

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FACTORS RELATED TO ARMY WIVES'  
ADAPTATION

by

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# Community Connections Factors Related to Army Wives' Adaptation

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## **(ABSTRACT)**

When military members deploy or temporarily relocate, spouses are left behind to maintain not only their normal day-to-day activities, but also assume the responsibilities of the absent spouse. In cases such as these potentially stressful events, it is important to have adequate support networks within the community to assist individuals in sustaining a sense of personal well-being. The data source of the study is the 2001 Survey of Army Families IV. The survey focuses on randomly selected wives of active duty Army members (n=6451). The research model for this study includes wives' adaptation as the criterion variable, with community connections as independent variables and a set of contextual influence measures also considered as independent variables. Regression analysis for the entire sample indicated that wives with greater adaptation utilized more formal network resources. Among wives of officers, the most important predictors were volunteering and having a close confidant, whereas among wives of enlisted military members most important factors were participating with the Family Readiness Group and employment status.

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## Introduction

Military families differ from their civilian counterparts due to the uniqueness of the context of military life. Events such as extended deployments, unexpected relocations, or frequent transfers can cause family separations. For those spouses who are left to tend to the needs at home, a strong sense of quality of life and military community connections are essential. The overwhelming majority of civilian spouses are women; not only are immediate familial relationships and friendships necessary to maintain connections and sustain a high quality of life for the wife and her family, but so are military community resources. Such resources include unit support networks, family resource centers, morale and recreation programs, and volunteer and employment opportunities.

In this study, I answer the following questions: 1) what community connections patterns are evident among the wives of active duty Army members; 2) how are these community connections related to their adaptation to Army life; 3) how do key contextual factors (whether married to an enlisted or officer active duty member, whether employed full-time, part-time or not at all, geographic location, and previous history with the military) relate to adaptation; and 4) are community connections or contextual factors more important for adaptation?

### Applicable Theoretical Concept

The theoretical model I describe is the community capacity model. This model focuses on change and concentrates on community connections as well as community capacity (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2000). Originally developed within the

military context, the community capacity model has more recently been applied to community health and well-being (Mancini, Martin, & Bowen, 2003).

Community capacity is defined as a sense of shared responsibility among members of a community and the collective competence among those members (Bowen et al., 2000). The model maintains that community capacity, which is represented by collective actions and behaviors of members within the community, is the core component in achieving desired community results (see FIGURE 1). The model proposes that community capacity is derived from the relations and engagements of informal and formal community networks (Bowen, Martin, & Mancini, 1999). Within the model, formal networks incorporate unit-level chains of command and other base-level and civilian community agencies. Informal networks include group associations, support groups, and less-organized networks of friendships (Bowen et al., 2000). The model asserts that informal and formal support networks act as indirect or direct determinants for the overall interaction patterns in a community. Bowen et al. (2000) explain that community capacity is a term used to denote the collective experiences of members within a community and represents the resources that are developed by people in formal and informal networks. Community capacity “represents behaviors and action rather than the potential for action” (Bowen et al., 1999, p.9).

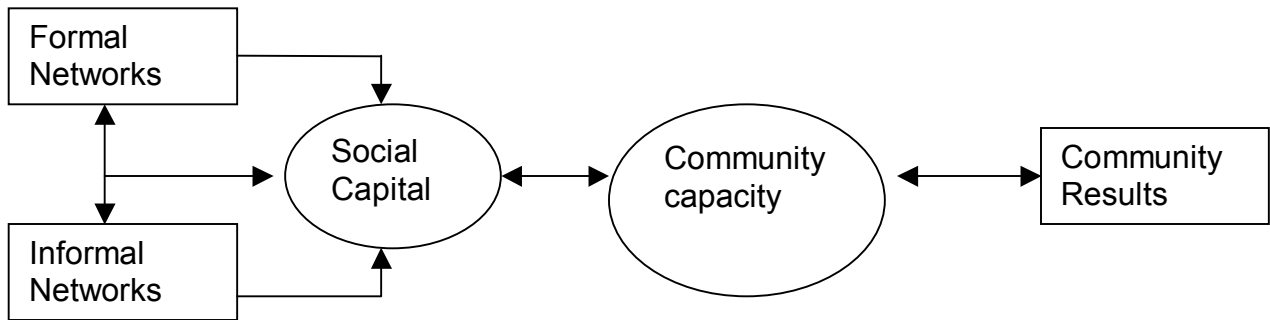


FIGURE 1. The Community Capacity Model (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2000)

This model is grounded in the literature on social capital. Social capital is derived from the interactions of informal and formal networks. “Those networks are considered to operate like ‘turbines’...to the extent to which they produce social capital, which is the social energy for building community capacity” (Bowen et al., 2000, p.11). Social capital suggests an individual is socially helpless if left to him/her self. Instead, factors such as good will, positive and fervent social connections, sympathy, and companionship contribute to improved living conditions within the social community (Putnam, 2000). According to Putnam (2000), trust and reciprocity are the two core elements of social capital. Ultimately, the interaction between community capacity and social capital assumes that the “community’s success in accomplishing tasks and in handling situations promotes the further development of social capital and consequently further enhances community capacity” (Bowen et al., 2000, p. 12).

Finally, community results are defined as the outcomes that are reflected by the community members’ collective actions and efforts (Coulton, 1997; Bowen et al., 2000). Community results include: safety, health and well-being, sense of community, personal preparedness, and family adaptation (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Orthner,



2001). Community results are generally seen as positive outcomes derived from community capacity (Bowen et al., 2000). In the present study, the focus is the community result of adaptation and is examined among wives of active duty Army members.

