity overseas. It investigates responses to their incorporation whilst examining how they have adapted (or not) to their new positionality behind the wire as army wives, how they experienced this as opposed to their previous (non-overseas) army wife identity. Exploring the encoding of various identities onto wives' positionality within ranked levels allows investigation into how they negotiated this imposed identity, "as distinct from [accepting] an ascribed and enforced classification" (Lawler, 2008a, p. 145; Bauman, 2004, p. 39)<sup>393</sup>. Assigned on marriage, whilst overseas, the term army wife permeates onto army wives through the very structure of their situatedness as this thesis has demonstrated. However, what is now of interest is women's response to this structuring outside their own marriages and how they negotiate this positionality within other cultures of belonging, constructed through their own friendships and communities.

Within an institutionally constructed environment, it cannot be assumed that because of the ranked and hierarchical systems of the garrison field, those living behind the wire simply accept their positioning and constructed habitus of army wife. To do so would reinforce the concept of determinism levelled at Bourdieu's work (Perez, 2008; Adkins, 2004; Adkins, 2004; Adkins & Skeggs, 2004; Lovell, 2004; Lawler, 2005b; Probyn, 2004). The key relevant criticism regarding determinism

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<sup>393</sup> Original emphasis

in Bourdieu's theory outlined by Perez is that "Bourdieu's concept of action is primarily instrumental and mechanical (largely based on past experiences) and mostly neglects the capability of agents to be reflexive, creative and/or critical" (2008, p. 7). Furthermore that "Bourdieu leaves too little room for individual willpower, reflexivity and ability to change when he evaluates the agent's course of action" (2008, p. 7). In *Feminism After Bourdieu* (Adkins & Skeggs, 2004) feminist scholars reflect upon the use of Bourdieu in feminist social sciences probing this charge of determinism. Adkin contends that "Bourdieu's social theory offers numerous points of connection to feminist social theory" (2004) which shall be briefly explored here focusing specifically on Lawler and McNay's work in this volume.

Investigating a group of socially positioned women within the specific world of a ranked military garrison requires the researcher to be alert to doxic understandings (Lawler, 2004) and the conferred identities (Lawler, 2004) of those living behind the wire. Lawler in her work examining the representation of British middle and working class women in the British media argues that habitus not only "carries the concept of history – both personal history and social, or collective, history" (2004, p. 111) but that habitus only makes sense "in the context of specific local contexts or 'fields'" (2004, p. 112). The preceding three analysis chapters have illustrated the geographical and institutional setting within which the interviewees relocated to Fimonue. They are bounded within a confined administrative socio-space, directed by the overarching military jurisdiction. It is against these contexts their army wife habitus is relationally at work.

McNay argues that "actors occupy positions within social fields [...] determined by both the distribution of resources within a given field and also by the structural relations between that field and others" (2004, p. 184). For this chapter and wider thesis 'structural relations' are key. Army wives only become so on marriage, thus it is their experiences (McNay, 2004, p. 184) as civilian women/army wives, mothers/nonmothers, employed/underemployed/unemployed and ranked

social subjective positioning that they draw on in negotiating their terms of incorporation. In considering their agency in response to the army wife habitus we must not ignore the forms of capitals that they utilise to inhabit this role. Arguably these experiences could encourage adaption and change to the army wife role not simply to assume the 'cookie kind of mould' that Jolene referred to<sup>394</sup>, therefore, we must be alert to the agency wives employ in their negotiations. McNay refers explicitly to gender which holds relevance in this context as the habitus of army wives within this battalion is specific to army wives and thus women. It is the specificity of their lived gendered experience as incorporated army wives under examination and thus the structural military masculine world they inhabit must be borne in mind when examining the interviewees' relation to the field of army impacting onto their army wife habitus.

Having reflected on the variants at play behind the wire reminding ourselves that despite the deterministic, total institution-like world of Fimonue, the habitus of army wife could be constructively a creative space in which the interviewees both individually and collectively work to develop and mould the army wife habitus, it is now time to examine the social relations at work behind the wire.

### **Friendship and the Army Wife**

There was an implicit intimation that all Fimonue wives, simply because of their shared army wifehood and thus supposed "sense of commonality" (Taylor, 2004, p. 211), would automatically find a group of women with whom to socialise. Such a community however, as Taylor suggests "is prey [...] to fragmentation and particularism" (2004, p. 211). As both the assumption about community, reinforced by the UWO's welcome address<sup>395</sup> suggests and, supported by interviewees' anecdotes, disputes occurred within the wives' community. Any investigation into such a unique community of women, located within a militarised hierarchical system imposed purely through

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<sup>394</sup> See page 226

<sup>395</sup> See page 150

happenstance of marriage, must be alert to the complexity of community definition and engagement.

Within Fimonue's insular setting and the restraints placed on socialising combined with limited external exposure to the local community, the friendship groups that existed were almost exclusively made within the garrison community. I was aware of only Veronica and Tabitha claiming friendship with an expatriate British woman from outside the garrison<sup>396</sup>. As noted in the second analysis chapter there were a handful of families that sent their children to local nurseries however friendships were not developed with local families as far as I was made aware due to language and cultural differences. The opportunities for a different experience of their time in Fimonue might well have been achieved for army wives and their families if stronger links had been made with local communities and families<sup>397</sup>. Within this limited community of approximately one-hundred-and-eighty, overseas wives were expected to establish and develop friendship groups. The context (Adams & Allan, 1998; Feld & Carter, 1998, p. 136) of these friendships is specifically tied to various militarised factors. Whilst all these friendships were female, within this feminine codification there were multiple variants including motherhood/non-motherhood, employment status and, particular to army wives, rank. The friendship pool is narrowed due to these factors yet there is the "expectation that these imposed relationships will become something like friendship" (Hruschka, 2010, p. 148). Furthermore, whilst being overseas, wives are often on their own for significant periods due to husbands' deployments. These interconnected factors create a web within which these women are expected to forge friendships deriving from the same *singular* "focus of activity" (Feld & Carter, 1998, p. 136), namely of being married to a soldier.

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<sup>396</sup> This friendship was made through an outward-bound group that local and expatriate children attended.

<sup>397</sup> Hyde makes note in her thesis of a group of officers' wives who attended cross-cultural coffee mornings with equivalent status German wives where it was perceived as an "inherent obligation" for women of a certain rank to attend (Hyde, 2015, p. 65).

A further point of consideration for the development of these friendships is that within this focus of activity, army wives are all “subject to a set of collective norms” (Feld & Carter, 1998, p. 137) or doxic understandings. These impact on the ability of overseas wives to cultivate friendships and it is worth remembering that “being thrust together in a same context is necessary to get to know a potential friend, but it is not sufficient for cultivating a friendship” (Hruschka, 2010, p. 149). Any examination of such community living and enforced friendship groupings must recognise the implications that this will have on the women who do not feel socially at home within their peer group and how this deprivation and exclusion (Pahl, 2000, p. 152) can impact on them, potentially leading to mental health issues and real social isolation.

Arriving in Fimonue, either as part of the unit move or individually, there is a general assumption on the part of both the husband and the welfare team that wives will naturally want to belong to the community of wives, likewise be welcomed into this community<sup>398</sup>. This is exemplified by the limited exposure to those on the other side of the wire, secluded as they are from “close contact with the locals” (Arieli, 2007, p. 23). In studies examining friendships of expatriate wives<sup>399</sup>, of which there is a significant dearth<sup>400</sup>, Copeland and Norell noted how “friendship networks in the international location often become important sources of support” (2002, p. 259) and that to know that “one is not alone” (2002, p. 259) mitigates, to some extent, the shock of arrival and cultural displacement. However, the uniqueness of this environment for many interviewees (and wider battalion wives) is the group relocation, not only to Fimonue but onwards to other postings which results in wives being arbitrarily assigned to a community for potentially twenty years rather than moving in and out individually like many of their sister peripatetic movers which provides a significant context to the

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<sup>398</sup> On my arrival in Fimonue apart from one wife (who did not live on my estate) I knew no one else and no one knocked on my door to welcome me. It was only through my new friend that I learnt about the social media pages, the coffee morning and her telling me how things worked in Fimonue.

<sup>399</sup> No other CMS research examines friendship in the level of detail thus it is necessary to look at expatriate women’s friendship of which there is again minimal published work.

<sup>400</sup> Arieli (2007) examines multinational expatriate wives in Beijing amongst whom she lived for two years as an expatriated wife herself. Copeland and Norell (2002) examined 194 women based internationally examining the importance of social support for the assimilation of expatriate women.

construction of their belonging within the group. Furthermore, the prevailing militaristic attitudes, such as rank and ranked housing creates the environment in which these social relations occur. Despite multiple attempts to find it, seemingly no research considers such a constructed community of women moving *en-masse*.

Examining the assumption that wives willingly participate in battalion-hosted activities; having attended numerous events, willingness to be involved was far from evident. The concept of community “is usually, although not always, used to designate a small-scale and spatially bounded area within which it is assumed that the population, or part of it, has certain characteristics in common” (McDowell, 1999, p. 100) tying it together. The correlating characteristics for the army wives’ community was that it was female, aged between nineteen and fifty, married to serving soldiers, located remotely on an overseas garrison<sup>401</sup>.

Solid friendships of significant importance existed in Fimonue. Daphne explained how wives have friends, your acquaintances and people that you say hello to in the street. And those close close friends, you know, go round for Sunday lunch, they’ll invite you round. [...] They know you’re on your own.<sup>402</sup> They will be in constant ... even if they’re away doing something, they’ll send you a message.<sup>403</sup>

Daphne implied how good friends will ensure a wife who is on her own has a network of people providing her with “an expanded ‘domestic sphere’ that extends beyond the family or household and is central in [army wives’] lives” (Cronin, 2015, p. 666). Cronin uses this sense of the expanded domestic sphere in the lives of mothers however, I believe this sense of support is applicable to army wives. Sonia commented that prior to her husband’s deployment there were

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<sup>401</sup> Across the wider garrison there were three men<sup>401</sup> married to serving women (all three serving personnel [two officers and one SNCO] working in the Med Centre), two permanently based in Fimonue, the other flying in and out based on his work commitments. The two officers’ husbands occasionally attended coffee mornings and toddler groups, the enlisted husband keeping himself very much to himself apart from attending various summer barbecues and beach parties.

<sup>402</sup> When husbands are deployed or on Overseas Training Exercises

<sup>403</sup> Interviewee #14 588 – 593

two older wives [...] picked me up and took me under their wing. [...] And it was nice. It was really nice. The community was here back in 2008, there was a real strong sense that everyone would do everything for anybody else. There was no bitching, there was no callous in everything. I think it's because of the job the lads were going out to do and there was a real sense of community spirit.<sup>404</sup>

Sonia's expanded network of these older women created a support network that she could rely on. Despite these women having left the battalion, she "still remain[s] friends with them"<sup>405</sup> revealing the strength and value of this friendship for Sonia.

This sense of the expanded domestic sphere held relevance for Jackie on her move to Fimonue, her first posting.

I'd met my first wife [on the trooper]. [Laughs] [...] she had been here last time. And so she'd given me sort of an outlook of [...] what to expect, so I did know somebody by that point, which was quite nice. [...] She kind of introduced me to a lot of my friends who then I carried relationships with and built from them. But she was kind of the first person that sort of introduced me, and things like that, which was really helpful.<sup>406</sup>

Through this woman, Jackie accessed other members of the community highlighting the centrality of support in army wives' lives. Annie became firm friends with a woman she met at a mess event prior to marriage and deploying to Fimonue.

It was quite nice to meet a few people that understood how I felt [...] one of them is my neighbour and I don't think I would have survived this long out here without my neighbour.<sup>407</sup>

These statements of support and help demonstrate that within such a remote posting where husbands are deployed, the network of women's friendships is integral to well-being, if not survival, as an army wife. Arguably, these friendships could enhance a wife's social capital, one that facilitates integration into the militarised army wife context. Through establishing these friendships,

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<sup>404</sup> Interviewee #7 185 – 191. During 2008 and 2010 the Bears' were rotating in and out of Iraq and Afghanistan on combat deployments.

<sup>405</sup> Interviewee #7 186

<sup>406</sup> Interviewee #8 331 – 339

<sup>407</sup> Interviewee #13 140 – 147

these women are integrated into the community, showing the newer wives the ropes, introducing them to other women, beginning their transition into an army wife habitus. For Annie, her friendship was a survival mechanism and through this integration she 'survived' in Fimonue moving as Goffman (1961) would suggest into the primary adjustment stage. Dependency on key women whilst their husbands were away reappeared as a theme in several narratives indicating that for those women who were lucky enough to find and establish strong feminine friendships these mechanisms were central.

Many discussed the concept of true friendship, a few referencing close friendships within the community. Jackie narrated that

we just built up this really good friendship. [...] And then they ended up becoming godparents, you know, to Alva. Which, you know, in two years is quite a massive thing to go from not knowing them to suddenly becoming that close.<sup>408</sup>

Three interviewees referenced becoming godparents to children of friends made within the battalion, however the closeness of friendship as a positive was not widely discussed.

Friendship as a site of tension was discussed with Megan alert to her dependency on her close friend, consciously aware of the price of this friendship.

I've got my close friend I just kind of stick with her and sometimes I don't necessarily agree with kind of the side she's chosen. [...] But because we are such close friends, like I don't want to lose her, and I'm not really close friends with anyone else.<sup>409</sup>

This extract encapsulates the politics of friendship within such a closed environment and the sacrifices Megan was prepared to make to maintain her friendship. Chloe developed the idea of close identification and incorporation of women via these friendships; commenting on the intensity or over-intimacy, she had with one her closest friends

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<sup>408</sup> Interviewee #8 1803 – 1807

<sup>409</sup> Interviewee #26 2486 – 2492

I have two friends, one that I am really close to, but sometimes too close. She knows when I come in and out my house. I am like no, I don't need that.<sup>410</sup>

The interviewees placed a value on friendship, but the concept of friendship and its lived realities underlined the tension within the community of women.

Charlene reflected on this tension intimating the lack of

true honest friendships here [...]. They are not true friends. You have to look at your friends, would these be friends in civvie street?<sup>411</sup>

Fiona concurred, “they can be quite forced friendships”<sup>412</sup>. Daphne too questioned her friendships when a private group message was misinterpreted, causing a significant schism in her friendship group. She felt uncertain of her positioning and “got quite upset going ‘All my friends hate me’”<sup>413</sup>.

The embeddedness of women’s friendship within Fimonue is unique to this environment and their interactions are “inevitably embedded within larger sets of interrelated ties in the community” (Feld & Carter, 1998, p. 139). While Feld and Carter argue that because of these interconnections disputes are dampened (1998, p. 139), I contend that within the specificity of Fimonue the interrelated ties at work make the space of women’s friendship a contested and difficult relationship.

The observable friendships within the wives’ community were small groups of women congregating together at the coffee shop after the school drop off, attending coffee morning, or at Wives’ PT. There were groups of women in the coffee shop in the wider military compound during the day and, on summer afternoons, groups of wives would meet at the beach with their children. Outside of my researcher capacity I was aware of various friendship groups such as those among the F&C community and the various subgroups within that, and the women whom I would regularly see in

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<sup>410</sup> Interviewee #6 1238 – 1240

<sup>411</sup> Interviewee #18 1178 – 1179

<sup>412</sup> Interviewee #17 1954

<sup>413</sup> Interviewee #14 1438

each other's company<sup>414</sup>. Predominantly the officers' wives congregated together, attending toddler groups and playdates with each other in their separated housing estate. Whilst it was acknowledged that officers' wives naturally make friends with and amongst each other, enlisted wives were perceived as congregating in cliques, excluding those married to different ranks. Despite wives being nominally free to move around the garrison and associate with whomever they wished, the opportunity to meet like-minded people from outside of their supposed peer group, appeared limited. So, whilst holding no formal position within the military structure, purely through marriage, wives became infused with a status not necessarily corresponding to their own pre-marriage positionality. Wives acknowledged how some were known to be keen to "keep the rank gap"<sup>415</sup>, consciously creating a hierarchical environment in which to place themselves in and to which we now turn.

Friendships groups between wives invariably followed the rank of the husband and as the husband moved up the ranked class system so too would the wife. However, this concept of within-rank friendship created sites of tension for the women. Chloe stated that

It is the older lot, who have been in the army quite a long time, or their husbands are high up<sup>416</sup>, they stick together. Privates, LCpls and Cpls, some Cpls they stick together and then the inbetweeners stick together. But I think the wives need to mix it up<sup>417</sup>

Charlene countered this by explaining that

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<sup>414</sup> As discussed in the Methodology and Analysis Chapter, there was a small cohort of F&C soldiers and accompanying wives within the Bears. I approached eight women and secured five interviews however, there were only three F&C origin wives who were interviewed and only two of those were married to F&C origin soldiers. Socially I was friends with one of these women and with the other, she and my husband were from the same country of origin, thus anecdotally I knew the latter was part of a small subgroup of F&C families however she did not directly socialise with these wives outside of her husband. Her friends were British women. The F&C wife (married to an F&C soldier) who I was friends with, was active amongst a small subgroup of women and particularly active in the church. However, she was the only woman from her F&C country of origin and did not disclose information on her friendship group within the F&C community. Valid further research would be an examination of friendship patterns and practices within F&C wives developing the brief focus in Ware's work (2012).

<sup>415</sup> Informal discussion during coffee morning February 2017

<sup>416</sup> Within the enlisted wives

<sup>417</sup> Interviewee #1211 – 1213

David and Anna<sup>418</sup> we've known them, they are godparents, we have experienced so much together but yet, [...], you will inevitably get people who say, she's friends [...] because David's the new [Rank], do you think me being friends with David will get Scott promoted? If you know the Army, you know you have no influence on your husband's career, it is up to him how hard he works.<sup>419</sup>

Charlene and Scott had grown up with David and Anna during their years as Bears with David and Scott being hitherto of similar rank. This provides the "context of interaction" (Allan, 1989, p. 49) to this specific friendship dynamic; however for outside observers, this friendship was, as Chloe demonstrates, observed and questioned indicating a potential lack of understanding that such wives will have lived and moved together over many years. Thus, the context of friendship in Fimonue must be acknowledged as the women were demonstrably bounded by the institutional setting in which they lived and socialised whilst consciously aware of the impositions it placed upon them.

Social interaction between officers and enlisted ranks provided a further context to be negotiated. Rosie discussed her isolation resulting from her lack of social interaction with those she felt of an equivalent academic standing. She reflected on a woman that she would have liked to have become friends with.

I think she's a great woman and ... she used to do netball [...] she seems very bright and just like the kind of person that I would make friends with. [...] I feel like she'd completely dismiss out conversations, she'd only talk to me when, you know, she was marking my position in netball [...] I mean obviously she's probably a million times cleverer than me and [...] even though I am [...] potentially roughly the same level, or even the same kind of area, in terms of education and stuff, I'd be dismissed. [...] [M]y only option then is to talk to people who are the same age as me who generally aren't highly educated, have children when they are like eighteen years old, and that is their life.<sup>420</sup>

Rosie was socially removed from this woman due to the difference in husbands' rank (age in this extract becoming synonymous with rank), with their social orbits being unlikely to cross, other than

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<sup>418</sup> Not a participant

<sup>419</sup> Interviewee #18 426 – 430

<sup>420</sup> Interviewee #9 1803 – 1822

in the socio-space of the netball club. She perceived that because Tim was a private soldier, her relative youth and socio-positioning in the ranked structure made her vulnerable to people judging her.

Whereas people, you know, Sergeants and so and so wives feel like “Oh I can’t associate with the riff-raff” and ...

[ENE] ... especially over on [Burma]<sup>421</sup>.

[Rosie] Do you know, I think it’s the ghetto, it’s referred to. [laughter] And so different reasons for why they’re conscious of it but they’re still all conscious of it. [...] And the fact that there’s Corporals’ Messes and stuff, there’s nothing for the juniors [...]. That kind of automatically says to you, like you are kind of nobody.<sup>422</sup>

Despite her educational background<sup>423</sup>, Rosie perceived herself as being outside the social class of the officer’s wife. Furthermore, she is aware of Fimonue’s ranked system. Her outwardly perceived recognition “dependent on the symbolic systems of knowledge and evaluation to which we have access and through which we recognise others” (Skeggs, 2001, p. 296), associated her with the supposed mores of a ‘private’s wife’. She felt burdened by the preconceptions surrounding her ranked positionality, ‘dismissed’ as a young junior wife, reducing herself in the eyes of this woman. As she condemns her peers for not understanding her vocabulary and for making her ‘worse’, so too did she assume that this woman castigated her into being nothing more than a ‘nobody’. This multi-level reduction that Rosie demonstrated is indicative that amongst the wives, there is the conscious attributing of “forms of social capital [on]to the subject positions and social groups they are implicitly or explicitly differentiated from” (Tyler, 2008, p. 18) working within and between the different groupings of army wives.

Where cross-rank friendships did occur, these were commented on within the community. Tabitha, a wife of thirteen years’ standing, was involved with various sporting and outward-bounds activities.

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<sup>421</sup> Not actual street name

<sup>422</sup> Interviewee #9 908 – 919

<sup>423</sup> Rosie was a tertiary educated woman with a Masters’ Degree, for further personal information please Appendix Five, page 335 – 340

Through the latter she had become friends with a senior officer's wife; however, she was aware that 'politically' this friendship would be a cause of comment.

I have had feelings [...] or I have read between the lines [...] I shouldn't be talking to [her]<sup>424</sup>  
because, because of who her husband is.<sup>425</sup>

Their recreational interests drew them together, indeed part of the reason that they were drawn together enabled them both to "generate alternative definitions of self" (O'Connor, 1998, p. 119) as opposed to the constructed identity of their army wifehood. These women within the normal ranked boundaries would not have been in each other's social orbit, inhabiting different messes with husbands of very different rank yet, through their mutual interests, their friendship created a space outside of these "enmeshed patriarchal" (O'Connor, 1998, p. 119) ranked boundaries, enjoying each other's company regardless of the external perception of their friendship.

Their friendship developed through common interests, however, the formal boundaries of rank that located women into ranked patches and groups (implicitly) prohibited friendships that sat outside of those demarcated lines; such friendships becoming public property, explicitly discussed. The permeating hierarchical ethos crept into women's friendships socio-spaces. O'Connor argues that "friendships [often] reflect and reinforce the stratified nature of the society, with friends typically being made with people from the same class, race, educational background, level of income, recreational activities etc" (O'Connor, 1998, p. 119). Friendships not remaining stratified were questioned and viewed as expedient or deviant. Despite shared interests, Tabitha's relationship challenged the inherent ranked boundaries overriding Fimonue's socio-spaces and in doing so the panoptic lens of the militarised community, as she surmised, questioned this relationship. Acknowledging that unusual cross-rank friendships contribute to "undermine arguments based on the immutability of given [ranked] structures" (Pahl, 2000, p. 162) and Tabitha's awareness of the commentary on her friendship, reinforces the strong pressures "exist[ing] in class-structured

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<sup>424</sup> To protect anonymity, I have removed this woman's name from the discussion

<sup>425</sup> Interviewee #21 1848 – 1851

societies to avoid the formations of friendships between social unequal” (Pahl, 2000, p. 162) due to the threat posed to doxic understandings within the context of the community at large.

Cross rank friendship was troubling for both enlisted and officer wives. Ruth recounted an incident which occurred at an informal wives’ beach party. These events were hosted to generate a community spirit which had dissipated during the Bear’s deployment in Fimonue. Initially, at least, the women remained within their friendship groups, sitting together before inhibitions were lowered leading to a mingling of the groups. Ruth narrated a story that involved a friend (Jennifer) married to a Late Entry (LE)<sup>426</sup> officer, indicating the complicated and nuanced site of belonging occurring for women transitioning from one classed grouping to another. Jennifer’s marriage positioned her outside of the enlisted wives’ group where most of her friends remained located, imbued with the mores of that social grouping. Though her husband had transitioned into the officers’ mess, her incorporation into this new middle-class socio-space was reluctantly recognised by Direct Entry (DE) officers’ wives refuting her as a ‘proper officer’s wife’, viewing her incorporation into ‘their’ mess as a transgression outside of the normal ranked division of the different messes. In the course of the evening, Jennifer<sup>427</sup> lost her friend, a JNCO’s wife, and asked another officer’s wife if she had seen her. Ruth informed me that this officer’s wife said, “[t]here’s a reason that people stick within their own rank structure, Jennifer.”<sup>428</sup> The ranked housing estate and socio-space of the various messes are based purely on militaristic reasons; however, some women within the Bears deemed this separation between civilian women desirable – the rank gap, leaving those who crossed the Rubicon onto the officers’ side vulnerable to isolation, comment and criticism. Having not

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<sup>426</sup> There is a social divide between Direct Entry and Late Entry Officers, the former are invariably university educated (UCAS, 2018) where LE officers (within the infantry) will have joined as a private, promoted through the enlisted ranks before commissioning, this in itself is a significant achievement. However, there remains a divide between the DE wives and the LE wives, as one DE wife explained it to me, “there is a social divide between enlisted and DE wives that does not get eradicated on the wife changing from one mess to another. Invariably the LE wife will have older children, will have served as a wife for upwards of twenty years and there will be a gulf not only in outlook and experience but in class as well”.

<sup>427</sup> Not a participant in any of the research project – she was invited to participate but chose to decline as she felt the project would be too personal and uncomfortable for her.

<sup>428</sup> Interviewee #27 2746 – 2747

spoken to Jennifer about this incident, she is unable to elaborate on any potential impacts resulting from such a comment. However, Pahl suggests that within personal communities “some people *will* be excluded and loneliness and isolation may follow. This is, perhaps, the dark side of friendship about which little has been written” (2000, p. 152)<sup>429</sup>. These rank structure negotiations indicate the realities of establishing friendships outside of ascribed ranked positioning. Such doxic interference indicates the militarisation of army wives’ friendship, nominally private spaces yet within the context of Fimonue, open to public comment and question.

### **Politics of Belonging**

Within the boundaries of Fimonue, interviewees indicated awareness of the militarised panoptic lens trained upon them. For Yuval-Davis, the “politics of belonging comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways, to particular collectivities”, (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 20) and offer a useful way to problematise the concept of belonging to army wifehood for a disparate group of women. Belonging is an important concept in any exploration of habitus, it is the mastery of the rules of the game within a field, “knowing what to do and when” (Bourdieu, 1977a; Bourdieu, 1984; May, 2011, p. 368) that encourages belonging. The commonality for these women is through their marriage to soldiers, existing in the narrowed overseas social world, reliant on other military wives<sup>430</sup> for their social existence overlaid by the ranked stratigraphy rendered visible through ranked housing. This specificity allows for a “focus on how cultural processes are embedded within specific kinds of socio-economic practices” (Devine & Savage, 2000, p. 193; Bottero, 2004, p. 986) as there is a perceived hierarchical structure to the social, non-military, world of the wives behind the wire. However, ‘army wife’ does in fact refer to a group of civilian women who are not homogenous, bringing with them their own perceptions of army wifehood. This section examines how women experienced belonging within the militarily constructed space of Fimonue focusing on those who struggled with negotiating their assimilation into the community of wives.

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<sup>429</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>430</sup> The British military garrison where the battalion was based was a tri-services garrison

Many of the narratives related the struggles experienced on arriving behind the wire. Once in Fimonue, a wife is predominantly left to her own devices in the private feminised domestic space whilst her husband performs his public military duties. Unless her husband has introduced her to his friends' wives, she is left to fend for herself without receiving any formal welfare welcome or introduction to the perceived doxic understandings of her army wife habitus. Jackie recounted that on her arrival, with Bobby away, it would have been

nice if perhaps a member of Welfare come round and said, or called me in and said "How are you getting on with your first posting?" [...] There was nothing. It was kind of like "Oh well you've moved, that's it now, you're thrown into the lion's den, that's it, don't come to us." [...] And I think that would [...] be more helpful, especially for newer wives, to understand kind of perhaps what's *expected*, what's gonna happen.<sup>431</sup>

Audible but unspoken was the sense that all women were grappling with the lack of formal codification, thus each woman's interpretation of what it meant to be an 'army wife' resulted in a multitude of versions being enacted across the garrison, stretching from not leaving the bins out overnight, to running the cake stand at a church event through to not wearing pyjamas on the school-run<sup>432</sup>.

Sonia was aware of struggling with her transition to army wifhood, reflecting that on her arrival into the militarised environment, she changed her appearance to demonstrate her conformity.

I very quickly bonded with a group of women, [...] it was down to the fact of being a bored housewife [...]. They are not necessarily people I would associate with on the outside world. And that sounds really horrid, but I didn't have a lot in common with them [...] a false [...] community [...] I built friendships that were severely fake friendships<sup>433</sup>

Initially she felt compelled to construct herself in different ways to assimilate, her sense of self became diminished. Changing her appearance revealed how, as a result of her incorporation into

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<sup>431</sup> Interviewee #8 1952 – 1959. My emphasis

<sup>432</sup> Charlene, Daphne and Chloe respectively

<sup>433</sup> Interviewee #7 857 – 878

this new friendship group, she believed she could find and create a new identity, presenting alternative aspects of self (Pahl, 2000).

I wore that, and I wore it with pride and I think, "Oh my God! what was I thinking, Jesus Christ that is not me".<sup>434</sup>

Belonging, for Sonia, meant a change in her behaviour, appearance and type of friends. She acknowledged that to belong she became a different person, someone in fact that she did not like. This idea of conforming to the mores of the group through changing her appearance highlight the contested space of community living and how, within this space, there are homogenous behaviours that women feel compelled to perform in order to find friends within such a closed socio-space. Ultimately Sonia "completely backed off, I withdrew into myself"<sup>435</sup> intimating that belonging to this group was "oppressive instead of secure" (Taylor, 2004, p. 207), attained at too high a cost. Sonia was able to distance herself from the army wife she briefly became and, like others within the group, reflected on how the perceived behavioural mores of army wives stand as other (Skeggs B. , 1997; Skeggs & Loveday, 2012) to her preferred sense of self.

Sonia felt located outside of this particular group due to her refusal to change her style of dress and the types of women she normally associated with. For others within there was a significant gulf based on career aspirations and work ethics whilst at school. Rebecca reflected on the contrast between the social mores of herself and her peered cohort:

I just can't understand at 16 what you were doing with your life, that you had a child. Why [we]ren't you focusing on your schoolbook[s]? Why aren't you focusing on furthering yourself, developing yourself into a professional person?<sup>436</sup>

Rebecca's narrative indicates the significance of educational and personal development for her, simultaneously placing her aspirations onto her peer group. Rebecca comes from a professional

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<sup>434</sup> Interviewee #7 1700 - 1701

<sup>435</sup> Interviewee #7 960

<sup>436</sup> Interviewee #11 1571 – 1574

family stating that since she was a small child, “all I ever wanted”<sup>437</sup> was to follow a certain career path. She, and her family, invested both institutionally and culturally, encouraging her to attend university and qualify. These investments became an integral part of who she is (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 244-245), however she finds herself at odds with herself and her positioning in Fimonue’s social world, her husband’s rank locating her at the lower end of the rank/class social system. Her castigation of her social peers demonstrates her awkward positionality outside of her recognised field, implying that the women she feels obliged to associate with have a “set of assumptions and [...] understanding of the world” (Hanley, 2017, p. 103) alien to her own.

Rebecca consciously reflected on young motherhood and in doing so reduced to irresponsible the other women married to junior soldiers with whom she was expected to socialise. Rebecca’s perception of their ‘fecundity’ conforms to Skegg’s analysis that those with access to power, in this case education, view working-class women or enlisted wives as fecund and irresponsible (Skeggs, 2005). An ambitious professional woman, Rebecca perceived these women amongst whom she is now socially bracketed, as having wasted opportunities she embraced. Despite being similar in age and husbands wearing the same rank, her life experiences and expectations resulted in her seeing certain life choices as inexplicable.

Just complacent, they are just complacent, and I don't under[stand] [...], especially when you have children, why wouldn't you want to better yourself, why not set that example for your kids, what are you teaching your daughters? What are you teaching your sons? You know, make something of yourself, be somebody, be proud of yourself.<sup>438</sup>

In this extract she indicates not belonging to the collective of young army wives through not sharing the same “identities and practices” (Devine, 1998, p. 23; Bottero, 2004, p. 988). She believes her aspirations set her outside of the norm for her army wife peer group.

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<sup>437</sup> Interviewee #11 255 – 256

<sup>438</sup> Interviewee #11 1066 – 1070

Gwen commented on her frustrations with “mindless conversations”<sup>439</sup> that she had with those among whom she was expected to make friends, Rosie too indicates a similar sense of linguistic dislocation. She articulated this through the depletion of her vocabulary

I literally had a conversation when I first moved here, with people, and they could barely understand a word I was saying because I was using vocabulary that they’d never even come across before, they hadn’t heard let alone understood. [...] I was sitting there like “Fuck me” you’re like “Shit, what am I going to do?” [...] So I had to literally find a less intelligent way to say what I wanted to say and now I’m almost like stuck in it to be honest, I need to get back to my uni friends.<sup>440</sup>

Unlike Rebecca, she is not critiquing the women for their lack of aspiration, instead she categorised them as not being of the same intelligence level as her. Like Rebecca, she distances herself, othering these women by their “lack of ‘taste’, knowledge, and the ‘right ways of being and doing’” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 511; Lawler, 2005a, p. 432). Rebecca similarly commented on the change in her vocabulary

I honestly felt myself becoming stupid, in fact I even went to the doctor and I was like, “I think I’ve got a brain tumour or something because I just feel dumb, I can’t recall words, I can’t recall any conversations, I can’t add to any arguments or add to a debate, I feel like I am becoming stupid” and he laughed at me and he said “it’s not stupidity, it’s because you are bored. My wife is going through the same thing, its boredom”.<sup>441</sup>

For Rosie,

parts of myself have become worse because, I dunno in a subconscious effort to fit in [...] things like vocabulary, the way that I speak.<sup>442</sup>

She evidenced that she judged herself by the same yardstick and in doing so that she had become ‘worse’. Both women are consciously aware of changing negatively to fit in, of becoming ‘dumb’ or ‘stupid’ and in doing so reveal how they perceived themselves and the women who have precipitated this change in themselves as something “held to be disgusting, [whilst] also signify[ing]

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<sup>439</sup> Interviewee #10 1642

<sup>440</sup> Interviewee #9 1872 – 1879

<sup>441</sup> Interviewee #11 385 – 389

<sup>442</sup> Interviewee #9 1851 – 1853

a 'deeper', pathological and repellent subjectivity" (Lawler, 2005a). Rosie's repellent subjectivity for herself contributed to development of quite significant mental health issues.

[A]nxiety is now so sky high. [...] Yeah, oh God, yeah. [...] you know we barely even get to the shops to feed ourselves, let alone you know, going out and trying to find craft shops or theatres.<sup>443</sup>

Rosie was not unique in how the situatedness of Fimonue had impacted on her mental health. One woman<sup>444</sup> revealed self-harm tendencies having never displayed any mental health illness before relocating to Fimonue. Rebecca similarly revealed mental health issues developing whilst overseas.