### Literature Review

The following section focuses on the literature as it pertains to the core elements in the study. These elements include family adaptation, formal and informal community connections, employment status, and rank. What is important to remember is that military wives have been considered the unrecognized backbone of the military with the most difficult tasks such as assisting their military husbands and solely running a household. The extant literature on military families examines wives' adjustment, overall satisfaction, and adaptation with the military way of life. Contemporary theory and research also note the relationship between community connections and family adaptation to the military environment (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2000). Researchers have found that informal and formal community connections are essential elements to providing and developing supportive relationships among military families (Martin, Rosen, & Sparacino, 2000) while other studies have noted the significance of spousal employment status (Rosen, Westhuis, & Teitelbaum, 1994) and the military member's rank in understanding family adaptation (Military Family Clearinghouse, 1995). This extant literature provides support for the direction of the present study.

### *Family Adaptation*

The criterion variable in this study is family adaptation, more particularly the adaptation of civilian wives. Family adaptation has been defined as family members' sense of belonging and well-being, satisfaction with the community, and perceived low levels of familial problems (Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1985). The exact meaning of terms such as satisfaction, external adaptation, and family adaptation varies by researcher and context. Family adaptation is "a relatively new concept...that is an outgrowth of changing systems of relationships between work and family roles generally and in the Armed Forces in particular. There have been several variations in the definition. It has been defined as an outcome of the level of fit between families and systems in their environment...family adaptation can be viewed as a combination of the family's ability to adapt to work demands from the Army and the ability to maintain satisfaction by meeting their own internal needs" (Segal & Harris, 1993, p. 34). Family adaptation encompasses internal and external dimensions. Internal family adaptation involves the relationships between family members, including marital satisfaction and communication. External family adaptation is satisfaction with extrinsic factors such as the military community. External adaptation is the focus in this study.

The adaptation of spouses has important implications for the military members. For example, retention rates of military personnel have been found to be affected by spouse adaptation (Army Community Service, 2002). Segal and Harris (1993) found that spouses' levels of adaptation potentially affect the military member's morale, which in turn affects the military member's readiness. It has also been discovered that a spouse's attitude toward the military is somewhat more influential on a soldier's re-

enlistment behavior than the soldier's own satisfaction with the military. "A 1978 survey of Navy wives...showed most wives feel successful, proud, and worthy as persons. They associate these positive feelings with being a part of the Navy system, and they feel a sense of belonging to that system" (Hunter, 1982, p. 19). In order to cope and adapt well the key skill for military wives is flexibility. The 'traditional wife' concept created in the early military is changing; therefore, the wife's changing duties "impact not only the military family members, but also military policies, programs, retention statistics, and ultimately the accomplishment of the military mission" (Hunter, 1982, p. 20). The focus on adaptation of civilian wives in this study is not only consonant with the community capacity model but addresses a key aspect that has an impact on the military member himself.

### *Community Connections*

Definitions of "community" vary widely. For some, community is merely a geographic location rather than a social construct. For others, community is defined by the amount of social cohesion from shared agencies and institutions as well as the cohesion among community members (Coulton, 1995). The definition of "community" includes the notions of sense of belonging, connectedness, and reciprocity. Van Laar (1999) states a family's well-being and sense of quality of life are mitigating factors in assessing overall sense of community. In this present study the primary independent construct pertains to community connections. Within the military context the strength of community connections is of paramount importance (Bowen, et al., 2000). Department of Defense policy states that families are to be provided with comprehensive family support networks, which includes deployment support, relocation support, child care,

private and public sector employment assistance, and family support services for off-base families (Department of Defense, 1988). Network support, a form of community connections, may be concentrated or isolated. Whatever the type of support, however, varying community connections have been found to influence the extent of personal and familial happiness, as well as being related to how well family members relate to one another (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, Ware, & Nelson, 2003).

Contemporary studies have found that families who utilized support groups had military members who performed more effectively during missions and experienced less stress (Bell, Bartrone, Bartrone, Schumm, & Gade, 1997). Results from an Air Force community needs survey showed that the ability of a family to adapt to ever-changing demands such as deployments, relocations, and other military career demands was partly related to how well community-oriented network support components interacted with the family (Bowen, Mancini, Martin, & Nelson, 2003). It was also found that community participation increases community capacity within the military community. Community connections are usually partitioned into those that are informal and those that are formal.

### *Formal Connections*

Within the military environment formal connections have been described as base-level and local civilian agencies and organizations that address the needs of individuals and families. These formal agencies support activities that provide much needed services to citizens, while encouraging collective community participation (Bowen et al., 2000). According to Putnam (2002), networks cultivate a communal social connection, in effect, supporting bonding within a group and bridging between

groups. In the Army there are a number of formal organizations that provide support to military families

### Formal Connections within the Army<sup>1</sup>

#### **Family Readiness Group (FRG)**

Family Readiness Groups (FRG) were instituted in the 1980s to assist families with adapting to deployment and separation (Morale-Welfare-Recreation, 2003). When working effectively, these support systems sustain positive coping responses to stressful situations (Segal & Harris, 1993). The official definition of a FRG is “an organization of family members, volunteers, and soldiers belonging to a unit that together provide an avenue of mutual support, assistance, and a network of communication among the family members, the chain of command, and community resources” (Bowman & Forrest, 2000, p. 10). Family Readiness Groups were fully implemented after several overseas military operations in the early 1990s.

“Commanders of deploying units discovered that while their units were highly trained to fight, little if anything was done to train and prepare families to better cope with the stresses and unique problems that often arise during extended and often times unexpected deployment of their spouses. Some type of organization was needed within units to address this serious shortcoming in peacetime, so that in time of crisis, families would be better able to take care of themselves” (Bowman & Forrest, 2000, p.12).

#### **Army Family Team Building (AFTB)**

Army Family Team Building (AFTB) was instituted in 1992 to promote and provide information and training to Army spouses and children (Army Family Team Building, 2003). The organization is volunteer-driven and is designed to serve several

purposes. Army Family Team Building helps “orient families new to the Army, progressively and sequentially educates soldiers and spouses in order to build more self-reliant, resilient families, and enhances family preparedness and soldier/Army readiness in the contingency Army of the future” (Army Family Team Building, 2003).