I mean I developed quite severe anxiety [...] 'cos, this is what I was constantly being surrounded by, it was literally, I felt like I was going to have a panic attack, all day every day [...] I couldn't cope. And Issac was away. [...] You know I was seeing the psychologist, you know, getting coping mechanisms, eventually. [...] I couldn't cope, [...] It was unbearable [...] I had to exclude certain people from my life, and, [...] suddenly I am like an erratic person that can't leave the house.<sup>445</sup>

Pahl argues that "[e]quality of status is a necessary condition for reciprocal friendship" (2000, p. 21). These women testified to their feeling of unequal status, which meant that they could not become part of enlisted wives' friendship groups. Similarly, friendship can be a way of providing "support and a sense of personal identity" (Pahl, 2000, p. 101). Rosie and Rebecca use negative pejorative terms to describe themselves, 'worse', 'stupid', 'erratic', articulating how they felt they had become closer to the imagined army wives they were keen to distance themselves from.

Rebecca suggested that wives' lack of desire to better themselves, of not making use of the educational resources available on camp, further exacerbated how the military perceives them.

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<sup>443</sup> Interviewee #9 1935 – 1941

<sup>444</sup> Anonymous

<sup>445</sup> Interviewee #11 1612 – 1643

I can't understand why you would accept this role of being a housewife, not doing anything to better yourself, being dependent on your husband [...] but maybe if you put yourself into a better position you would have more of a standing.<sup>446</sup>

Rebecca encoded her peers with a “hierarchical version of ‘class’” (Bottero, 2004, p. 991), viewing those not sharing her aspirational expectations as in need of ‘betterment’. Her self-worth is derived from her achievements whilst, perhaps unintentionally, judging these women she perceived as seemingly content to embrace their dependent status. Her statement reminds us of Lawler’s argument of how the ‘other’ can be placed in an inferior position not only by the military but by wives whose social capital and determination have given them the wherewithal to achieve (Lawler, 2008a). In this classed attitude towards progression, she indicates that her peers need not be “trapped by their gender and class” (Hanley, 2017, p. 105). For Rebecca, there is potential for them to succeed, not remain stuck within the imposed categorisation of dependent army wife. However, it might be salutary to remember that Rebecca has invested in social and institutional capital, foregrounding a belief in her ability to progress and succeed whereas the women she excoriates are unlikely to have had similar opportunities for such investments. Rebecca’s investment in and aspirations for herself run as a theme in her narrative; whilst in Fimonue she demonstrated feelings of entrapment by the militarised rank system, clearly underemployed, very unhappy and bitter. Thus, whilst encouraging other women to invest in themselves, her own self-investments have become, as she readily admits, redundant. This begs the question of whether overseas army wives can escape their ranked positionality and gender whilst living overseas. A comparative piece of further research investigating overseas army husbands would provide fascinating insight into whether the women’s reactions to their situatedness is unique to overseas army wives or a more ubiquitous experience resulting from dependent status as an army spouse.

Belonging, for the interviewees, was a contested space. For the newer wives, learning how to belong within this ranked community was demonstrably a challenging and contentious process.

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<sup>446</sup> Interviewee #11 1640 – 1643

Rebecca had spent her formative years investing in herself and now found those investments worthless within her social peering. Rosie too felt isolated away from her normal markers, feeling “that no-one here seems to even remotely like me. There’s no sense of culture here”<sup>447</sup>. Arguably these investments into both cultural and institutional capital were rendered redundant by the social stratification within the garrison’s ranked system. Saliently, despite Rebecca and Rosie working in the same part of the garrison, they were unaware of each other’s educational background, perhaps guilty of making assumptions of the “assumed lack of *knowledge* and *taste*”<sup>448</sup> (Lawler, 2005b, p. 800) of army wives in their militarily constructed social bracket. The difficulties these women experienced during their time in Fimonue were visceral; emotional during their interviews, ranging from tears to anger, conscious of the impact that Fimonue was having on them, that their incorporation into the militarised world was depriving them of their own pre-marriage expectations. Demonstrably they had not reconciled their current positioning and their aspirations, leaving them feeling alienated and unhappy, unable to belong.

### **Playground antics**

The level of animosity and tension between wives was often remarked on in the interviews. Tasmin commented that “there is a lot of bitchiness, it’s like a school playground”<sup>449</sup> and Sonia narrated how the nastiness between certain women escalated:

it was the bitching [...]. All this started happening. And that is bloody hard to deal with as an army wife, when you've got someone saying something to someone about you, [...] And you are not there to defend yourself. [...] it was very hard with people coming to your door, saying so and so is saying this about you [...] Yeah, oh it was school playground antics completely. So much so that it was actually brought into work, one of the husbands actually said something to Martin.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> Interviewee #9 1527 – 1528

<sup>448</sup> Original emphasis

<sup>449</sup> Interviewee #1 386 – 387

<sup>450</sup> Interviewee #7 928 – 942

Sonia's comment that it is like the schoolyard with wives coming to her house and regaling her with what people were supposedly saying, reintroduces the panoptic lens, reinforcing how army wives must not only be conscious of how their words and deeds are interpreted by the military establishment but also by the community of wives. The concept of the panoptic lens was indirectly reflected upon by the women, as they felt that there was a sense of judgement at play behind the wire.

Negative aspects of friendships and women's exclusionary and hostile attitude were commented on by almost all those interviewed. Candice commented that

[e]veryone's talking behind everyone's back [...] I knew everything about everyone [...] I knew all of their drama [...] they are like "oh my god you know that person over there, they just stayed out". That's what it like and more with younger people because that's what it's like, it's like school [...] I just think it's because they haven't grown up. They think they are at school and that's what you do at school, talk about everyone. Nothing better to do<sup>451</sup>

Insightfully, Candice's comments that these women 'haven't grown up' introduces a further component into the construction of army wives' female friendships, as argued by Hey (1997), Bunnell et al (2012) and McDowell (1999). Fernández Kelly's states that a "sense of identity is mutually constituted in the combination of spatial location, their class and their gender in an environment where these adolescents lack 'bridges to other social networks that control access to a larger set of opportunities and meanings'" (Fernández Kelly, 1994, p. 109; McDowell, 1999, p. 103). Many of the wives overseas were young women at the time of their marriage, many had not lived away from the family home prior to moving into the MQ. Their previous friendships were with friends from school or those established during their adolescent years. Whilst behind the wire, they matured from adolescent girls into mothers without developing their friendship skills; it is thus perhaps unsurprising to discover overtones of school at play within the wives' community. Bunnell et al suggest that "the tracing of friendships through the affective social worlds that people inhabit

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<sup>451</sup> Interviewee #5 258 – 268

[...] reveals a new dimension to the social” (2012, p. 491) and arguably the possibilities of ‘doing friendship’ for these women was limited to those they had developed during their adolescence.

Returning to Sonia’s narrative, this altercation or falling out had leaked into Martin’s workplace highlighting once again the elision between army wife and soldier-husband. This idea of ‘school playground antics’ reminds us of the importance of the geography of space and the relevance of the bounded garrison. In such a setting, the demarcations between the private and the public spheres of the army wife and the military are closely entwined. These demarcations worked in reverse, something that was reflected upon by various women as they probed the multifaceted restrictions they perceived within Fimonue. I was made aware that two wives’ husbands had fallen out and in the neutral setting of a coffee morning they discussed how this prevented them from socialising within the same friendship group. Whilst they were happy to be in the same institutionally sanctioned coffee morning (hosted and run by the Welfare team) the women explored how arguments between soldiers directly impacted on wives’ friendships and that the women were conscious of husband’s opinions (approval) of their friendships. This discussion reveals the hyper-masculine presence within these women’s lives, not only are their friendships bound by the militaristic ranked environment, but their marriages were so constructed that husbands were able to ‘approve’ or not of their wives’ friendships, returning us to Anderson’s work on coercive control. This intersectionality stands as further evidence as to the wives’ positionality behind the wire and that even though friendships are “interpersonal relationship between two or more people that is voluntarily entered into and may be similarly dissolved” (Bunnell, et al., 2012, p. 491; Bowlby, 2011) for these women, friendships are consciously interwoven by the entangled world of Fimonue, of home, work and play dominated by the overarching militarised institution.

Thus far this chapter has probed women’s friendship in Fimonue, examining how their sites of belonging, through their ranked positionality and involvement within the community impacts on

their identity as women and as army wives. It has revealed the dislocation many women felt within their peer friendship groups and the negative effects of their being militaristically placed into ranked patches and ranked social groups. Exploring cross-ranked friendship, it demonstrated that women were judged negatively for these relationships, with their motives called into question. Certain women were evidenced as being overtly conscious of the 'rank gap' policing the parameters of their social group, judging and questioning others who seemingly did not comply. Friendship as a socio-space was explored with it being likened to adolescent friendships of the school playground. The final extract evidences the imbrication between the women and their soldier husband being ever present as the fallings out between women and between soldiers impacted on both the militarised dealings of the men and the domestic space of female friendships highlighting the totalising incorporation of life behind the wire.

### **Working Lives and the Underemployment of Army Wives**

Within Fimonue, there are minimal opportunities for employment outside of the MQ, working in support roles in the schools<sup>452</sup>, as clerks supporting various military departments, in the local information office, at the post office, as a receptionist in the medical centre or employed by the AFF. Thus, the multifaceted habitus of army wife incorporates their employed, underemployed and unemployed status. There are diplomatic reasons relating to the limited jobs for spouses overseas (United Nations, 1960); however, lack of employment and underemployment had deep seated implications for these women. My use of the term underemployment stands as "a multi-dimensional concept that refers to inadequacies in employment or employment-related hardship, as indicated by less than full-time employment (including unemployment) and by employment that is inadequate with respect to training or economic need"<sup>453</sup> (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 161). The peripatetic nature of trailing wives<sup>454</sup> remains "husband-dominated" (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p.

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<sup>452</sup> As LSA, office clerks or dinner ladies

<sup>453</sup> My emphasis

<sup>454</sup> I acknowledge that there are trailing husbands, these are demonstrably in the minority

162) placing women into a secondary migrant (Morrison & Lichter, 1988; Markham, 1986), or in the case of the army dependent, position. Furthermore, through repeated moves and associated discontinuities in employment, is the implied lower value placed on wives' careers. The norm for the Bears, as evidenced by the number of wives<sup>455</sup> who relocated, is that wives do indeed follow their husbands rather than remaining behind. Whilst it is questionable that all wives' earning power rivalled their husbands, there were some within this cohort whose earning potential far outstripped their husband's. That so many wives moved repeatedly, irrespective of their own potential earning power, indicates how husband's employment prospects held greater value to wives' "regardless of economic consideration" (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 162).

Lack of value and lack of employment reflecting their educational attainment and career training were emotionally experienced by a small group of women who articulated settling "for a job for which she is overqualified" (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 163). These women were all keen to work to fill the vacuum of the endless days; however, this underemployment came at a cost to their mental wellbeing. Such curtailment of employment is not exclusive to army wives and has been extensively studied within the canon of incorporated wives (Finch, 1983; Jervis, 2011; Jolly R. , 1987; Arieli, 2007; Callan, 1975; McCarthy, 2014; Harrison & Laliberte, 1994). However, where this work breaks new ground is in its reflection of the direct impact of underemployment and how this was ontologically and emotionally experienced by some of the interviewees.

Twelve of the twenty-nine women were actively employed within the garrison<sup>456</sup>. Tamsin ran a small business from home<sup>457</sup> and like two other women (both of whom worked) was involved in a distance

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<sup>455</sup> These numbers reflect the changes in the battalions' manning during the Bears' time in Fimonue with soldiers rotating in and out of the battalion depending on postings, transfers to different corps and termination of contract.

<sup>456</sup> There were minimal jobs available for dependents within Fimonue. During the time the Bears were deployed there were significant job cuts to the civilian staff with their being no more than twenty jobs (support roles, clerks) open to dependents. This has to be factored against the jobs that were ring fenced for Locally Employed Civilians who were also eligible to apply for the other jobs within Fimonue before they were

learning programme. From this twelve, only four had children<sup>458</sup>, one pre-school aged, the rest were either at school or living away from home. From the remaining seventeen, five had school age children<sup>459</sup> the remainder had children under pre-school age. The small nursery was oversubscribed with a waiting list, both it and the pre-school, were open from eight o'clock until twelve, school hours were eight o'clock until one thirty. No formal after school childcare provision existed within the garrison and, during the Bears' time, there was a dearth of qualified/registered childminders. Jobs available to spouses were predominantly from seven thirty in the morning until two o'clock.

Over thirty years ago, Jolly's (1996) study of army wives argued that the role of women was changing and that more women married to the enlisted ranks had professional careers (1996, p. 65). Yet on moving overseas in 2014, the option to continue working in their chosen profession was almost impossible. To compound their difficulties, due to the terms of the Treaty of Establishment (United Nations, 1960)<sup>460</sup> few "suitable employment opportunities" (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 163) exist for these women. Whilst unable to ascertain how many of the total number of Bears' wives worked prior to relocating, seventeen interviewees had been in employment directly prior to relocation. There was a breadth of employment experience, and whilst some decided to start a (or add to their) family during the posting, there were several women who walked away from promising careers to support and relocate for their husbands.

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advertised externally to dependents. LECs due to historic diplomatic reasons exerted a monopoly over potential jobs. One wife worked as a bank midwife, she was the only professionally employed dependent wife within Fimonue. One wife did remain in the UK for work purposes, splitting her time between Fimonue and the UK however she declined to participate and I have no insight into her professional capacity. An additional wife remained in the UK working as a vet however I had no contact with her, she had never lived as part of the Battalion and I believe they married during the Bears' tour in Fimonue.

<sup>457</sup> Dependents were entitled to run small businesses from home if they were in receipt of a business license obtainable from the military court. These businesses ranged from beauticians and nail technicians, hairdressers and photography. One wife (not an interviewee) provided maths tuition to school children and ran a GCSE maths class at the Education centre for both dependents and soldiers alike. Caroline also ran a small business from home alongside of working.

<sup>458</sup> NB: one woman's children no longer lived at home, they were either at school, university or working.

<sup>459</sup> One woman's children were away at boarding school.

<sup>460</sup> This means, that where the job can be carried out by a Cypriot (i.e there is no professional qualification required) they have priority over the wives for these roles. To compound this, during the battalion's years in Cyprus (2014-2017), an additional clause was included that when a job became available within the garrison that had previously been held by an LEC, then only another LEC could apply for this role.

Those experiencing the most detrimental change in their identity were wives who experienced work as “a major source of actual and perceived competence” (Raskin, 2006, p. 1361). Their jobs were intrinsically important to their self-identification, achieving a sense of purpose through this employment. Yet, on relocation, these women, previously finding meaning in their work (Gini, 1998, p. 707), were unable to recognise or find value in themselves without these identity markers. Sonia

had everything stripped away from me [...] I have lost the sense of drive I used to have, I used to be exceptionally career driven. I used to love my job”<sup>461</sup>

With meaning removed, new self-identification markers had to be acquired proving universally challenging. The lack of identity resulting from losing their professional positionality was most visible amongst those who did not have another identity to fall back on, such as motherhood.

There was a clear and noticeable void resultant from their loss of professional self and, un(der)employed within the garrison they insinuated that available jobs were beneath their actual capabilities.

I know it’s rude, but instead of being a housewife, I took whatever job [...] I could take. I studied for 4 years, I put myself through university, there was no ways I was giving up on my dream [...] to support Issac’s career. That’s where, you know the line got drawn. And so, I accepted a position [...] not realising, what a *step back* it was going to be.<sup>462</sup>

Rosie expressed her frustrations at the menial job she had accepted to keep herself occupied.

It wasn’t particularly intellectually stimulating, [...] it’s not the stimulation that I was used to, having done, you know, a Masters’ degree.<sup>463</sup>

These jobs could arguably fall into Goffman’s definition of removal activities (1961, p. 67) where they are “sufficiently engrossing [...] to lift the participant out of himself” (1961, p. 67). Whilst not perhaps sufficiently engrossing to lift the women fully out of themselves, they were time-fillers with women fully cognisant of the compromise made to follow their husband, ‘supporting’ his career.

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<sup>461</sup> Interviewee #7 1319 – 1322

<sup>462</sup> Interviewee #11 212 – 217 my emphasis

<sup>463</sup> Interviewee #9 819 – 821

Removed from what they had aspired to do, these underemployed women became bitter and resentful.

Another concern arising from lack of employment opportunities were potential mental health issues. Gwen narrated that her year of unemployment was detrimental to her sense of self and ultimately to her mental well-being.

I was an Avon lady at 14, that was my first job. [...] I have always had a job, umm and I have never been unemployed and then I did a year here, of being unemployed, it almost broke me.<sup>464</sup>

As her narrative continued, she described how this removal of purpose came at quite a cost to her self-worth.

And just sit on the sofa all day and watch the TV, [...] when you do that every day it is not fun, it is just demoralising and horrendous and [...] if I hadn't have got that job [...] I was just a complete shambles [...] by that point because even all the other stuff that I was doing wasn't filling enough time or, brain power.<sup>465</sup>

The value Gwen placed on her career and her professional self was removed leaving her 'a complete shambles', her lack of employment impacting upon her emotional and mental well-being.