### **Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)**

The Morale, Welfare, and Recreation program (MWR) is another agency within the formal community connections network. MWR’s primary objectives are community, growth, peace of mind, renewal, and self-reliance. During World War I, Salvation Army Sisters and Red Cross volunteers tended to soldiers’ various needs. However, after the war, programs like this were discontinued. Not until 1940 did a new program, called the Morale Division, appear. From this new program, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs were developed. MWR’s philosophy is that “soldiers are entitled to the same quality of life as is afforded the society they are pledged to defend. Keeping an Army ready to fight and win takes more than hard work and training. Soldiers need a balance of work and play. The...mission is to create and maintain...services that are essential to a ready, self-reliant force” (Army Morale Welfare Recreation Center, 2003). Today, MWR encompasses a number of areas within the military installation. MWR facilities include bowling centers, recreation centers, gyms, outdoor recreation rentals, shopping areas, and parks (Army Community and Family Support Center, 2003). MWR programs provide the structure within which community connections can occur.

### **Volunteer Activities**

Volunteering trends have begun to decline over the years. “In 1975-76 more than two in every five American adults said that they had worked on some community

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<sup>1</sup> A list of military-specific key terms is located in Appendix A.

project in the previous year, but by 1998-99 that figure dropped to fewer than one in three” (Putnam, 2000, pp. 127-128). However, the size of the community and the age of the volunteer makes a difference in the degree to which many volunteer. The “most consistent predictor of giving time and money is involvement in community life. Social recluses are rarely major donors” (Putnam, 2000, p. 119). Horton Smith (1993) found that employment is a facilitator of volunteering because volunteering exposes people to new social networks. Most employed persons who volunteer are employed part-time.

The Army provides volunteer opportunities through Army Community Service in which soldiers, retirees, civilians, and spouses may participate. The program “offers a wide range of volunteer opportunities that significantly impact the military community” (Army Community Services, 2003). Services include volunteering at hospitals, offices, organizations, playing fields, and so on. Programs such as the Installation Volunteer Program, located with the 415<sup>th</sup> Base Support Battalion (Kaiserslautern) enhance and promote volunteer participation by providing the community with a centralized source of information on volunteer opportunities. The IVC serves as the advocate for volunteerism, helping to create an environment where volunteering is perceived as an important service performed with pride and professionalism. The IVC assists volunteer agencies in publicizing their needs and assists individuals in finding volunteer positions that best suit their personal interests or career goals” (Kaiserslautern Army Community Services, 2003). Historically wives have provided many volunteer hours to the military, though declining volunteer participation parallels trends in the civilian community. Volunteering is a type of community connection because these activities often include

interaction with other volunteers, as well as providing services to other military family members.

### **Sponsor Program**

Unique to the military is the sponsorship program. In the Army the sponsorship program is coordinated through Army Community Service. The sponsorship program assists commanders in their support of families as they relocate (Department of Army Regulation, 2002). Very often the sponsor is the newcomer's first contact with the military unit (Cline, 1992). Newcomers to a specific installation are matched with a sponsor of similar rank and marital status. The sponsor and his family then begin communication with the soon-to-arrive family in order to provide pertinent community-related information. Sponsors can be important sources of information and familiarization to a new military community all the while alleviating moving stresses for the new family (Harrell, 2000). The sponsorship program provides one of the earliest connections that the military member and his/her family have with the military unit.

### **Unit Leaders**

Unit leaders are also significant sources of support to the Army family, in that unit leaders provide direct, positive reinforcement to their military personnel and families, while acting as a facilitator of informal and formal network interaction (Bowen et al., 2003; Bowen et al., 2000). Research has shown spousal support for a military member is strongly associated with the perceptions the spouse has about the degree to which the unit leaders care about their families (Segal & Harris, 1993; Rosen, Carpenter, & Moghadam, 1989). The 1985, 1986, 1991, and 1995 surveys of Army families found that unit leaders were very important for the adaptation of civilian wives, which suggests



that this aspect of formal connections is a core aspect of adaptation itself (Martin, Rosen, & Sparacino, 2000). In another recent survey, unit leaders were perceived as central influences on building informal connections among members of the unit, all the while promoting a positive sense of community (Bowen, Mancini, Martin, Ware, & Nelson, 2003). In the present study the role of unit leaders in adaptation is conceptualized as part of the criterion measure.

### Informal Connections within the Army

Informal connections include personal relationships with friends, colleagues, and other close community members (Bowen, Martin, & Mancini, 1999). Informal networks “play a more active role in the day-to-day life of members and families” when compared to formal networks (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2001). When a civilian spouse is in need of support, she turns to her spouse first and then to a close friend. However, due to various reasons such as frequent relocations or an active and demanding familial life, friendship networks are sometimes sparse. Even extended family members are sometimes unreliable sources of support for a military spouse because of geographic location (Caliber Associates, 1997). Bowen et al. (1999) state that the interaction of informal networks supports the resilience of the community and its members. It has also been found that informal networks are more likely to act as support systems for family members and those within a neighborhood as well as across other neighborhoods (Bowen et al., 2000). Bowen et al. (2003) suggest that social support acts as a buffer between family strain and adaptation, and one’s sense of community acts as a determinant for involvement within the community.

## *Contextual Influences*

### Employment

According to Department of Defense demographics, 48 percent of civilian wives of active duty officers are employed while 55 percent of wives of active duty enlistees currently hold jobs (Department of Defense, 2000). One of the contextual influences I include in the study is employment and, specifically, the level of employment. Degree of employment includes full-time employment, part-employment, or not employed.

Research has shown that employment facilitates spouse adaptation within the military and is also related to military personnel retention rates (Segal & Harris, 1993). Scarville and Payne (1995) found spousal employment enhances the spouse's and family's quality of life and well-being. Many families, both civilian and military, are dual-income families. Especially for junior enlisted families, spousal employment is necessary to increase the level of annual income. However, many junior enlisted spouses have given up secure employment in order to relocate with their spouses (Martin et al., 2000).