Rebecca, Rosie Gwen, Jolene, Megan and Annie were amongst the youngest interviewees, married for less than three years during the fieldwork, at the point of interview nonmothers working in support or clerical jobs, relocating overseas within a few weeks of marriage. Gwen reflected that she had

not just give[n] up my job, but actually give[n] up that career as there was no way that I was going to hit the career plan that I had wanted originally [...] that wasn't going to happen.<sup>466</sup>

Annie, too, considered her position

[i]f I constantly followed him around and never went down the career path and just picked up a dead-end job [...] what have I got for me?<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Interviewee #10 611 – 617

<sup>465</sup> Interviewee #10 665 – 673

<sup>466</sup> Interviewee #10 536 – 538

Rosie reflected that even though she had a job that she “needed some sort of satisfaction as well, [...] it kind of just wasn’t enough for me”<sup>468</sup>. Megan’s family questioned her decision to relocate as “[t]hey, I think, were very against it because obviously I was leaving [...] my dream job”<sup>469</sup>. These women indicated that they were conscious of what they had given up, no longer the “producers of their present and their future, inventors of the people they are or may become” (Giddens, 1991; Walkerdine, et al., 2001, p. 2). Megan reflected that prior to marriage and her quick relocation she wanted to have her “own independent life, my own career. And then suddenly it was all taken”<sup>470</sup>. Rosie felt that giving up her burgeoning career was “the hardest, one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do”<sup>471</sup>. Consciously aware of putting their careers on hold, Rebecca rationalised her current situation by considering that when back in the UK

my career will come first [...] I am not prepared to fully give up my career for him. I won't do that, and I don't think he would respect me if I did. I don't think I would respect myself if I did<sup>472</sup>

It appears that their self-identity was being challenged by their changed overseas location, rendered underemployed, no longer pursuing their future or their careers. The subjective positioning these younger women brought to their relocation lead them to question their newfound positioning as adjunctive to their husband. Rebecca felt that she had diminished since relocating to Fimonue.

My whole world revolves around Issac, everything, everything. [...] Everything about me goes back to him.<sup>473</sup>

Rebecca has become dependent, not only for her entitlement to live within Fimonue but also for her sense of self as ‘everything about me goes back to him’. Resulting from her career loss, her positioning in the home, she felt adjunctive to Issac, lost in the domestic world of the MQ,

I have had to give up a huge part of who I am, to be Issac's wife. [...] To be Issac’s dependent, I don't even get a name.<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> Interviewee #13 1334 – 1336

<sup>468</sup> Interviewee #9 823 – 824

<sup>469</sup> Interviewee #26 737 – 739

<sup>470</sup> Interviewee #26 993 – 994

<sup>471</sup> Interviewee # 9 188

<sup>472</sup> Interviewee #11 626 – 629

<sup>473</sup> Interviewee #11 1162 – 1164

Her comment that she does not 'even get a name' reinforces the dispossession of self as "the most significant of these possessions is not physical at all, [...] loss of one's name can be a great curtailment of the self" (Goffman, 1961, pp. 27-28).

For these women, their relocation and removal from their chosen career was a difficult transition.

They related losing a sense of themselves and considered relocating back on their own to the UK.

Annie was

at the point, we had sat down and had the discussion that I was going to go back, [...] I couldn't get a job, I was going [...]. He supported, he understood, I think he knew, just how much it was getting to me not working.<sup>475</sup>

On finding out she had finally got a job within Fimonue,

I cried when I got the job, because I could not believe that I had got the job. [...] I think it meant quite a bit more because I was on the verge of going back, I was on the verge of just leaving.<sup>476</sup>

Gwen too experienced similar feelings,

when they called and said that they would like to give me the job<sup>477</sup>, I was so elated, that, jumping around the house, like, yeah, thank you so much! [...] only two weeks before, I'd been [...] so depressed and if something didn't change then I was going, and it was all, like, horrendous, [...] I couldn't cope.<sup>478</sup>

However, on hearing that she had secured a job "I already felt better, like, I already felt amazing, I can pretty much do anything now"<sup>479</sup>. Thus, despite their newly married army wife status, for these women, turning their back on a career proved an almost impossible sacrifice. If they had not found employment, they would likely have left their husband. In their responses to losing their career, and the self they had invested in, these women highlight the potential dangers of assuming the identity of army wife.

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<sup>474</sup> Interviewee #11 1214 – 1216

<sup>475</sup> Interviewee #13 861 – 866

<sup>476</sup> Interviewee #13 891 – 895

<sup>477</sup> Within Fimonue

<sup>478</sup> Interviewee #10 2007 – 2011

<sup>479</sup> Interviewee #10 2012 – 2013

Evidentially, for this subgroup of interviewees, employment was key to their identity and through their various capital investments they had embarked on promising careers after graduating or leaving school. Gwen had decided to retrain on her return to the UK.

I am going to retrain when we get home or before we get home. [...] I still want to move up, I don't want to sit where I am<sup>480</sup>

demonstrating that she had been able to channel her ambition and her drive into her new job and potential career. For the other women, the lack of recognition placed on their career through its subordination to their husband's demonstrates a continuation of the domination experienced by the women behind the wire "reinforc[ing] status distinctions within the family" (Morrison & Lichter, 1988, p. 171).

This section has considered the impact of underemployment on a subgroup of women who clearly struggled with their relocation behind the wire. They all articulated a sense of dislocation from their previous identity as career or professional women, all struggling to find a purpose in Fimonue. The detrimental impact this had on their mental health was acknowledged by all these women who felt vulnerable and adrift as they tried to locate themselves into their changed category of incorporated army wives.

### **Army wives as mothers**

An alternative identity available for women behind the wire was that of motherhood. This section reflects on the implications this status had for women's identity development as they negotiated their life within Fimonue. Concurrent to being known as 'wife of', apart from a small number (six) within the interview cohort (and across the wider garrison), most women in Fimonue were mothers. When asked what being an army wife meant to them, the unanimous response was motherhood, that being overseas facilitated the opportunity to be 'stay-at-home' mothers. Whilst the additional

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<sup>480</sup> Interviewee #10 604 – 605

identity markers mother/nonmother exist for women living outside the wire, for those overseas they provide an alternative important discourse to being known simply as 'wife of'. Even though identity is undeniably a multifaceted concept and that the major aspects of one's identity should be studied in concert (Laney, et al., 2014, p. 1247), within Fimonue's ranked banded locale, the women must negotiate not only what it means to be known as 'army wife' but also a mother/nonmother and how this additional identity impacts on their daily lives. The concept of motherhood was pivotal to all the women's wider experience of life overseas, regardless of whether they had children. Therefore, within the contested space of army wifeness, arguably the role of mother created an alternative identity construction to dependent army wife.

Within the sample of twenty-nine, twenty-three women were mothers at the time of interview, with one woman heavily pregnant with her first child. Although motherhood was not a specific focus of the interviews, interviewees almost universally discussed the importance they placed upon the additional/alternative status of mothering. For those without children, childlessness became representative of something they did not have, preventing their transition into the community of wives; motherhood provided a way of structuring the day, giving many women an alternative framework in which to situate themselves. The construction of life for army wives, regardless of employment status, focused heavily on the domestic space; incorporated into that was the role and act of mothering. For nonmothers, "the norm of parenthood and convictions of its 'naturalness', 'rightness', and 'selflessness'" (Park, 2002, p. 25) permeated Fimonue, visible in the week day activities available for wives, the block company leave<sup>481</sup> incorporating school holidays and ultimately the questioning of one's childless status.

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<sup>481</sup> Each company division would take its leave during set periods of time and for those couples who had no children and wanted to holiday outside of company leave, permission had to be sought from the CSM and the OC.

The average age of the fourteen enlisted wives who had children at the time of interview was twenty-four years, significantly under the national average. Thirteen were either pregnant or mothers on marriage; three had degrees or had participated in tertiary education, five had completed predominantly vocational post-sixteen education and the remaining five had completed their secondary education. One tertiary educated woman had not pursued a career due to her dual mother/army wife status, Amelia had given up work on marriage (and motherhood) whilst Camille who had one child with an earlier partner, had initially returned to work but on becoming an army wife and relocating to Fimonue<sup>482</sup> had given up work. Jackie had given up work on relocation and had her child in Fimonue; Caroline had retrained several times to fit in with her husband's peripatetic career and was constantly undertaking long-distance vocational courses.

Three of the non-tertiary educated women had never worked and those who had, using the NS-SEC's (2017) scale, had worked predominantly in lower professional occupations with periods of unemployment due to relocation or whilst on maternity leave. On narrating this part of their life-story, on their time as pregnant and not yet married, there was a sense of achievement that they were coping on their own with their boyfriend away. Georgia explained that despite it being "amazing, we was having a baby, totally loved up"<sup>483</sup>, the army had other ideas for her and Gary. She narrated that "I grew a baby, he went to war, I planned the wedding"<sup>484</sup>. Whilst arguably most brides do most of the wedding planning, that she did so whilst pregnant, with her fiancé in a warzone, is perhaps indicative of the strength of character that she would subsequently demonstrate, able to shoulder the burden of responsibility<sup>485</sup>.

Four of the five officers' wives were tertiary educated, none had children on marriage. Ruth, Daphne and Fiona briefly continued their career post marriage; however, neither currently worked

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<sup>482</sup> And from her F&C country of origin

<sup>483</sup> Interviewee #19 322

<sup>484</sup> Interviewee #19 367

<sup>485</sup> See also page 141

in their chosen career path nor felt it likely that they would resume this trajectory on returning to the UK. The average age of primigravida for this small cohort was thirty, under the national average of thirty-five (Office of National Statistics, 2017). These women were amongst the oldest within the interview cohort with an average age of forty-two; the enlisted women's average age was thirty-one. Their length of marriage was thirteen years compared to enlisted wives' six.

The three oldest women at time of primigravida had vocational post-sixteen educational qualifications and promising careers prior to marriage and relocation.<sup>486</sup> Sophie was in the enviable position of being on a long term (unpaid) career-break from her employer. She was cognisant that this placed her in a privilege position presenting her with a

different choice. If I had to leave my job then, yeah, I think, I think it'd have been a ... we'd have had a different, probably maybe different conversation, if I'd have had to leave my job for good.<sup>487</sup>

Whilst in Fimonue she had her first child, viewing her time at home as extended [unpaid] maternity leave. This enabled her to enjoy her time overseas as she and Anthony had the financial security that on their return, she would just have to give six months' notice prior to wanting to go back to work.

I've just been very lucky; this is a stop-gap. [...] I've been able to enjoy Fimonue. And I mean I can go back to *normal*<sup>488</sup> life. [...] [I]t's always been a nice thought.<sup>489</sup>

Both Sonia and Tasmin's respective employers offered to keep their jobs open for them with Tasmin even working remotely.

I was still doing some freelance work for them, as I was still on maternity, I had a very long maternity leave, they looked after me very well. I did a lot of work for them. [...] So that sort of, kept me a little bit sane.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> For all three women their first married tours were overseas

<sup>487</sup> Interviewee #12 1023 – 1025

<sup>488</sup> My emphasis

<sup>489</sup> Interviewee #12 1863 – 1867

<sup>490</sup> Interviewee #1 122 – 126

However, at the end of her maternity leave she resigned despite her company wanting her to return to work. For Tasmin, despite having a job “that I did love, I was a specialist”<sup>491</sup>, she felt unable to “do unaccompanied. I didn't have a baby with him to not be with him”<sup>492</sup>. Sonia too reflected on what she had given up even though she acknowledged that she was going into her marriage with open eyes.

I knew what I was taking on [...] Now I feel like, Mummy *and* Daddy, when Daddy's away. I am cleaner upper of the house, I am this, I am that and actually you took me, or if you took an Army Wife out of the situation, probably the world, the house would fall to pieces<sup>493</sup>

Even though married for several years before having children, Sonia's narrative reveals how her role is as a mother, and, when her husband is away, father, to their daughter, perhaps demonstrating that not only has she been incorporated into her husband's career as a wife but her incorporation is also now as a pseudo-father. She reveals how the role of mother or main carer in the house is entwined with being that of an army wife providing the scaffolding to all those within the family home.

Tasmin and Sonia were previously career women. Tasmin, becoming an army wife weeks before becoming a mother, acknowledged that when they were dating, she

fought my feelings for him for a long time because I did not want to be an *army wife*. That was pretty much because I was used to being so independent<sup>494</sup>

On discovering that she was pregnant they

were already having conversations about getting married. I was already contemplating not wanting to stay in London, so becoming an army wife was, sort of, an alternative, easy way out for me if you like. [...] It meant that I almost didn't have to quit my job properly, if you like, because I was pregnant. They kept my job open when I moved overseas.<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> Interviewee #1 585 – 586

<sup>492</sup> Interviewee #1 138 – 139

<sup>493</sup> Interviewee #7 1313 – 1319

<sup>494</sup> Interviewee #1 25 – 27 – emphasis in audio transcript

<sup>495</sup> Interviewee #1 43 – 48

In her case, even though becoming pregnant was a surprise, the route this offered into army wifehood left the door to her previous career (and arguably her previous identity) propped open. Whilst resisting the idea of becoming an army wife, she was able to replace her perceived negative conceptions of army wifehood, with the identity of mother.

The interviewees acknowledged the significance of motherhood for providing them with a way into the battalion and garrison community. Jolene felt isolated, unable to find common ground; as an older<sup>496</sup> wife she felt that she was being judged too, both on age and childlessness

you kind of get judged on, so we're older, we don't have children. Immediately that's it, you're out of two groups<sup>497</sup>.

Rosie felt this enforced isolation and exclusion

every family has, you know, at least one child, there's so few who don't have any children, [...] every time I [...] went round someone's house or [...] tried to hang out or make friends with people, and they had kids, all you'd talk about was the children or the husband, or their work. And that was it.<sup>498</sup>

For these young women, their identity within the wire was bounded into their current childlessness, excluding them from the wider community. They interpreted this as not performing or embracing the identity of army wifehood, providing the next generation [of soldiers or army wives] (Bamfield, 1974; Trustram, 1984; Venning, 2005).

Not only was their identity as wives called into question, but the lack of activities to fill their time demonstrably weighed heavily upon newly-married childless women arriving in Fimonue new to the battalion, and without employment. The lack of non-child-based activities was commented on as nonmothers interpreted their status as one of the main (if not only) contributing social practice (Bourdieu, 1986; Glover & Hemingway, 2005, p. 389) to not fitting in as opposed to those "individuals connected through social ties [of motherhood] who then have the possibility of

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<sup>496</sup> This is comparative as she herself was only twenty-nine at the time of interview.

<sup>497</sup> Interviewee #15 2378 – 2379

<sup>498</sup> Interviewee #9 1074 – 1077

accessing each other's resources" (Mulcahy, et al., 2010, p. 4; Glover & Hemingway, 2005). Jolene commented how not having children marked her as outside community "I was very much kind of on the outside looking at all of this"<sup>499</sup>, limiting her social interactions. Her lack of homophily (Mulcahy, et al., 2010) with other wives who were mothers reduced her ability to bond with other wives,

they all had children and they were all kind bonding over that. And everyone was still very nice, but they all kind of migrated towards each other.<sup>500</sup>

Her perceived inability to bond as a nonmother excluded her from this network of wives reducing her social capital within the community. This reduction in social capital, locating her outside of the group, reduced her support system within the community, putting her at risk of potential ostracism (Mulcahy, et al., 2010, p. 21). Arguably motherhood reinforces the structural inequalities of Fimonue's wifely community which arbitrarily placed those as nonmothers outside of the norm of army wifehood. Unwittingly through her lack, the balance of power (Mulcahy, et al., 2010, p. 4) she needed to facilitate her incorporation into the community had swung away from her and as she experienced it the 'motherhood' panopticon denoted her as other.

Jolene was new to this battalion on moving to Fimonue, she was an older 'newer' wife and she felt, that her age and nonmother status set her outside the social norm, of not what an army wife is. Rebecca reflected on her non-mother identity.

I mean, it's the same for me, there are times when I think, I really wish that I had a child, just so that I could fit in [...] so even though I am 25 and I don't want to have children [...] I am probably too young to even be married, [...] but because of the environment we are in, it's something that I have considered and I am like woa!<sup>501</sup>

Rebecca intimated that her non-motherhood sat her outside the Fimonue norm, rendering her unable to fit in to the dominant society. She was unable to construct her biography (McMahon, 1995, p. 55) as she would wish and, due to the construction of environment, she perceived herself as deviant; having a child seemingly being the acceptable identity for an army wife. That Rebecca is

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<sup>499</sup> Interviewee #15 2429

<sup>500</sup> Interviewee #15 1965 – 1966

<sup>501</sup> Interviewee #11 1113 – 1117

even considering having a child, just to 'fit in', takes her outside of the "class conventions of being ready" (McMahon, 1995, p. 71) demonstrating the "difficulty in sustaining an identity of nonmother" (McMahon, 1995, p. 66). Rebecca seems to be considering motherhood despite not feeling ready as she interpreted army wifehood as entwined with motherhood creating two binding identities. Like Jolene, Rebecca is aware of her perceived lack as a nonmother (viz the mothers within her social grouping). Rebecca viewed the belonging through the social engagement (May, 2011, p. 387) achieved via motherhood as way to "alleviate loneliness and isolation" (Mulcahy, et al., 2010, p. 2018) within her subjective positioning. Thus whilst having a baby creates a functional way of bonding with her peers this further demonstrates how motherhood, though providing social capital and networks and mastery of the perceived habitus of army wifehood to the mothers within the community, continues to "normalise gendered behaviour" (Mulcahy, et al., 2010, p. 2018). This consequentially suggests non-motherhood as not fulfilling the role of true army wifehood through overt practices at play reinforcing specific "social positions and power relations" (Lee, et al., 2014, p. 315) of such community living.

The evidence suggests that by becoming mothers some who followed the flag overseas re-gained a sense of agency and control, giving the appearance of self-determination (McMahon, 1995, p. 112). Whilst the interviews did not focus specifically on motherhood per-se, during their narratives it became obvious that for several women who had children young, motherhood, whilst not always planned, was their clear identity marker, providing a sense of purpose. Candice reflected that she

"love[s] looking after her, I am so happy at the moment, she's relying on me. I don't know what it is, but I love it."<sup>502</sup>

It could be argued that in having their children young, motherhood produced a "socially secure and acknowledged identity" (McMahon, 1995, p. 116) in their home environment. By developing their mother identity they were perhaps able to subordinate or remove from their sense of self the negative identity of army wife.

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<sup>502</sup> Interviewee #26 1242 – 1243

Motherhood was a topic universally discussed by mothers and nonmothers alike. Daphne acknowledged that through the change in her situation from nonmother to mother, her friendship circle widened significantly.

I think through circumstance and people moving on, and you know, there's a couple of people that have had kids now that you [...] so now that she's got a little baby, I'd see her at the health [visitor] [...] so it's people like that who I've become more friendly with.<sup>503</sup>

These mother/children-based friendships allowed her to make “some really, like proper friends for life”<sup>504</sup> even becoming godmother to one of her friend's children. This idea of the change in her friendship circumstance, making friends for life, is illustrative of the supportive spaces (Cronin, 2015, p. 66) potentially available for women located behind the wire in a institutionally constructed incorporated role. Furthermore, establishing themselves within a community, identifiable as mother, visibly participating in activities, they individually constructed an identity alongside that of army wife. Being seen to be part of this friendship group facilitated “an alternative definition of identity – or at least one which enables women to critique the dominant definition of themselves as the Other” (O'Connor, 1998, p. 117; Cronin, 2015, p. 666).

For Sandra, her identity as army wife was overlaid by her role as mother and her sense of responsibility in protecting her children from the realities of life in a military family. She articulated that

even being an army wife doesn't prepare you for being an army mum [...] and that's probably my hardest role, always making it right for [the children].<sup>505</sup>

This sense that her primary role, above that of being a wife, was to protect and support her children in coming to terms with their father's deployments, confirms the theory that “motherhood influences identity more powerfully than either material status or occupation” (Rogers & White,

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<sup>503</sup> Interviewee #14 634 – 645

<sup>504</sup> Interviewee #14 654 – 655

<sup>505</sup> Interviewee #4 1570 – 1574

1998; Laney, et al., 2014, p. 1230) becoming an important source of meaning in the women's lives (Ross & Van Willigen, 1996; Laney, et al., 2014, p. 1230). It is perhaps the overlaying of their identity of mother onto army wife that facilitated an acceptance of "the[ir] social categorisation or classification" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 224). With the idea of the other at play within the wider construction of army wife within the community of women and, indeed, for the women themselves, perhaps it is unsurprising that women are more content to wear and inhabit the appellation 'mother' than 'army wife'.

Motherhood provided a tangible identity for women within the community. The motherhood friendships they established and subsequent extended domestic spaces resulted in an "accruing of benefits" (Mulcahy, et al., 2010, p. 4), increasing their social capital, profiting (Mulcahy, et al., 2010, p. 10) as Daphne alluded from this change of status. Through motherhood, some women found the flexibility to accommodate their army wife habitus, discovering it a more acceptable alternative. Yet conversely the nonmothers such as Jolene, Rebecca and Rosie were (perhaps unknowingly) responding creatively to their imposed army wifeness or habitus which deterministically implied motherhood as a recognisable status for these women. Whilst minimal in number these women's refusal to have children simply to belong, demonstrates social conditions of action which are different to the conditions in which the habitus was originated (Perez, 2008, p. 8) indicating that there are different statuses available to army wives behind the wire not just that of mother.

### **What makes an army wife?**

The only direct questions posed to the interviewees probed their views as to 'what makes an army wife' allowing them to problematise and explore what the term meant to them, whether they perceived themselves as such and their views on others in the community. The concept of army wifeness is militarily constructed yet experienced by civilian women, its liveability as a term is dependent on the women who wear the nomenclature. This final section investigates how the

interviewees considered 'army wife', both as a term applicable to themselves in their Fimonue locale and what ultimately makes an army wife.

The interviewees almost universally claimed to not be "your stereotypical army wife". Army wifehood was predominantly viewed in the negative. Their reasons were multiple, however what was audible from those who disavowed the term was how this collective identity appeared to diminish their independence from their husband, becoming subsumed into his career. Veronica stated that for her a typical army wife is

a wife who lives her life through her husband [...] through his achievements and her children because there is nothing else outside the wire for them to focus on. So it's a very narrow existence.<sup>506</sup>

Jolene continued this concept of incorporation, stressing that she thinks

"it's more, like, what I presume [it] would be in the like fifties and sixties. You're the wife, here to promote your husband's career."<sup>507</sup>

She narrated hearing other women discussing promoting their husband to more senior wives:

And I know of some wives who kind of go "Well we really should make an effort, we need to go see X, Y and Z, because they're X, Y and Z's [...]er wives."<sup>508</sup>

Noting further that

"if you don't fit into that kind of group, so you're not going to the coffee mornings, you're not doing the cake and bake sales and your kids aren't kind of altogether, helping out on the next SSAFA run, then you're kind of pushed a little bit further out of what you should be doing in terms of helping your husband's career"<sup>509</sup>

The concept of the role of the army wife was that of an incorporated woman, promoting her husband, allowing her own identity (and perhaps purpose) to take a back seat. The apparent consensus was that unless you were working the side-lines of your husband's career, then you could not really consider yourself to be a truly incorporated army wife. This "vicarious career" (Finch,

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<sup>506</sup> Interviewee #3 1142 – 1145

<sup>507</sup> Interviewee #15 2681 – 2682

<sup>508</sup> Interviewee #15 2742 – 2744

<sup>509</sup> Interviewee #15 2691 – 2694

1983, p. 157) is not a new phenomenon for army wives and whilst easy to dismiss them as merely ambitious wives, it is worth focusing at a deeper level on their incorporation into their husband's careers.

Firstly, these women experienced a peripatetic lifestyle resulting from their marriage, in many cases, unable to maintain or develop their own career. Veronica reveals a sense of resignation,

[A]t that point I had given up any idea of having a career, and just settled into the fact that I was just going to do admin.<sup>510</sup>

Wives' focus turns towards the development of their husband's career; as he advances up the rank structure, so too will she. Noticeable in wives' narrative was the linkage of their life-story to husbands' career, plotting their own chronology to his postings and overseas tours. In this instance the husband's career becomes "an observable pattern, linked to an individual's social location and changes in that location" (Finch, 1983, p. 159). The social location of the wife improves the more senior the soldier becomes, financially they become more secure as his wage increases<sup>511</sup>, and perhaps she will herself feel that she has gained more social standing, meaning that their career becomes "a linked series of changes in the interior of that individual's life" (Finch, 1983, p. 159).

Secondly, the single-career-dual-person (Papanek, 1973) construction demands "a three-way relationship between employers and two partners in a marriage, in which two sets of relationships are of the 'secondary' type and one is of the 'primary'" (Papanek, 1973, p. 855), impacting on the positionality of wives alongside husband's career. Whilst perhaps finding themselves secondary to their husband's relationship with the army, such positionality might encourage wives to work in conjunction with their husband, facilitating his career "we're here supporting our husbands"<sup>512</sup>. For these wives this sense of working together might reduce the notion of being relegated to the sidelines, their worth limited to the domestic sphere. In linking herself to her husband's career, an army

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<sup>510</sup> Interviewee #3 246 – 248

<sup>511</sup> See Appendix Two, page 331

<sup>512</sup> Interviewee #8 1809

wife creates “a life in a specific social setting [...] set[ting] a framework for interaction to which others can relate” (Finch, 1983, p. 159). This demonstrates the importance of not dismissing these women as pushy, or negatively viewing the stereotype of army wife. Instead it is necessary to consider that for women who have given up everything to follow their soldier husband, a sense of self is perhaps achieved through supporting and encouraging his career progression thereby justifying in her own eyes the sacrifices she has personally made.

Returning to the question ‘What make an army wife’, in the interviews many struggled to view the concept of army wife positively. Sandra, a long-standing member of the battalion’s community of wives, felt that the only positive thing she could say about being an army wife was:

I described it once, and my civvie friend said ‘that's horrible’. I said ‘it’s not horrible it’s just my life. I think at times you are a financially supported single parent’.<sup>513</sup>

Tellingly, this was perhaps the most positive view of the designation of army wifeness, demonstrating that that even though there were wives who had relatively positive experiences, it was impossible to find a wife who happily wore the *nomenclature*, as opposed to the lived experience – or even that constructed by the media of ‘army wives’. Military wives’ public persona was in the public eye during the Afghanistan years<sup>514</sup>, nowhere more so than in the programme and subsequent rise to fame of the Military Wives Choir in which, Cree (2017) argues, the military wife stood as the “embodiment of feminine patriotic sacrifice” (2017, pp. 37-38) embedded into “everyday life and popular culture, her function to generate support for ‘our boys on the frontline’” (2017, pp. 37-38). This public imagery of wives’ “feminine sacrifice” (Cree, 2017, p. 36) of her husband to the nation’s cause, perhaps skewing the lived realities for wives overseas, negotiating their day-to-day incorporated army wifeness married to non-deployed soldiers and thus not on the frontline.

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<sup>513</sup> Interviewee #4 823 – 825

<sup>514</sup> 2002-2014 (MoD, 2015)

The 'right' type of wife was considered at length and there was universally a sense that Fiona was the archetypal officers' wife within the Bears. Married to a senior ranking officer within the Bears, Fiona had worked prior to marriage and had experienced an overseas posting (not directly) prior to Fimonue. Even though not the most senior ranking officers' wife, she was viewed by the entire battalion as being community orientated and was credited with reinvigorating the community spirit which had dissipated somewhat in the year prior to her arrival<sup>515</sup>. Many women highlighted and praised her abilities. Charlene reflected,

I think she's fantastic, she's rallying, she's a rallier of the troops and I really like her enthusiasm and I am willing to you know, can you help out doing this, absolutely, I will help out because I really enjoy. [...] And I find it a pleasure working alongside her because she has got, the way she wants to bring everybody together is really positive.<sup>516</sup>

Other wives commented "you [can] imagine Fiona as a CO's wife. She would be perfect, wouldn't she?"<sup>517</sup> and that "Fiona would be an amazing CO's [wife]. And that's what everyone views them as. As a CO couple at some point."<sup>518</sup> Fiona was seen to hold the right attributes such as being "very discreet, she was also presentable"<sup>519</sup>. In extolling Fiona's capabilities as the right type of officers' wife she is commended for doing all the right things, summed up as being, "very good at being an army wife."<sup>520</sup>

Turning to Lawler's (1999; 2005a; 2008b) and Skeggs' (1997; 2004; 2005) work on classed identity, remembering that within the army community enlisted men (and associatively their wives) are viewed as working class and the officer community as upper classes, the concept of the ideal army wife stems from this middle class framing. Such attitude regarding the role of the officer's wife still

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<sup>515</sup> The community of wives had fractured somewhat in the year prior to the fieldwork with a schism between different pockets of enlisted wives. This was a very public breakdown of the community which had occurred via social media on a private group page (interestingly monitored by the HCSO and CoC and was closed-down due to the vitriol of the messages). After this breakdown coffee mornings were shut down for a period of time before being taken over by Welfare and there were no wives' events in the intervening period. Fiona was credited with kick-starting these activities. Perhaps there is another research project lurking in here too!

<sup>516</sup> Interviewee #18 1453 – 1460

<sup>517</sup> Interviewee #3 327 – 328

<sup>518</sup> Interviewee #14 1418 – 1419

<sup>519</sup> Interviewee #3 334 – 335

<sup>520</sup> Interviewee #27 2866 – 2867

prevailed as recently as 1976 with a directive stating that “[visiting] should be undertaken voluntarily by those who have the time and talent to play a friendly and supportive role to soldiers’ wives and families. It follows that those who are not able to accept a welfare role because they do not ‘have the talent and time’ are in *no sense failing to reach the standards expected of them*” (Finch, 1983, p. 90; MoD, 1976, p. 282). As with wider society, the middle-classes of the officer wives echelon have come to stand as “the benchmark of ‘normality’ against which other groups are measured” (Lawler, 2008b, p. 247; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989; Skeggs B. , 1997). It is against this measuring of the ‘right’ attributes of the officer’s wife that the ‘wrong’ attributes of the enlisted wife can be measured. This framing or placing in opposition indicates the dyadic nature of class within Fimonue and its relational status with the other (middle vs working classes, officer vs enlisted) “because part of the logic of class relies on the making of distinctions between classes and class fractions” (Lawler, 2008b, p. 246).

Conversely, the wrong type of attributes were implicitly assumed, seemingly corresponding to the UWO’s address<sup>521</sup> that Bea received, insinuating that enlisted wives would be bitchy and participate in cat fighting. Bea admitted that she was expecting fights and fallings out which she in fact witnessed at her first mess event.

The mess do’s, sort of, they had fights and things, it was the first time in my life I had come across that [laughs].<sup>522</sup>

Sonia reflected on this at length

if you look around here [...] you can glimpse at people and look at them and say what, “in the outside world I would not give you the time of morning or day, because you are just worlds apart from where I’ve come from [...] Your persona and the way that you put yourself across, the way that you speak, the way you speak to your children, the language that you use and stuff like that”. Yes I swear, don’t get me wrong, I don’t know an army wife that doesn’t swear [...] But there is a time and there is a place for it and in the middle of the

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<sup>521</sup> See page 150

<sup>522</sup> Interviewee # 23 247 – 248

flipping [...] car park, swearing at your child calling it all the names under the sun and stuff like that, you just think “how uncouth do you look?”<sup>523</sup>

Demonstrably Sonia was keen to distance herself from other army wives ‘you are just worlds apart from where I’ve come from’ creating the sense of distance and “legitimation” (Lawler, 2008b, p. 249) that she needs to distinguish her peer army wives as other to her own sense of self.

Caroline in her reflections on army wives stated that

To be honest, after the twelve years [...] knowing all those people, when you say army wife. [...] and a pikey or a chavvy person, I don’t see a difference. [...] Most wives I think go under that kind of [label].<sup>524</sup>

Thus, transcript evidence demonstrates that the wives of enlisted soldiers are often reduced to a vulgar and excessive Other (Skeggs, 1997; Skeggs, 2004; Lawler, 2008a; Walkerdine, et al., 2001) not only by the CoC but by each other. They are perceived to fight in the street, indulge in bitchy behaviour, swear in car parks; they are discussed in derogatory terminology presenting them in direct opposition to the acceptable face of military wifehood, that of the ‘officer wife’. The behaviours of the enlisted, supposedly working-class, wives are deemed to veer towards the disreputable as judged by both the middle-class (officer) observers (Lawler, 2008a, p. 137; Lawler, 2008b) but, ironically, also by enlisted wives themselves as evidenced by Sonia, Caroline and Bea, all married to enlisted soldiers.

This final section has considered how the interviewees responded to the term army wife and their incorporation within it. Predominantly the wives were keen to distance themselves from such an identity marker and in doing so looked for ways to carve out their distance from others within the wider cohort. In refuting the appellation they resist at low level their incorporation yet ultimately it is through moving overseas, becoming dispossessed and removed from their former lives,

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<sup>523</sup> Interviewee #7 1718 – 1731

<sup>524</sup> Interviewee #29 1592 – 1597

institutionalised into the we-talk of the institutional lingo located behind the wire of Fimonue that they do in fact become overseas army wives.

### **Conclusion**

Army wifehood is evidentially a contested space both in its physical embodiment and in its ontological application. For interviewees army mother was an alternative identity demonstrably easier for the women to adopt, interestingly pointing to Goffman's removal and adjustment activities for those within total institutions as a mechanism of coping with the lived realities of their situatedness. Demonstrably, in replacing the appellation of army wife with mother, these women were able to provide themselves with an identity worn more comfortably. For those within the cohort who were nonmothers, this lack of alternative identity, marked them as different from the majority of women behind the wire, denoting them as outsider with Rebecca even considering having a child purely to fit in with the group of women she was now associated with. The evidence thus suggests that for these women to be able to identify themselves with army wife there needed to be an additional association, in this case with motherhood, to facilitate an easier transition of identity into that of army wife. The chapter has thus continued Mulchaly et al (2010)'s work considering motherhood as a form of social capital, seemingly softening for the mothers within the cohort their incorporation as alluded to through the removal activities it provided.

In its examination of the impact of underemployment, the chapter evidenced the impact such status had on women within Fimonue and its detrimental effect on the newer wives within the cohort, their loss of professional identity and the inability to replace this with a new fulfilling identity behind the wire. These impacts demonstrated worrying implications with reports of development of anxiety and mental illness. Having to leave professional identities behind, coupled with their former social identity as civilian professional women, they felt further marked as outside of the norm of

army wives. This positioning made them consciously aware of what they had lost by moving overseas.

Consistently remarked upon was the adolescent-style friendships that were evident within the community. It has been argued that such friendship patterns are indicative of the relative lack of maturity in friendship development and a fascinating piece of further research would be a consideration of the long-term implications of living within such a contested social environment. Within the friendship space of the community, evidence has shown that the panopticon amongst the wives was again at play with cross-rank friendship being deemed inappropriate. This is a form of self-policing the women enacted maintaining the stratigraphy of rank placed upon them by the militarised hierarchy. Awareness of rank, despite many interviewees' claims to the contrary is indicative that (un)consciously these women adopt this hierarchical militarised stratigraphy.