Segal and Harris (1993) suggest it is not the mere distinction of employed versus unemployed, but, rather, the degree of employment (full time, part time, or not employed), such as type of work, amount of pay, and how those factors meet the expectations of the spouse that should be considered. For the purposes of my study, the degree of employment will be studied.

### Rank

Another important contextual influence in the military culture is rank. Military wives are "integrated into a military social network with clearly defined role obligations

and benefits determined by their husband's rank and positions...wives are socialized through various members...and, family members learn that their behavior is under scrutiny and that the degree to which it conforms to normative prescriptions can affect the service member's career development" (Bowen & Orthner, 1989, p.24). Rank is the primary social status and socioeconomic status indicator in the military system.

According to a 1985 study, most wives maintained friendships with women whose husbands were of similar rank; most enlisted wives felt their opinions were discounted when in the presence of officer wives (Rosen & Moghadam, 1989).

In the Army, enlisted rank ranges from E1-E9, which includes private (E1), private 2<sup>nd</sup> class, private 1<sup>st</sup> class, specialist, corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant, sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> class, master sergeant, 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant, sergeant major, and command sergeant major (E9). Rank classifications for officers range from O1 – O9, listed as 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant (O1), 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general, major general, and lieutenant general (O9) (Grunts Military, 2003). TABLE 1 shows the basic pay for Army personnel (The Princeton Review, 2003).

TABLE 1. Army Pay Grades (as of January 1, 2003)

<b>Rank</b>	Cumulative years of services	<b>Rank</b>	Cumulative years of services
	2 years or less		2 years or less
<b>E1</b>	1150.80	<b>O1</b>	2183.70
<b>E2</b>	1290.00	<b>O2</b>	2515.20
<b>E3</b>	1356.90	<b>O3</b>	2911.20
<b>E4</b>	1502.70	<b>O4</b>	3311.10
<b>E5</b>	1625.40	<b>O5</b>	3837.60
<b>E6</b>	1770.60	<b>O6</b>	4603.20

The ratio of officer to enlisted personnel is 1 to 5.3; however, the ratio across the services varies (Department of Defense, 2000). Junior enlisted military members (E1-E4), because of pay grade distinctions from their junior officer counterparts (O1-O4), possess less control over assignments and relocations, more likely struggle more with financial demands, and struggle with dual-career pursuits of their spouses (Bowen et al., 2003). “Spouses described precarious family financial positions – running out of money before the end of the month, living ‘paycheck to paycheck,’ and having little to no savings. Enlisted and first time wives were especially anxious, and the high cost of living at some posts exacerbated these problems” (Martin, Rosen, & Sparacino, 2000, p.60). Junior enlisted members, often run into financial difficulties. Members have sometimes been called back from deployments to handle housing evictions or credit collections (Buddin & Do, 2002).

## Geographic Location

Two dimensions of location are examined in this study, living on or off the base, and living inside or outside of the United States. These dimensions have an important relationship with community connections and with adaptation. “The military family has a unique mobile lifestyle, unmatched by any other population group” (Hunter, 1982, p. 37). Most families officially relocate every three years, by way of a PCS (permanent change of station) move. McKain (1973) found wives often felt alienated and developed personal, relational, and parental problems as a result of frequent moves. However, Wilson (1977) found military couples typically reported high marital satisfaction, even with frequent relocations. Most research finds that number of transfers is a major factor that contributes to a family’s internal adaptation (Hunter, 1982). Most researchers agree that relocations have both positive and negative effects. “Positive aspects of mobility include obtaining cultural experiences in conjunction with educational knowledge;” however “change of duty stations exacerbate already existing financial problems. Limited educational services, limited community resources, many occupational transfers, limited monetary funds during the moving process and adjusting to a new social and cultural environment all present difficulties for the mobile military family” (Hunter, 1982, p. 41). The effects of relocations are magnified by the extent of the relocation, for example, whether it involves moving outside of the United States. Living OCONUS can bring families closer together, thus improving community connections. At the same time, however, OCONUS residence can effect adaptation on an individual level by complicating everyday life tasks.

Living on or off of the military installation is another aspect of geography. It can directly relate to external adaptation. For example, on base living places members and their families in contiguity with other military families, and facilitates their use of on base family support services. At the same time, however, the housing on the installation may not be seen by the family as adequate. In addition, there are those family members that prefer more distance from the military and therefore are more satisfied with living off of the installation. Regardless, contiguity to the base potentially has importance for external adaptation of civilian wives.

### Previous Military Experience

Another factor that may influence wives' adaptation to the military is their experience with or familiarity with the military aside from their husbands' being a military member. Several assumptions can be made with regard to wives' history with the military. For a wife who previously served in the military, worked in conjunction with the military through the Department of Defense, had a parent in the military, or previously married a military member, several advantages exist. Wives with some type of military background have more insight and understanding of military customs than a "first time" military wife because of their experience. The assumption is that wives with previous military experience are more informed about their choices in a military mate and have more realistic expectations as to the demands placed upon a military family.