This chapter has responded to criticisms levelled at Bourdieu's habitus as deterministic in reflecting on wives' responses to their army wife habitus as they interacted with Fimonue's various fields of plays (or sites of struggles). Friendship as a form of social capital was similarly considered with the frank acknowledgment that whilst friendship groups did provide a form of support and succour for the interviewees, there were significant points of tension within the construction and lived realities of friendships in Fimonue. The lack of friendships and their direct impact on wives' social capital arguably hindered some women's assimilation into the community impacting directly on their incorporation. It considered the agency, perhaps unknowingly, demonstrated by the small number of wives refuting the status of nonmother-hood purely to fit into the pre-determined mould or habitus of army wife. Yet through this agentic approach they remained cast outside of the norm of army wife, isolated from the remainder of the community.

As the evidence suggests, there are multiple implications for women who follow their soldier husbands to Fimonue. Many of the women interviewed narrated a litany of loss that they had experienced since moving overseas. All wives felt encircled by the inaudible yet deafening constraints of their overseas garrison.

Why I am here, what purpose have I got being here, apart from being someone's wife [...] I had lost my identity.<sup>525</sup>

These women evidenced a sense of loss, of mourning their previous civilian self. They were aware of their negative reputation constructed by the institution under whose control they fall but, due to the prejudices of the very people who should be supporting them, they felt unable to seek help or support. The perceived wisdom is that they should just 'crack on' and make the best of it, eventually either conforming to the model of behaviour and identity predetermined by the military or breaking under the weight of repression. Therefore, the women's behaviour and implied position within the military hierarchy becomes that of obedient wife, clearly demonstrating that women 'married to the army' overseas are manoeuvred into a subjugated performance which de-identifies them from their previous self and into an 'army wife'.

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<sup>525</sup> Interviewee #13 608 – 610

## Thesis Conclusion

This thesis accompanied a cohort of twenty-nine women inhabiting the nomenclature of 'army wife', moving and living behind the wire of Fimonue. In so doing it experienced, however fleetingly, the world of twenty-first century incorporated army wives, negotiating and responding to their dependent and adjunctive living.

In preparing for the unit move, deciding what to store and what to pack, the women revealed their responses to their dispossession into the army machinery, moving within the parameters that the army sets. They became incorporated into the baggage carts of the modern army, moved and housed according to their husband's rank. Their sense of possession and control over their own lives became lost, subsumed into their husband's service number, dispossessed from their own name and, as was elucidated, their sense of self. Through this removal, their language became peppered with the we-talk of the institutionalised, demonstrating the elision between their civilian and military positioning, locating them somewhere between inside and outside of the militarised world that their husband occupies. Though Jervis (2011) also employs Goffman's frames of total institution and dispossession, this thesis goes beyond her work by revealing the intimate and micro-impacts of institutionalisation, as articulated by wives' response to, and negotiation of, such dispossession and incorporation.

In moving overseas, wives were made aware of the expected rules of behaviour through the welcome lecture delivered by the UWO. Permeating Fimonue was the demarcation between the moral order of the officers' wives, still held up as paragons of army wifely duty, with enlisted wives policed and judged not only by the chain of command but by the wives themselves. The pervasive rules of the game that these women experienced demonstrated the panoptic lens focused upon them since their relocation and subjugation by the term, and the realities of their dependent status.

This thesis has gone further than previous cognate studies in exploring the ontological realities of moving overseas with the army, how wives viscerally experienced their dispossession not only of their physical possessions becoming bounded and coded by militarised expectation and doxic understandings. Within these overseas procedures there are complex rules which must be adhered to, enforced through a wife's positioning against her husband's military service number; whilst some are written, others, equally pervasive, are unwritten. These include the length of a civilian wife's dress at a mess do, to the expectation of managing the domestic front privileging the role of soldier above the role of husband, her incorporation into his career through the expectation of emotional labour performed on his behalf. In exploring the interviewees' responses to their incorporation, both positive and negative, it has demonstrated that incorporation is still a common and acute experience for peripatetic army wives. It acknowledges that there are differing responses to incorporation and that there are exceptions to the norm in the responses of Daphne and Charlene who, by embracing their role and inhabiting the doxic realm of the army wife as they perceived it, were able to create a new sense of purpose for themselves. There were however many women who experienced their changed status as a reduction in self as agentic choice maker, struggling to adapt and inhabit the rules of the game.

Having arrived in Fimonue, it was necessary to explore the geographic realities of such a militarily constructed space, investigating how incorporated army wives created a life and purpose for themselves behind the wire. The second analysis chapter explored patch life, the limited socio-spaces available to women during the working day and how the hierarchy infantilised their requirements for a community space, demonstrating an underlying lack of empathy for their needs as adult women and not merely adjunctive members of the military community. Further lack of empathy was revealed in the particular incident of the strike and lock down of the gates where the women felt ignored as valid members of that community, only aware that the gates had been unlocked when hearing the strains of the ice cream van's music as it wound its way through camp.

Emerging in these initial chapters were the realities of symbolic domination, unconsciously imposed onto the wives, nowhere more so than in the medical staff attending to them in military uniform. Though it is inescapable that these women are overseas solely at the behest of the army's demands, their incorporation into a quasi-military status was overtly impressed upon them through the visual representation of the military machinery when seeking support. Tabitha too found the intersection of her private communication with a politician and its military consequence with both her and husband being 'pulled into welfare'; visibly demonstrating to her, and readers of this thesis, the intersectionality of an army wife under the jurisdiction of the army command. A civilian wife, she was militarily reprimanded for publicly questioning the authority and judgement of the army's decision to deploy her husband.

Rank and its symbolic domination briefly revealed in the first analysis chapter, emerged in this second chapter as a significant theme, nowhere more so than in its consideration of the ranked patches and significance of a back fence – an examination not previously considered in cognate military wife investigation. Though seemingly innocuous, the relevance that such a boundary has is multifarious, not only for indicating the privacy deemed a requirement for the officer and his family but in the panoptic authority it provides not only to the military but also to others within the community, seemingly comfortable in passing judgement on others' life choices. The lack of privacy between the enlisted ranks is emblematic of the lack of privacy that the army exerts over its more junior ranking soldiers, viewing them as a homogenous whole rather than as individuals requiring privacy and seclusion.

Rank was further experienced as a form of exclusion between the interviewees and wider community with specific implications for women who found themselves outside of a recognisable social milieu, reducing themselves down to an essentialised other. This sense of loss of self,

symbolised by a reduced vocabulary, led to an increase in levels of anxiety with Rosie feeling unable to physically care for herself and her household. This thesis does not question the military requirement for a rank structure; rather, what is revealed is how the traditional and patriarchal assumption that women must assume the same social ranked/classed standing as their husband has clear negative consequences for many women. Conversely, rank was experienced positively by some women who through their husband's rank were able to move up the traditional class/social scale keen to embrace the traditional militarised doxa of the line in the sand between officer and enlisted ranks. This thesis acknowledges that rank still plays a significant part in the ontological experiences of army wives overseas and whilst there are positive experiences, it raises the cautionary warning that continuing to place wives in blatant ranked stratum could well have negative and long-term impact.

Established in this second analysis chapter and running as a theme through the remaining two chapters was an investigation of the separation of the private and public spaces of the garrison, thus the feminised married patches and the militarised masculine world of the barracks. Women were briefly legitimated in the public space through enacting domestic duties such as bringing lunch to their soldier husbands or handing out Minden Day Roses, a demonstration of further commoditisation of their emotional labour, facilitating their husband's career. This legitimisation of their role as their husbands' wifely helpmate is indicative of their incorporation into his military career where wives had to explicitly stall or leave behind their careers in the UK. Such removal from their previous selves was a source of considerable angst for the newer wives of the cohort who had significantly invested into their careers and selves prior to marriage and relocation. Such an examination of the implications of incorporation still occurring at this level in a twenty-first century form of employment has not been conducted in cognate studies and the worrying implications for these women's mental health must stand as stark warning concerning the realities of moving overseas as dependent, adjunctive underemployed women.

The private space of military marriage was a significant focus of the overall thesis looking explicitly at the construction of marriages within such an institutionalised setting as opposed to the intimacies of the women's marriages. Again, this is the first time such an investigation has overtly investigated the lived realities of overseas army marriages through an examination of the pervasive symbolic domination at play within marriages behind the wire. The varied responses of wives were examined with Chloe standing as (light) relief against the ontological experience of domination that the interviewees seemingly experienced. The investigation revealed how the privileged position of warrior further incorporates women into home and hearth, creating the role of dominated domesticated wife during their time overseas. Bea's experience with the chain of command indicating its perception of her role as explicitly there to provide childcare is indicative of how the militarised system perceives the role of army wife.

The changing nature of marriage was explored, juxtaposed against the militarised demands and warrior positioning of the soldier husband. Against the backdrop of the lived realities of army marriage three-and-a-half-thousand kilometres and a five-hour flight away from home, it is questionable whether overseas marriages can be considered to fall into the bracket of the pure relationship. The external circumstances that need to be dissolved still exist with wives falling under military jurisdiction and the possibility of being removed from Fimonue at the chain of command's request is ever present. The institutional positioning of women as dependent, not even mentioned on the tenancy agreement, has again not been previously explored and this thesis has demonstrated beyond question that army marriages overseas continue to place women in a dependent rather than an equal status, indicative of potential institutional abuse and vulnerable to coercive control by both the military and their soldier husbands in whom obedience to orders has been inculcated. Alongside the examinations of the second and third analysis chapters contributing to work on marriage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Bourdieusian/feminist geography's work on dominated socio-spaces, this thesis

contributes to an understanding of the ongoing incorporation and thus militarisation of women into the institution through the direct impact of rank and the geography of rank on nominally civilian women.

This thesis' final consideration of the journey taken when relocating behind the wire was an investigation of the community of wives and how these disparate women were expected, and sometimes able, to find friends and inhabit the identity of army wifehood. Motherhood undeniably provided an alternative identity to that of army wife, providing a role and purpose outside of simply adjunctive unequal partner. Yet for those without children, their status was constantly experienced in the limited nonmother orientated interactions behind the wire. These women, all of whom felt isolated and outside of the ranked peer group, felt further alone through not having children, consciously aware that this marked them as falling outside the expected and accepted role of army wife/mother. Rebecca even went so far as to consider having children in order to fit in. The women who were mothers acknowledged that motherhood provided them with a purpose, a reason to leave the house and to meet other women, facilitating an entry point into the community. Motherhood as an alternative identity to the appellation of army wife has not been considered in cognate research and as this was not an explicit focus of the overall thesis, further work examining the implications of non-motherhood on overseas army wives and its contribution to social isolation would be a worthwhile undertaking.

The wider community of wives was explored by this cohort reviewing the realities of living within such a constructed world. Friendship as a key theme was explored and there was the acknowledgement that within such a structured and hierarchical space, finding 'true' friendships was challenging and many friendship patterns were likened to the schoolground, leading to the suggestion that friendships behind the wire are somehow stunted, mimicking the fragile friendships girls make at school. Such an examination of friendship has not been considered in this setting

before and the challenges of making friends within such a unique environment must be acknowledged. The traditional assumption is that women will make friends within the community of wives yet expecting them to do so strips them of their individual requirements, reducing these disparate women to a homogenous whole. This reduction of their sense of self, placing women into vulnerable and lonely positions, is indicative of how certain interviewees felt stripped away from their former friends and support groups, continuing their sense of isolation.

An additional component of friendship not previously considered in cognate research is the particularised militarised environment of Fimonue. The women live with and amongst each other specifically because of their husband's work. They are isolated away within an enclosed garrison with minimal interaction with the outside world. Their friendships and peer groups are dictated and constructed specifically due to their husband's rank and his work, with wives acknowledging that they only were friends with certain people due to their husband's friendship groups. More so than this, Sonia revealed that on falling out with another woman, this argument spilled into her husband's workplace, demonstrating the complete entanglement between the personal and the private, the militarised and the feminised spaces at play in such an environment. Such intersections rarely occur in many other walks of life and the wives are constantly aware of how their behaviours are continuously judged and viewed by the panoptic lens of both the civilian wifely community and the wider military hierarchy. This in-depth study of incorporated female friendship is ground-breaking and further demonstrates the level of incorporation of overseas army wives living day to day behind the wire.

The final focus of the analysis chapters and thus of the entire thesis was the concept of what makes an army wife and how the wives themselves responded to this appellation. In fact, deep down it was perhaps this question of my own nascent incorporation that led me to want to pursue this line of enquiry as I grappled with the many changes happening in my own life. Such an identity was one

with which few women seemed to want to associate, indicating that, for them, the idea of army wife was something other to what they were. Almost universally the 'army wife' was viewed as something old fashioned, restrictive and tying women into the domestic space and their husband's career, a seemingly hard and bitter pill for them to swallow. Fiona was held up as the true army wife, yet it was through her positioning as an officer's wife that she was in fact able to enact such a traditional role; when enlisted wives attempted to do so, they were castigated, marked out as busy bodies. This expectation of the proper officers' wife stems back to the 1970s and far beyond, to the Victorian era when the commanding officer's wife paraded the wives of the regiment in their Sunday best, marching them off to church (Trufram, 1984; Venning, 2005) and whilst not as overt as this in terms of behaviours, there are still the idealised attributes applicable to officers' wives. Enlisted wives, as revealed by the interviewees, are still seen as other both by themselves and the military itself. Wives narrated judging their peers and finding them wanting, yet Sonia succinctly recognised that these women often come from vulnerable homes and are indeed young women living away from home for the first time. Through revealing their judgement of each other, this thesis acknowledges the tensions at work within such a community, highlighting the potential vulnerabilities for the women who live behind the wire distant from home and family support.

To conclude this thesis, we must revisit the research questions posed in the introduction:

- How do women experience military marriage overseas?
- What shapes and governs their incorporation into, and negotiation of, military life?
- What does the analysis of their experiences contribute to sociologies CMS and Incorporated Wifehood?

Reflecting on these questions and their applicability to the research undertaken moving behind the wire with the women, learning the ropes of life as an army wife overseas, it became obvious that it was the daily ontological experiences of life behind the wire that are so unique and so fundamentally important to reveal. Overseas army wifehood is a constructed experience imposed specifically on

women due to their military marriage and incorporation into their husband's career that I contend occurs in no other industry in the early twenty-first century.

The final research question asked what this analysis of overseas wives' experience in Fimonue contributes to CMS and the sociologies of incorporated wifedom. Whilst this thesis sought to examine the experiences of the wives themselves, it has also revealed that militarisation still occurs for overseas army wives. This thesis has demonstrated that this militarisation takes place through their dispossession, both of physical objects and of their sense of self as they relocated behind the wire. It acknowledges that there were some women who experienced this relocation as a positive, whilst militarised through their location overseas and behind the wire, they found opportunities through which to positively inhabit this changed positioning.

Militarisation occurred through the construction of the physical environs of Fimonue with the women placed into socio-spaces defined and created by the military establishment. The concerning dismissal of the need for a separate area for the wives must be reflected upon, how this is reductive of the women's requirement and needs for a space not under the military's panoptic where they can just simply go for a 'brew and a catch up'. Wives' location into the domestic quarter and thus into the domestic role, further encouraged their militarisation as it was through the lack of alternative roles within the garrison that they could thus facilitate their husband's needs in removing his domestic burden allowing him the role of privileged warrior. Such an examination of the geographic space of a military garrison, the space (or lack thereof) for wives and how this construction directly impacts on to overseas wives has not hitherto been undertaken and thus this thesis charts new waters developing our understanding of the ongoing militarisation of overseas army wives.

A defining component of CMS' framework is the idea that the privileged warrior soldier is supported by his dependent army wife. Bourdieu's work on symbolic domination has hitherto not been used in

an examination of overseas army wives and through its use, the work in this thesis is sociologically innovative as it has continually revealed how wives through their adjunctive positioning are not only incorporated by their dependent status but become actively dominated in multiple different ways. In using Bourdieu's work on symbolic domination, this thesis has introduced a new sociological interpretation of the space of military marriage. That symbolic domination is still in place within overseas military marriages through their dependent status and the ongoing privileging of the head-of-the-household position. Their marriage is arguably militarised by the overt doxic demanding their emotional labour on their soldier husband's behalf and that if they do not perform these tasks their commitment to their marriage and the institution is questioned. Such an intimate examination of military marriage has not been undertaken in cognate studies focusing on the expected 'jobs for the day', the loss of self within the military marriage and the wives' responses to their positioning. Whilst a challenging section of the thesis, it demonstrates the potential vulnerabilities overseas army wives can experience, requiring those in command to be cognisant of the demands exerted onto these civilian women.

The detailed examination of army wife community living has not been explored before within CMS and as such continues to break new ground. The military panoptic was trained on and within the community, asserting a form of militarised wifely behaviour onto the Bears' wives living in Fimonue. The concept of self-policing is further indicative of overseas wives' militarisation through their performance of army wifeness, interpreted differently as was demonstrated by each interviewee. Within the community there were those who did contest this panoptic lens and the doxic expectations in place behind the wire, and whilst arguably there were those willing to contest their militarisation and incorporation, it must be queried at what cost their refusal came.