### Research Model for this Study

The conceptual model examined in this study is represented in FIGURE 2. Major components in the model are community connections (including volunteer involvement

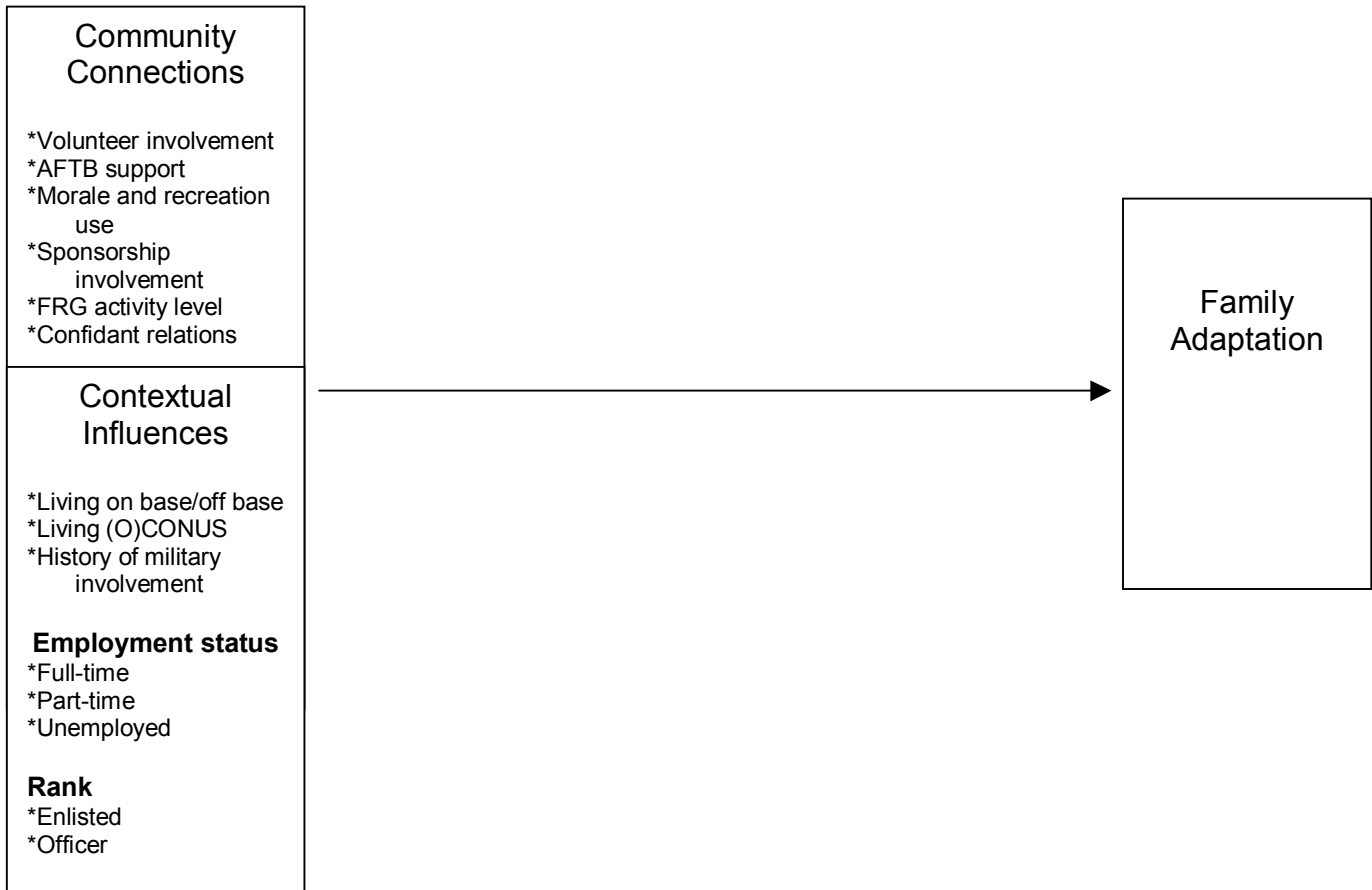


FIGURE 2. Model of Community Connections, Contextual Influences, and Family Adaptation

in, either, military or civilian organizations, receipt of AFTB support, MWR use, involvement of a sponsor, FRG participation, and confidant relations), contextual influences (including geographic location, employment status, and rank), and family adaptation. Adaptation of wives is the outcome/dependent variable. Adaptation is defined as the ability to adjust to change and/or a changing environment. Community connections are the primary independent variables. Connections are defined as relations, or associations, among informal and informal networks. Contextual variables are included in the model because they have a bearing on connections and on

adaptation. Contextual influences are defined as effects of the environment either historically, recreation use, are all interrelated with informal connections. Although the inclusion of formal networks implies informal network activities, only one question from the survey directly relates to informal connections (confidant relations).

Living off base or on base, living in the United States or internationally, one's own personal history with the military, rank, and employment are considered contextual influences. Although the first three contextual influences may be considered types of community connections, for the purposes of this study, they are considered more as background factors that affect interaction within the community.

### Hypothesis

My hypothesis is two-fold in this study. I anticipate that community connections will be positively associated with wives' adaptation to Army life. It remains to be seen which aspects of community connections are relatively more important for adaptation. I also anticipate that the contextual variables and adaptation will significantly vary. It is expected the higher the rank, the greater the employment status, geographic location, and previous military experience will relate to increased adaptation levels.

### Method

#### *Data*

The data for this study are derived from the 2001 Survey of Army Families IV, sponsored by the Army Community and Family Support Center and conducted by the Army Personnel Survey Office. A questionnaire was mailed to a stratified sample of



Army civilian spouses of active duty Army personnel. Spouses of generals (O7-O10) and privates (E1) were excluded from the study. Military family demographics indicated in December 2000 there were approximately 253,966 Army civilian spouses. Thirty-three percent of those surveyed responded; the total 6,759 returned responses were weighted to reflect the total civilian spouse population at each Army rank. The sampling error was  $\pm 1$  (U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, 2001; Peterson, 2002). For the purposes of my study, civilian wives of active duty Army members are the primary target population (N = 6451). TABLE 1 represents the specific 2001 SAF survey questions utilized in my study.

<b>CRITERION VARIABLE</b>
<u>FAMILY ADAPTATION</u>
How satisfied are you with the following: 1) the respect the Army shows soldiers 2) the respect the Army shows spouses 3) the concern your spouse's unit has for families 4) how would you feel if your spouse were to make the Army a career 5) the kind of life you have in the Army How satisfied are you with the support and concern the following Army leaders show for your family? 1) officers in my spouse's unit/place of duty 2) NCOs in my spouse's unit/place of duty
<b>DEPENDENT VARIABLES</b>
<u>COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS</u>
During the last 3 months, how many hours of volunteer work did you do for military-affiliated and/or civilian organizations? <u>HELPFULNESS OF AFTB PARTICIPATION</u>
How much information have you heard/received about the Army Family Team Building Program (AFTB)? How much has AFTB helped you in the following areas? 1) increased my familiarity with community resources 2) increased my sense of preparedness and self-efficacy 3) helped me adjust to Army life <u>MORALE AND RECREATION USE</u>
How often do you (and your children) use/participate in your post/installation recreation programs and services? Below is a list of morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs, activities, and services available at most Army installations. 1) community recreation centers
<u>SPONSORSHIP INVOLVEMENT</u>
If your spouse requested a sponsor for your most recent PCS move, which of the following did the sponsor do for your family? 1) sponsor helped orient us with the community 2) sponsor helped orient us with the installation <u>FRG ACTIVITY LEVEL</u>
During the last 12 months, have you participated with FRG?
<u>CONFIDANT RELATIONS</u>
At your current location, is there a friend, neighbor, or relative (besides your spouse) outside your home who will listen to you when you need to talk?
<b>CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES</b>
<u>CONUS/OCONUS</u>
Where are you currently living? <u>IN-BASE/OFF-BSAE</u>
How far do you live from the nearest military installation or the one you use the most? <u>HISTORY OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT</u>
Other than currently being married to a soldier on Active Duty, what types of experiences have you had with the military? 1) served on active duty 2) served/serving with the National Guard/Reserves 3) child of parent(s) in military service 4) previously married to a military member 5) worked/working as a civilian for the U.S. Armed Forces
<u>RANK</u>
What is your spouse's present rank?
<u>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</u>
What is your current employment status?

TABLE 2. 2001 SAF survey questions

## *Measurement*

### **Family Adaptation**

Family adaptation was measured using a 7-item scale that reflected wives' overall satisfaction with the Army (refer to TABLE 2 for specific item content for all measures). The questions included satisfaction with the Army's respect for the soldier and spouse, satisfaction for the unit's concern for families, satisfaction with the officers and commanding officers in the soldiers' unit, and the kind of life in the Army. Response choices ranged from very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, and very satisfied. Higher score indicate greater adaptation. These items were summed into a single scale, with items ranging from 7 to 35. Internal consistency for this summed scale was high ( $\alpha = .8764$ ).

### **Community Connections**

Community connections were grouped into six (6) categories: volunteer involvement, receipt of support in the Army Family Team Building program, specific morale, welfare, and recreation facility use, sponsorship involvement, Family Readiness Group unit activity level, and confidant relations.

Volunteer involvement included participation with military and/or civilian affiliated organizations. Two questions were used from the study, one directly reflecting participation with military-affiliated organizations (19 percent of enlisted wives [ $N = 479$ ] and 36 percent of officer wives [ $N = 1194$ ] volunteer with military organizations) and the other related to civilian-affiliated organizations (21 percent of enlisted wives [ $N = 538$ ] and 38 percent of officer wives [ $N = 1265$ ] volunteer with civilian organizations). These items were summed into a single scale, with items ranging from 2 to 4. The frequency distribution showed that

52 percent ( $N = 3376$ ) of the wives volunteered for either a military or civilian-sponsored organization.

Receipt of AFTB support was assessed by a 4-item scale regarding (a) whether or not the wife received information about AFTB (53.3 percent of the wives who responded answered “yes, they received information,”  $N = 3409$ ), (b) whether or not AFTB increased the wife’s familiarity with community resources (77 percent of the wives answered “no,”  $N = 4874$ ), (c) whether or not AFTB increased one’s sense of preparedness and self-sufficiency (of the 6326 wives that answered this question, 80 percent said “no,”  $N = 5070$ ), and (d) whether or not AFTB helped the wife adjust to Army life (18 percent of the 6323 respondents for this question answered “yes, the AFTB helped them adjust,”  $N = 1112$ ). Responses were dichotomous, with a higher score of a “2” representing “yes.” The four items were summed into a single measure. The scores range from 4 to 8. Internal consistency was high ( $\alpha = .8891$ ).

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facility use was represented by a 2-item scale that indicated whether or not wives used on-post recreation (64 percent of enlisted wives [ $N = 1610$ ] and 69 percent of officer wives [ $N = 2250$ ] showed they used on-post recreation) and community recreation centers (11 percent of enlisted wives [ $N = 284$ ] and 16 percent of officer wives [ $N = 477$ ] reported they used recreation centers). These two items were summed into a single measure ( $M = 2.80$  and  $SD = .624$ ). Higher scores indicated they had used these MWR facilities. The distribution ranged from 2 to 4.

Sponsorship involvement was represented by a 2-item scale, asking if a sponsor assisted the family by orienting them to 1) the general community and 2) the installation. Response categories were dichotomous, with a higher score of a “2” indicating an

affirmative response. These items were summed into a single score with scores ranging from 2 to 4 ( $M = 2.17$  and  $SD = .524$ ). Results indicated 89 percent of the wives ( $N = 5763$ ) answered “yes, a sponsor helped orient the family,” and 11 percent of the wives ( $N = 688$ ) answered “no, a sponsor did not help orient them to the community.”

One question was used to determine whether or not spouses participated with the unit Family Readiness Group. Response categories were dichotomous with a higher score of a “2” signifying participation ( $M = 1.28$  and  $SD = .450$ ). Seventy-two percent of the wives ( $N = 4638$ ) answered “no” and 28 percent of the wives answered “yes” ( $N = 1813$ ).