Moving beyond significant contributions to CMS, this thesis has also developed sociological work previously conducted on incorporated wives. As has been articulated throughout, a direct focus on

the experiences of enlisted wives has not been undertaken before. Their incorporation, as suggested by Finch (1983) at the beginning of this thesis, is perhaps a more extreme form of incorporation as they have minimal choice over their relocation and with whom they relocate. The very nature of their incorporation is furthermore defined by the battalion community with whom they regularly relocate. The wives are bounded into a community environment with the singular commonality of being married to a serving soldier of this battalion. Their incorporation stretches from the low-level use of words such as 'suck it up', 'crack on with it' through to Georgia's feeling of euphoria of successfully negotiating the militarised terms of relocation with her husband deployed.

Incorporation of wives includes their co-opting within their military marriage in facilitating and privileging their soldier husband. To do so places his needs and that of the army above her own, suspending herself in order for him to achieve, as Carrie and Sandra so poignantly note, they have given twenty and eighteen years respectively to their soldier husbands. Arguably through the term 'dependent' they are linguistically and ontologically incorporated, continuously placed adjunctively alongside of the dominant soldier husband. This was made apparent through the course of each interview as they charted their life-story against the happenings of their husband's career. Returning to Callan's salient remark that "it would be quite wrong to conclude that the incorporated wife is on the brink of extinction" (1984), I contend that army wives are still positioned as incorporated within the context of their overseas deployment through the performance that is expected of them and by subsuming of themselves into their soldier husband's career. In the post-feminist world of the early twenty-first century where equality is supposedly within grasp, there is still a significant group of women married to the army who are incorporated into and living a lifestyle that is reminiscent of the 1950s. Whilst it is easy for an outsider to question their perceived passivity, it is only through examining the particularities of their lived world that we can begin to understand how their positioning within military marriage, overlaid by the militarised environment, coerces them into a potentially vulnerable situatedness overseas and far from home. Therefore, this

study's contribution to feminist sociology is that it reveals that despite many advances in equality within heterosexual marriage and for women more generally in society, many army wives are still bound by, and live within, an incorporated existence.

The final significant contribution this thesis makes to the sociological discipline is through utilising both Bourdieu and Goffman to analyse the experiences of overseas army wives. In the Literature Review it was suggested that institutions indicate consensus whereas fields are indicative of the "conflictual nature of social life" (Swartz, 1997, p. 120). As this thesis concludes, I believe that both bodies of work have provided a vital theoretical framework for this research and that reflecting on the totalising nature of the field of the army garrison has provided a detailed analysis not previously been achieved. By being alert to the ongoing dispossession that incorporated overseas wives experienced through relocation, learning the rules of the game within which they had to adapt to this new habitus, revealed the conflictual nature of the ontology of being an overseas wife. Through examining the doxic understandings of the garrison field and working with the wives as they negotiated these terms of their incorporation, this thesis has demonstrated the challenges wives face during their time overseas yet remained alert to agentic choices they were able to make.

This thesis has considered the construction of identity of overseas army wives and has examined how they individually and collectively respond to this heteronormative compound nomenclature. Through the master-signifier appellation they are consistently positioned and identifiable against their husband and the rank that he carries. Regardless of the denial of wives' wearing rank, through the stratigraphic patches they inhabit and the socio-spaces they are entitled to use, and the rank appropriate activities encouraged onto them, their identity is constructed, and placed upon them, by the militarised environment. Until women are no longer known as dependents, nor introduced as 'Mrs Z Company', they will remain unable to create an identity that is autonomous and not

subsumed into their husband's career. The evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that during their time overseas, identities for army wives continue to be synonymous with that of their husband.

For these twenty-first century women, wearing uneasily the term 'army wife', the struggles were manifold as they attempted to carve a life for themselves, living a patch life behind the wire, located far from home, perched on their rocky outcrop overlooking the Mediterranean.

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## Appendices

### Appendix One – FOIR Submitted – SFA Occupation

#### Freedom of Information Request



Newman-Earl, Elizabeth

13/08/2019 13:18

To: defstrat-stat-army-enquiries@mod.uk

To whom it may concern,

Please can you provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

Total Number of UK British Army Garrisons

Total Number Overseas UK Military Garrisons with further break down of:

Total Garrisons per country with

Total Number of accompanying army spouses per country

I look forward to hearing your response at your earliest possible convenience.

Kid regards  
Elizabeth

Appendix Two– Army Pay Scales<sup>526</sup>

OF-4 Lt Colonel ARMY	Step 7	£84,310			
	Step 6	£82,394			
	Step 5	£80,478			
	Step 4	£78,561			
	Step 3	£76,645			
	Step 2	£74,734			
	Step 1	£72,812			
OF-3 Major ARMY	Step 7	£62,132			
	Step 6	£60,423			
	Step 5	£58,715			
	Step 4	£57,006			
	Step 3	£55,297			
	Step 2	£53,588			
	Step 1	£51,879			
OF-2 Captain ARMY	Step 7	£48,979			
	Step 6	£47,600			
	Step 5	£46,351			
	Step 4	£45,082			
	Step 3	£43,784			
	Step 2	£42,485			
	Step 1	£41,186			
OF-1 Lieutenant ARMY 2nd Lieutenant ARMY	Step 5	£35,523			
	Step 4	£34,394			
	Step 3	£33,266			
	Step 2	£32,138			
	Step 1	£26,738			
OF-0	Step 3	£19,908			
	Step 2	£18,092			
	Step 1	£15,248			
<b>OTHER RANKS</b>					
<b>RANK</b>	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>SUPP 1</b>	<b>SUPP 2</b>	<b>SUPP 3</b>	<b>SUPP 4</b>
RANGE 5 (OR-9) WO1 ARMY	OR9-5	£50,785	£50,785	£50,785	£52,155
	OR9-4	£50,271	£50,271	£50,271	£51,691
	OR9-3	£49,709	£49,709	£49,709	£51,198
	OR9-2	£49,147	£49,147	£49,147	£50,712
	OR9-1	£48,665	£48,665	£48,665	£50,282
RANGE 4 (OR-7 - OR-8) WO2 ARMY Staff Sergeant ARMY	OR-7-10	£45,457	£46,096	£47,906	£49,284
	OR-7-9	£44,694	£46,295	£47,621	£49,000
	OR-7-8	£43,949	£45,675	£47,319	£48,697
	OR-7-7	£43,095	£45,050	£46,982	£48,336
	OR-7-6	£42,191	£44,147	£46,320	£47,830
	OR-7-5	£41,285	£43,011	£45,046	£46,527
	OR-7-4	£40,646	£42,373	£44,159	£45,908
	OR-7-3	£40,035	£41,762	£43,309	£45,038
	OR-7-2	£39,402	£41,128	£42,638	£44,288
	OR-7-1	£38,791	£40,423	£41,689	£43,580
RANGE 3 (OR-6) Sergeant ARMY	OR-6-5	£38,620	£39,620	£41,009	£42,642
	OR-6-4	£37,110	£38,369	£39,986	£41,549
	OR-6-3	£36,209	£37,554	£39,012	£40,496
	OR-6-2	£35,320	£36,566	£38,076	£39,455
	OR-6-1	£34,462	£35,622	£37,128	£38,347
RANGE 2 (OR-4) Corporal ARMY	OR-4-5	£32,813	£33,915	£35,347	£36,404
	OR-4-4	£32,352	£33,456	£34,717	£35,691
	OR-4-3	£31,917	£33,004	£34,001	£34,855
	OR-4-2	£31,451	£32,361	£33,253	£34,056
	OR-4-1	£30,632	£31,523	£32,390	£33,194
RANGE 1 (OR-2 - OR-3) Lance Corporal Private ARMY	OR-2-9	£28,759	£29,554	£30,176	£30,766
	OR-2-8	£27,462	£28,203	£28,754	£29,263
	OR-2-7	£26,265	£26,875	£27,400	£27,877
	OR-2-6	£25,122	£25,621	£26,146	£26,480
	OR-2-5	£24,011	£24,356	£24,788	£25,110
	OR-2-4	£22,900	£23,156	£23,501	£23,823
	OR-2-3	£21,761	£22,018	£22,285	£22,285
	OR-2-2	£20,406	£20,406	£20,406	£20,406
	OR-2-1	£19,025	£19,025	£19,025	£19,025

<sup>526</sup> (Armed Forces Net, 2019)

## Appendix Three – FOIR Total Army Personnel Married or in Civil Partnership



Ref: FOI2018/03022

Army Secretariat  
Army Headquarters  
IDL 24 Blenheim Building  
Marlborough Lines  
Andover  
Hampshire, SP11 8HJ  
United Kingdom

E-mail: [ArmySec-Group@mod.gov.uk](mailto:ArmySec-Group@mod.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.army.mod.uk](http://www.army.mod.uk)

Elizabeth Newman-Earl

28 March 2019

Dear Mrs Newman-Earl,

Thank you for your email of 04 March in which you requested the following information:

Please can you provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

*Total Army Personnel  
Married/Civil Partnership  
Total Army MALE  
Personnel Married  
Total Army FEMALE  
Personnel Married  
Total Army  
Personnel*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held:

**Table1: Non-Trade and Trade Trained Regular Army Personnel Who Are Married Split By Gender Using Marital Stats (1, 1s, 1c, 5c, 5s) As At 1st October 2018**

	Total	Male	Female
<b>Non Trade Trained and Trade Trained Regular Army Personnel</b>	<b>79,640</b>	<b>72,120</b>	<b>7,520</b>
<b>Of Whom are Married or in a Civil Partnership<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>34,180</b>	<b>31,930</b>	<b>2,250</b>
Source: Defence Statistics (Army)			

### Notes/Caveats:

1. The figures are for Non Trade Trained and Trade Trained Regular Army only and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, Full Time Reserve Service, Mobilised Reserves, TA and all other Reserves.
2. The legal marital status is not recorded on the Army's administrative

system. DS (Army) used Status as recorded on Joint Personnel Administration, this relates to entitlement to allowances. It is not necessarily the same as a person's legal marital status.

3. Those entitled to "married" allowances are categorised by their Status and included in the answer above;

1. Married or in a Registered Civil Partnership

- 1C. Married or in a Registered Civil Partnership to Civil Servant or Individual with recognised Welfare

- 1S. Married or in a Registered Civil Partnership to Service Person who is 5S

- 5C. Married or in a Registered Civil Partnership to Civil Servant or Individual within recognized Welfare

- 5S. Married or in a Registered Civil Partnership to a Service Person who is 1S. CP. Civil Partnership

Excluded from "Married / In a Civil Partnership" are categorised by Status

0. No Value

2. Prime carer and provider for child

3. Separated providing voluntary support

4. Separated providing support as result of court order

5. All other members of Armed Forces

4. Gender as recorded in the administrative database has been used to separate Male and Female

5. Figures have been rounded to 10; numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

6. Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO- FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

J Winter  
Army Secretariat

## Appendix Four – Chain of Command Ethical Approval



Newman Earl, E [redacted] <>  
30/07/2016 15:07

To: Cox, Pamela

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**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 05 January 2016 07:58  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: 20160104-Letter\_from\_AFF\_Coord\_[redacted]\_Mrs\_Earl\_[redacted]  
**Importance:** Low

Happy New Year.

I am more than content for Mrs Earl to conduct her research and would be very interested in her findings and eventual thesis. I would ask however that Mrs Newman-Earl seek formal permission from her employer prior to conducting the work (if she has not already done so) as I would not wish to see a conflict of interest arise. If Mrs Newman-Earl wishes me to, I am happy to confirm with the AFF Regional Coordinator that we are content for the work to be conducted. Should she wish to meet to discuss her aims and her research I would be more than happy to meet with her – my wife has a particular view of the term Army wife given the amount of times she is referred to as such despite her strong allegiance to another colour of cloth!

Regards,

[redacted]

Sir,

Please see attached a letter from Mrs Newman-Earl, the AFF coordinator for Dhekelia.

Are you content that Mrs Newman-Earl proceed? Is there a formal route to follow, and if so would you be inclined to meet Mrs Earl to discuss?

Regards

[redacted]

[redacted]

### Appendix Five – Total Interviewee Breakdown

Interview # Code	Name	Spouse's name	Moved With Bears (WB)/ In-situ/ Individual Move (IM)/	Martial rank	Garrison Employment	Community Involvement	Age at Interview	Age at Marriage	Years Married	Primigravida Age	Child. at Marriage.	Number of Children	Number of Postings	Previously Overseas (Fimonue (F) or Elsewhere	Married Unaccompanied	Unmarried Cohabitation outside of the Wire (UK or	Educational Attainment	Employed prior to Marriage	Employ. prior to Fimonue	Career vs job	Continued Career as Army Wife
1	Tamsin	Kenny	In-Situ	JNCO	Former	F&C	38	32	6	32	Yes	2	3	Yes (F&E)	No	No	Post 16	Yes	No	Yes	No
2	Amy	Blake	With Bears	JNCO			26	20	6	20	Yes	2	2	No	No	No	Post 16	No	No	No	No
3	Veronica	Jonny	Officer Move	Officer		Volun./ Sports Club	46	31	15	33	No	2	8	No	No	No	Tert.	Yes	Yes	No	No
4	Sandra	Bryan	With Bears	SNCO	Yes	Volun./ Sports Club	37	20	17	27	No	2	9	Yes (F&E)	No	No	Post 16	Yes	No	Yes	Until child.
5	Candice	Ross	With Bears	Pvt			29	24	4	22	Yes	3	2	No	No	Yes (UK)	Post 16	Yes	No	No	No
6	Chloe	Geoff	Ind. move	JNCO			32	23	9	23	Yes	2	2	No	No	Yes (UK)	Post 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Interview # Code	Name	Spouse's name	Moved With Bears (WB)/ In-situ/ Individual. Move (IM)/	Marital rank	Garrison Employment	Community Involvement	Age at Interview	Age at Marriage	Years Married	Primigravida Age	Child. at Marriage.	Number of Children	Number of Postings	Previously Overseas (Fimonue (F) or Elsewhere	Married Unaccompanied	Unmarried Cohabitation outside of the Wire (UK or	Educational Attainment	Employed prior to Marriage	Employ. prior to Fimonue	Career vs job	Continued Career as Army Wife
7	Sonia	Martin	With Bears	JNCO	Yes		35	27	8	30	No	1	3	Yes (F)	No	No	Post 16	Yes	No	Yes	No
8	Jackie	Bobby	NM (With Bears)	SNCO		Play Groups	29	27	2	28	No	1	1	No	No	Yes (UK)	Tert.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
9	Rosie	Tim	NM (With Bears)	Pvt	Yes		26	24	2	N/A	No	0	1	No	No	No	Post Grad.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
10	Gwen	Kevin	NM (With Bears)	JNCO	Yes		29	27	2	N/A	No	0	1	No	No	Yes (UK)	Tert.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
11	Rebecca	Issac	NM (With Bears)	JNCO	Yes		25	23	2	N/A	No	0	1	No	No	No	Tert.	Yes	yes	Yes	No
12	Sophie	Anthony	With Bears	JNCO		Play Groups	32	28	4	31	No	1	2	No	No	No	Post 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Career Break
13	Annie	Ray	NM	JNCO	Yes		26	24	2	N/A	No	0	1	No	No	No	Post	Yes	Yes	No	No

Interview # Code	Name	Spouse's name	Moved With Bears (WB)/ In-situ/ Individual. Move (IM)/	Marital rank	Garrison Employment	Community Involvement	Age at Interview	Age at Marriage	Years Married	Primigravida Age	Child. at Marriage.	Number of Children	Number of Postings	Previously Overseas (Fimonue (F) or Elsewhere	Married Unaccompanied	Unmarried Cohabitation outside of the Wire (UK or	Educational Attainment	Employed prior to Marriage	Employ. prior to Fimonue	Career vs job	Continued Career as Army Wife
			(With Bears)														16				
14	Daphne	Des	In-Situ	Officer		Volun./ Child. Group	36	31	5	32	No	2	3	Yes (F)	No	Yes (UK)	Tert.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
15	Jolene	Jack	With Bears	JNCO	Yes		28	25	3	N/A	No	0	2	No	No	Yes	Post 16	Yes	Yes	No	No
16	Esther	Alan	With Bears	Officer	Yes	Sports Club	48	23	25	21	No	3	4	Yes (F&E)	Yes	No	Secon.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Fiona	Luke	Officer Move	Officer		Volunt./ Sports Club/ Coffee Morning	37	28	9	31	No	2	5	Yes (E)	No	Yes (UK)	Tert.	Yes	No	Yes	No
18	Charlene	Scott	Ind. move	SNCO		Volunt./ Sports Club	35	23	12	21	Yes	3	3	Yes (F)	Yes	No	Post 16	Yes	No	No	No

Interview # Code	Name	Spouse's name	Moved With Bears (WB)/ In-situ/ Individual. Move (IM)/	Marital rank	Garrison Employment	Community Involvement	Age at Interview	Age at Marriage	Years Married	Primigravida Age	Child. at Marriage.	Number of Children	Number of Postings	Previously Overseas (Fimonue (F) or Elsewhere	Married Unaccompanied	Unmarried Cohabitation outside of the Wire (UK or	Educational Attainment	Employed prior to Marriage	Employ. prior to Fimonue	Career vs job	Continued Career as Army Wife
19	Georgia	Gary	With Bears	JNCO		Play Groups	28	20	8	20	Yes	3	2	Yes (F)	No	No	Secon.	Yes	No	No	No
20	Carrie	John	With Bears	SNCO			39	20	19	20	Yes	4	8	Yes (F&E)	Yes	No	Secon.	Yes	No	No	No
21	Tabitha	James	In-Situ	SNCO	Yes	Volunt.	33	20	13	19	Yes	2	6	Yes (F&E)	No	No	Post 16	Yes	Yes	No	No
22	Camille	Richard	NM (With Bears)	SNCO		Volunt	37	34	3	26	No	1	1	No	No	No	Tert.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
23	Beatrice	Norman	Ind. move	JNCO		Play Groups/ Coffee Morning	24	20	4	20	Yes	2	2	No	No	Yes (UK)	Tert.	No	No	No	No
24	Amelia	Paul	With Bears	SNCO		F&C	35	28	7	28	Yes	1	1	Yes (E)	No	No	Tert.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Interview # Code	Name	Spouse's name	Moved With Bears (WB)/ In-situ/ Individual. Move (IM)/	Marital rank	Garrison Employment	Community Involvement	Age at Interview	Age at Marriage	Years Married	Primigravida Age	Child. at Marriage.	Number of Children	Number of Postings	Previously Overseas (Fimonue (F) or Elsewhere	Married Unaccompanied	Unmarried Cohabitation outside of the Wire (UK or	Educational Attainment	Employed prior to Marriage	Employ. prior to Fimonue	Career vs job	Continued Career as Army Wife
25	Angel	Shane	With Bears	SNCO		Sports Club / Play Groups / Coffee Morning	28	21	7	20	Yes	3	2	No	No	No	Post 16	Yes	No	No	No
26	Megan	Blake	NM (With Bears).	JNCO	Yes	Distance Study	24	22	2	N/A	No	0	2	No	No	No	Tert.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
27	Ruth	Noel	Officer Move	Officer		Church/ Coffee Morning / Play Groups	42	33	9	35	No	2	4	No	No	No	Tert.	Yes	No	Yes	No
28	Jenny	Robin	Ind. move	SNCO	Yes		34	33	2	32	Yes	1	1	No	No	Yes (F)	Secon.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
29	Caroline	David	With	Pvt	Yes	F&C	35	25	10	26	No	2	2	Yes (E)	No	No	Tert.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Retrain.