One item was used to refer to confidant relations in order to discover if the wife has a friend, neighbor, or relative who is considered a close friend. A higher score of a “2” indicated the wife had a close friend ( $M = 1.90$  and  $SD = .300$ ). Ninety percent of the respondents answered “yes” ( $N = 5785$ ) while 10 percent of the wives answered “no” ( $N = 622$ ).

### **Contextual Influences**

Living on base or off base, living CONUS (living within the United States including Hawaii and Alaska) or OCONUS (any area overseas), history of military involvement, employment status, and husband’s rank comprise contextual influences. Results from the frequency distribution showed 38 percent of enlisted ( $N = 971$ ) and 35 percent of officer families ( $N = 1145$ ) live on post while 32 percent of enlisted families ( $N = 804$ ) and 30 percent of officer families ( $N = 973$ ) live less than 10 miles from the nearest post.

Current geographic location was recoded to indicate CONUS (living in the United States) or OCONUS (living abroad). Also important to analyze was the relationship between previous military experience and adaptation. There were five types of military

experience: previous military active duty service (of the 6451 wives who responded, 12 percent were previously in the military,  $N = 750$ ), previous national guard or reserve duty (4 percent of the 6451 respondents said “yes, they have previous experience,”  $N = 259$ ), having a parent in the military (20 percent had a parent in the military,  $N = 1303$ ), previous marriage to a military member (95 percent of the 6451 respondents have never been previously married to a military member,  $N = 6126$ ), or previously worked as a civilian in the military (16 percent of the respondents stated “yes, they have worked as a civilian in the military,”  $N = 1018$ ). If a respondent had experience in any of these five areas, she received a “yes” score. The recoded variables were then recomputed into a single, summative variable. A frequency distribution was run on the recomputed variable ( $M = 5.57$  and  $SD = .7790$ ).

Employment status was assessed by a single question that focused on part-time employment ( $N = 1184$ ), full-time employment ( $N = 1893$ ), and unemployed ( $N = 3312$ ). A frequency distribution was conducted on the recoded variable ( $M = 1.78$  and  $SD = .8749$ ). Results showed 52 percent of the respondents are not employed, 19 percent are employed part time, and 30 percent work full time. A further analysis showed 48 percent of enlisted wives ( $N = 1201$ ) are not employed, 18 percent are employed part time ( $N = 460$ ), and 34 percent work full time ( $N = 866$ ). Results from employment status of officer wives showed 55 percent are not employed ( $N = 1806$ ), 19 percent are employed part time ( $N = 636$ ), and 26 percent work full time ( $N = 841$ ).

Rank of the military member spouse was represented by a dichotomous variable. All enlisted ranks were combined into a single category, as were all officer ranks. It should be noted that the warrant officers were not included because they are commissioned from the

enlisted ranks for a specific technical duty and, consequently, do not fit neatly into either the enlisted or officer ranks. A “1” denotes “enlisted” and “2” represents “officer.” A frequency distribution was run on the new computed variable ( $M = 1.56$  and  $SD = .4960$ ). Of the 5864 respondents who fit the criteria of enlisted or officer, 44 percent ( $N = 2561$ ) of the respondents are enlisted wives and 52 percent of the respondents are officer wives ( $N = 3033$ ).

### *Results*

A 3-stage data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Carver & Nash, 2000). In the first stage, frequency distributions were run on the individual variables. TABLE 3 reports the mean, standard deviation, and number of respondents for each variable.

TABLE 3. Descriptive Statistics for Family Adaptation, Community Connections, and Contextual Influences

Measures	M	SD	N
Family adaptation	23.14	5.72	5028
Volunteer involvement	2.59	0.50	6451
Receipt of AFTB support	5.13	1.46	6318
MWR use	2.80	0.62	6364
Sponsorship involvement	2.17	0.52	6451
FRG activity level	1.28	0.45	6451
Confidant relations	1.90	0.30	6407
Living on/off base	2.22	1.34	6430
O/CONUS	1.12	0.33	6424
Military history	5.57	0.78	6451
Employment status	1.78	0.87	6389
rank	1.56	0.50	5864

Note: N is based on the 6451 female respondents of the study.

Correlations between all study variables are presented in TABLE 4; this was the second stage of analysis. Most coefficients were significant at  $p = .01$  or  $p = .05$  levels (see TABLE 4 for specific levels for each variable). Of particular interest is the correlation between how far one lives from the nearest post and all other study variables. Results showed wives engaged in less interaction or activity the further they lived from the nearest post. With regard to family adaptation, rank most highly correlated ( $r = .25$ ) followed by FRG activity level ( $r = .204$ ) and volunteerism ( $r = .201$ ). Of all study variables, the highest overall correlation was between how far one lives from the nearest post and MWR use ( $r = -.380$ ), meaning the further away wives live from the nearest post, the less likely they are to



utilize MWR resources. The correlation between O/CONUS and sponsorship was the second highest correlation ( $r = .314$ ), meaning that location determined the use, or frequency, of utilizing sponsor programs and services. The further away a wife had to travel to relocate, the more likely she was to use a sponsor in acclimating herself to her new post.

TABLE 4. Correlations of Model Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 family adaptation											
2 volunteerism	.201**										
3 receipt of AFTB support	.179**	.262**									
4 MWR use	.108**	.220**	.219**								
5 sponsorship	.125**	.106**	.097**	.107**							
6 FRG activity level	.204**	.230**	.241**	.146**	.074**						
7 confidant relations	.125**	.119**	.089**	.058**	.035**	.063**					
8 distance live from post	-.038**	-.088**	-.100**	-.380**	-.050**	-.113**	-.034**				
9 (O)CONUS	-.011	.062**	.052**	.149**	.314**	.043**	.030*	-.066**			
10 prev. military exp.	.044**	.041**	.001	.054**	-.008	-.024*	.010	.007	-.012		
11 employment	-.028*	-.069**	-.085**	-.063**	-.088**	-.063**	.044**	.090**	-.069**	.098**	
12 rank	.245**	.252**	.212**	.071**	.151**	.095**	.099**	.011	.017	-.032*	-.092**

\* Correlations are significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level

The third stage of the analysis included multiple regressions. Variables were entered in blocks, with the contextual influence variables included in the first block and the community connections variables added in the second block. TABLE 5 presents the regression results of all study variables.

TABLE 5. Multiple Regression Analysis of Community Connections and Contextual Influences

<b>Family Adaptation</b>				
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b><i>b</i></b>	<b><i>Beta</i></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Rank	2.05	0.18	11.93	.000
Employment status	0.00	0.003	0.24	.807
Previous military experience	0.32	0.04	3.00	.003
(O)CONUS	-1.00	-0.06	-3.83	.000
Distance living from post	0.00	0.006	0.42	.673
Confidant relations	1.64	0.08	5.90	.000
FRG activity level	1.69	0.14	9.07	.000
Sponsorship	0.87	0.08	5.20	.000
MWR use	0.42	0.05	2.90	.004
AFTB support	0.27	0.07	4.51	.000
volunteerism	0.72	0.09	5.60	.000

Adjusted  $r^2 = .132$ ,  $df = 11, 4431$ ,  $F = 62.148$ ,  $p < .05$

Block 1 included the contextual influence variables: rank, employment, previous military experience, O/CONUS, and how far one lives from the nearest post. Regression results from block 1 showed  $r^2 = .068$ . Block 2 included community connections variables: confidant relations, FRG participations, sponsorship, MWR use, AFTB participation, and volunteerism. Regression results from block 2 showed  $r^2 = .132$ . All variables in block 2 were statistically significant. Most variables proved to be statistically significant. Rank is the

most prominent predictor of family adaptation ( $\beta = .18$ ) followed by participation in a FRG ( $\beta = .14$ ) and volunteerism ( $\beta = .09$ ). Previous military experience proved to be the least prominent predictor of adaptation ( $\beta = 0.04$ ). Employment and how far one lives from the nearest post have no statistical significance in predicting family adaptation. Results from TABLE 4 indicate that, although O/CONUS is a predictive variable to family adaptation, it is negatively related to adaptation. In other words, families living OCONUS are less adapted than families living CONUS.

Since rank was the most prominent predictor of family adaptation in the first regression analysis, a second set of regression analyses were run with enlisted separated from officer wives. TABLE 6 presents the regression results of the study variables when just examining enlisted wives' data. As the table shows, the greatest influence on enlisted wives' adaptation is participating in a FRG ( $\beta = .19$ ) followed by receipt of AFTB support ( $\beta = .12$ ), and confidant relations ( $\beta = .07$ ). The least predictive variable for family adaptation was sponsorship ( $\beta = .04$ ). Previous military experience, how far one lives from the nearest post, and volunteerism were statistically insignificant variables.

TABLE 6. Multiple Regression Analysis of Community Connections and Contextual Influences, Enlisted Wives Data Only

<b>Family Adaptation</b>				
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b><i>b</i></b>	<b><i>Beta</i></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Employment status	0.39	0.06	2.73	.006
Previous military experience	0.22	0.03	1.34	.179
(O)CONUS	0.00	-0.01	-0.53	.596
Distance living from post	-0.65	-0.04	-1.59	.111
Confidant relations	1.24	0.07	3.25	.001
FRG activity level	2.62	0.19	8.52	.000
Sponsorship	0.71	0.04	2.01	.045
MWR use	0.44	0.05	1.98	.048
AFTB support	0.56	0.12	5.47	.000
volunteerism	0.40	0.04	1.83	.067

Adjusted  $r^2 = .094$ ,  $df = 10, 2098$ ,  $F = 22.759$ ,  $p < .01$

TABLE 7 presents data from a multiple regression analysis on wives of officers. The greatest predictors of family adaptation were sponsorship and volunteerism, each with a standardized regression coefficient of .11. Confidant relations and FRG activity level also proved to be predictive variables to family adaptation. The beta related to how far one lives from the nearest post indicates the closer officer wives live to the post, the more they are adapted. The least predictive variables were employment status ( $\beta = -.06$ ), previous military experience ( $\beta = .06$ ), and MWR use ( $\beta = .05$ ). O/CONUS and receipt of AFTB support were insignificant.

TABLE 7. Multiple Regression Analysis of Community Connections and Contextual Influences, Officer Wives Data Only

<b>Family Adaptation</b>				
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b><i>b</i></b>	<b><i>Beta</i></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Employment status	-0.36	-0.06	-2.90	.004
Previous military experience	0.40	0.06	2.90	.004
(O)CONUS	0.00	0.02	1.11	.266
Distance living from post	-1.35	-0.09	-4.08	.000
Confidant relations	2.10	0.10	5.12	.000
FRG activity level	1.03	0.10	4.56	.000
Sponsorship	0.95	0.11	5.30	.000
MWR use	0.37	0.05	2.02	.043
AFTB support	0.00	0.02	1.00	.317
volunteerism	0.83	0.11	5.37	.000

Adjusted  $r^2 = .070$ ,  $df = 10, 2332$ ,  $F = 18.421$ ,  $p < .01$

Results show officer wives rely more on volunteering, having a sponsor during a PCS move, having a confidant, and participating in the FRG more than officer wives. Employment and previous military experience, however, were not important factors enlisted wives. Military history was a more valuable predictor for officer wives when compared to enlisted wives. For both ranks, living CONUS versus OCONUS proved to be an unimportant predictor of adaptation.

### Discussion

I hypothesized that community connections are positively correlated with family adaptation. My hypotheses were initially left open-ended because it was difficult to speculate which community connections would be more or less influential. Overall, however, I theorized that general community connections are important determinants to adaptation.

The results support this expectation. In this study of wives of active duty Army members, adaptation is higher among wives of officers. The idea of the military family as a distinct and, paradoxically, entwined entity within American culture is still developing. Gone is the research focusing on prevalence of spousal