	<b>Interview # Code</b>
	<b>Name</b>
	<b>Spouse's name</b>
Bears	Moved With Bears (WB)/ In-situ/ Individual. Move (IM)/
	Marital rank
	<b>Garrison Employment</b>
	<b>Community Involvement</b>
	<b>Age at Interview</b>
	<b>Age at Marriage</b>
	<b>Years Married</b>
	<b>Primigravida Age</b>
	<b>Child. at Marriage.</b>
	<b>Number of Children</b>
	<b>Number of Postings</b>
	<b>Previously Overseas (Fimonue (F) or Elsewhere</b>
	<b>Married Unaccompanied</b>
	<b>Unmarried Cohabitation outside of the Wire (UK or</b>
	<b>Educational Attainment</b>
	<b>Employed prior to Marriage</b>
	<b>Employ. prior to Fimonue</b>
	<b>Career vs job</b>
	<b>Continued Career as Army Wife</b>

## Appendix Six – Cross Section of Total Women Approached for Interview

Code	Name	Husband's Name	Marital Rank	Total Numbers of Women at each rank approached for Interviews
2	Amy	Blake	Pvt	14 women married to Pvts were approached 4 were interviewed
5	Candice	Ross	Pvt	
9	Rosie	Tim	Pvt	
29	Caroline	David	Pvt	7 women married to Lance Corporals were approached 5 were interviewed
6	Chloe	Geoff	LCpl	
10	Gwen	Kevin	LCpl	
11	Rebecca	Issac	LCpl	
15	Jolene	Jack	LCpl	
26	Megan	Blake	LCpl	7 women married to Corporals were approached 6 were interviewed
1	Tamsin	Kenny	Cpl	
7	Sonia	Martin	Cpl	
12	Sophie	Anthony	Cpl	
13	Annie	Ray	Cpl	
19	Georgia	Gary	Cpl	
23	Beatrice	Norman	Cpl	
8	Jackie	Bobby	Sgt	9 women married to Sergeants were approached 5 were interviewed
22	Camille	Richard	Sgt	
24	Amelia	Paul	Sgt	
25	Angel	Shane	Sgt	
28	Jenny	Robin	Sgt	
20	Carrie	John	CSgt	7 women married to Colour Sergeants were approached 2 were interviewed
21	Tabitha	James	CSgt	
4	Sandra	Byran	WO2	5 women married to WO2s were approached 2 were interviewed
18	Charlene	Scott	WO2	
Two women were approached married to soliders at this level			WO1	2 women married to WO1s were approached Both declined to be interviewed
27	Ruth	Noel	Officer	11 women married to officers were approached 5 were interviewed
3	Veronica	Jonny	Officer	
14	Daphne	Des	Officer	
16	Esther	Alan	Officer	
17	Fiona	Luke	Officer	

### Appendix Seven – Interviewee Location

Code	Name	Husband's Name	Location
1	Tamsin	Kenny	ENE
2	Amy	Blake	Own Home
3	Veronica	Jonny	Own Home
4	Sandra	Byran	Own Home
5	Candice	Ross	Own Home
6	Chloe	Geoff	ENE
7	Sonia	Martin	Own Home
8	Jackie	Bobby	Own Home
9	Rosie	Tim	ENE
10	Gwen	Kevin	Own Home
11	Rebecca	Issac	Own Home
12	Sophie	Anthony	Own Home
13	Annie	Ray	Work Place
14	Daphne	Des	ENE
15	Jolene	Jack	Own Home
16	Esther	Alan	Own Home
17	Fiona	Luke	ENE
18	Charlene	Scott	Own Home
19	Georgia	Gary	Own Home
20	Carrie	John	ENE
21	Tabitha	James	ENE
22	Camille	Richard	Own Home
23	Beatrice	Norman	Own Home
24	Amelia	Paul	Own Home
25	Angel	Shane	Own Home
26	Megan	Blake	Own Home
27	Ruth	Noel	Own Home
28	Jenny	Robin	Own Home
29	Caroline	David	ENE

## Appendix Eight – Invitation Letter and Consent Form

Hello,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Essex working in the Sociology department under Professor Pam Cox. The subject of my research is *Patch Life, Army Wives Behind the Wire* and I would like to invite you to participate in my research project.

I will be conducting interviews with a group of Bears' wives to explore their experiences of being married to the British Army, and in particular of being married to an Infantry Battalion. I am keen to hear your story and to learn about your experiences of being an Army Wife.

The research project is a self-funded project which means that I am not working on behalf of the Battalion, the Ministry of Defence or anyone else. Although I am the co-ordinator for the Army Families Federation (AFF). This research is wholly independent from the work I do on their behalf. If you agree to participate then I will be interviewing you as an independent student from the University of Essex. I am happy to provide further clarification if required.

The interview will be audio recorded so that I can accurately reflect your responses. No one, apart from myself will have access to these recordings and I have organised secure storage for them.

All the participants will be anonymised and your confidentiality is uppermost in my mind. Your privacy and the privacy of your family will be respected and no one will know that you have participated in this research project. As such I will be anonymising:

- Name of Participant
- Name of Husband and Rank
- Name of Battalion
- Name of Garrison

Only I will know who has been involved in the project.

This research is informed by the multiple changes and initiatives that are taking place as a result of the New Employment Model. It is only by speaking to the women living the life of an Army dependent that any understanding be gained as to whether life is improving for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Army Wife.

This is a voluntary project and you are under no obligation whatsoever to participate. If at any time you feel uncomfortable about your involvement, then you have every right to withdraw from the proceedings. At any point during the interview if you do not wish to answer a specific question then you have every right to not answer.

If you are happy to participate then please contact me via my email.

I shall pop by next week if I have not heard back from you.

I very much look forward to hearing from you and hearing your story.

Kind regards

Elizabeth Newman-Earl  
University of Essex

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project. Before we have the interview, please sign and return this consent form.

I will be recording the interview so that I can accurately reflect your responses. No one, apart from myself will have access to these recordings and I have organised secure storage for them.

1. All the participants will be anonymised and your confidentiality is uppermost in my mind. Your privacy and the privacy of your family will be respected and no one will know that you have participated in this research project. As such I will be anonymising:

- Name of Participant
- Name of Husband and Rank
- Name of Battalion
- Name of Garrison

No one apart from myself will know who has participated in the project

2. This is an independent self-funded research project and as such I am not working on behalf of the Battalion, the MOD or any other body. All responses will be treated confidentially and no personal information or responses will be shared.
3. My research project is part of my doctoral thesis and as such I will be publishing my findings and using them at conferences. In this and subsequent publications personal information will be supplied.
4. This research is external to the Battalion however I have received permission from the Commanding Officer as we fall under his jurisdiction on an overseas base. This permission should reassure all concerned that even though this is an independent project we are fully supported by Battalion and the British Army.

Please sign here if you are happy with the above information and to participate with the interview. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions should you require further reassurance

Signed .....

Date .....

I look forward to our time together and hearing your story.

## Appendix Nine – Personal Effects Shipping Entitlement

**TABLE 1 - REMOVAL SERVICE OVERSEAS**

<b>Basic Allowance (All Ranks) (Accompanied)</b>		
<b>Type of Accommodation Entitlement</b>	<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Over 4 Bed	11.00 Cu M (1980 Kg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4*, 3* and 2*.</li> <li>• 1* and OF5 when in command appointments</li> </ul>
4 Bed	10.50 Cu M (1890 Kg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1*, OF5, OF4, OF3 and RAF Warrant Officers.</li> <li>• ORs with 4 or more children of any age or 3 over the age of 10.</li> </ul>
3 Bed	8.75 Cu M (1575 Kg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OF3 if no 4 bed available</li> <li>• OF2 and below</li> <li>• RN and Army Warrant Officers</li> <li>• ORs with 2 or 3 children</li> </ul>
2 Bed	8.20 Cu M (1476 Kg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ORs with 1 or no children</li> </ul>

(MoD, 2018a, pp. 12.4.11, para 12.4.21,a)

The total amount of storage for any one family at public expense is 67.92 cubic metres minus the total volume of personal effects moved overseas (MoD, 2018a, pp. 12.4.11, para 12.4.21,a)

## Appendix Ten – Housing Entitlement

SERVICE FAMILIES ACCOMMODATION - ENTITLEMENTS					
Type	Royal Navy	Army	OTHER RANKS		Notes
			Royal Air Force	Civilians	
D 7 person Bedrooms: 3 double 1 single  Overall size: 119.50 sq m	Applicants with 4 or more children of any age, or 3 or more children age 10 or over.	Applicants with 4 or more children of any age, or 3 or more children age 10 or over.	Warrant Officers and applicants with 4 or more children of any age, or 3 or more children age 10 or over.	Band E and equivalent	10. RAF Warrant Officers are entitled by rank to occupy a Type D OSFA (regardless of their family size).  11. RN/RM and Army WO1s with smaller and / or younger families should be allocated a Type D, where available.
C 5 person Bedrooms: 2 double 1 single  Overall Size: 94.50 sq m	Warrant Officer 1s	Warrant Officer 1s		Band E and equivalent	12. See Notes 13 and 14.  13. Applicants, including WOs, who are normally entitled to Type C SFA but have 4+ children of any age, or 3 children all aged 10 years or over, will be entitled to elect to occupy Type D SFA law Vol 1 Part 1 Chapter 3 Para 0332 but must pay SFA charges for the type and band of SFA occupied.
B 4 person Bedrooms: 2 double Overall size: 85.50 sq m	Applicants with 1 or no child	Applicants with 1 or no child	Applicants with 1 or no child	Band E and equivalent	14. Where Type C quarters are in short supply, it may be necessary for families with 2 children under 5 to occupy Type B quarters.
155.5 sq m	Commander Lieutenant Colonel RM	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander		Refer to Vol 1 Part 1 Chapter 3 Para 0337– SFA Entitlements.  6. Commanders, Lieutenant Colonels RM and Lieutenant Colonels with one or no children may be offered a type IV OSFA if no Type III OSFA is available under the 'one down' rule
IV 6 person Bedrooms: 2 double 2 single  Overall size: 137 sq m	Lieutenant Commander Major RM	Major	Squadron Leader	C2 and equivalents	Refer to Vol 1 Part 1 Chapter 3 Para 0337– SFA Entitlements.  7. Lieutenant Commanders, Majors RM, and Majors with one or no children may be offered a Type Vs/V OSFA if no Type IV OSFA is available under the 'one down' rule.
V Special 5 person Bedrooms: 2 double 1 single  Overall size: 137 sq m	Lieutenant Commander Major RM	Major	Squadron Leader	Band D and equivalents	8. Appropriate for applicants with one or no children if no Type IV OSFA is available. Type V charges to be levied.
V 5 person Bedrooms: 2 double 1 single Overall size: 116.5 sq m	Lieutenant and below  Captain RM and below	Captain and below	Flight Lieutenant and below	Band D and equivalents	9. Officers who are normally entitled to Type V SFA but have 4+ children of any age, or 3 children all aged 10 years or over will be entitled to elect to occupy Type IV SFA (above normal rank entitlement) but must pay SFA charges for the type and band of SFA allocated.

(MoD, 2019)

## Appendix Eleven – Living Overseas Allowance

11. Please contact DBS Mil Pers Current Ops LOA for rates payable to personnel serving permanently under Fed and Accommodated conditions.

### LOCAL OVERSEAS ALLOWANCE - REVISED RATES - CYPRUS SHOREBASED DAILY RATES OF LOA (£)

ANNEX K

FFR      £      1.18 / £							Accompanied					
Single/Unaccompanied				RN	ARMY	RAF	Number of Accompanying Children				Additional Child	Absence Deduction (Note 3)
Full Rates	Temporary Rates	Exercise/Field Conditions Rates	Residual Rates (Note 4)				NIL	1	2	3		
20.72	12.43	7.25	16.78	Vice Admiral and above	Lieutenant General and above	Air Marshal and above	36.70	41.98	45.02	46.92	1.89	14.69
20.72	12.43	7.25	16.78	Rear Admiral	Major General	Air Vice Marshal	36.70	41.98	45.02	46.92	1.89	14.69
20.72	12.43	7.25	16.78	Commodore (See note 5)	Brigadier	Air Commodore	36.70	41.98	45.02	46.92	1.89	14.69
20.72	12.43	7.25	16.78	Captain	Colonel	Group Captain	36.70	41.98	45.02	46.92	1.89	14.69
20.72	12.43	7.25	16.78	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander	36.70	41.98	45.02	46.92	1.89	14.69
19.13	11.48	6.70	15.50	Lieutenant Commander (See Note 2)	Major (See Note 2)	Squadron Leader and Specialist Aircrew (See Note 2)	33.89	38.78	41.60	43.36	1.77	13.57
19.13	11.48	6.70	15.50	Lieutenant RN (See Note 1)	Captain (See note 1)	Flight Lieutenant(See note 1)	33.89	38.78	41.60	43.36	1.77	13.57
17.55	10.53	6.14	14.22	Sub Lieutenant and below	Lieutenant and below	Flying Officer and below	31.09	35.59	38.19	39.82	1.64	12.46
19.13	11.48	6.70	15.50	Regimental Sergeant Major RM Warrant Officer 1	Warrant Officer 1	Warrant Officer and Master Aircrew	33.89	38.78	41.60	43.36	1.77	13.57
19.13	11.48	6.70	15.50	Warrant Officer 2 Chief Petty Officer	Warrant Officer 2 Staff Sergeant	Flight Sergeant and Chief Technician	33.89	38.78	41.60	43.36	1.77	13.57

19.13	11.48	6.70	15.50	Petty Officer	Sergeant	Sergeant	33.89	38.78	41.60	43.36	1.77	13.57
17.55	10.53	6.14	14.22	Leading Rating	Corporal	Corporal	31.09	35.59	38.19	39.82	1.64	12.46
17.55	10.53	6.14	14.22	Below Leading Rating	Below Corporal	Lance Corporal and Junior Technician and below	31.09	35.59	38.19	39.82	1.64	12.46

1. This rate of LOA should also be paid to RN Senior Upper Yardmen SubLieutenants Effective Date: 1 January 2017

2. This rate of LOA should also be paid to RN Senior Upper Yardmen Lieutenants, RM equivalents, Army LE Captains and Branch List Flight Lieutenants.

3. Deduction from appropriate accompanied rate of LOA to produce the residual rate when both the Serviceperson and spouse/civil partner are temporarily absent from the normal LOA area.

4. Residual rate of LOA for the normal LOA area which remains payable when single/unaccompanied personnel are temporarily absent from their normal LOA area for a period of temporary duty or exercise. Residual Rates may vary slightly due to roundings. This is a calculation based on the Full Rate of LOA.

(MoD, 2017)

## Appendix Twelve – Correspondence with Joint Service Housing Advice Office

### RE: LHA rehousing overseas spouses



RC-Pers-JSHAO-0Mailbox (MULTIUSER) <RC-Pers-JSHAO-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk>

18/07/2019 10:40



To: Newman-Earl, Elizabeth

Elizabeth

Further to your e-mail enquiry, we have had a few occasions when this has happened and there are complications when spouses have arrived with no where to live. Firstly when a spouse returns to England from a foreign posting they have no entitlement to benefits or have a credit record. The council will not grant housing to divorced wives if they have no ties within that area. The spouses can apply to the rented sector but will need a guarantor or have a good independent financial accounts . We have had to put separated families into Cotswold centre based in Corsham, this is a stop gap centre which is used until alternative housing can be found.

Regards

Karl Riley

**Karl Riley** | Business Support Worker | Pers & Family Support | HQ Regional Command

*“Regional Command – Supporting Excellence”*

Floor 2, Zone 2, Montgomery House, Queen’s Avenue, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 2JN.

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Multiuser Inbox: [RC-PERS-JSHAO-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-PERS-JSHAO-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk)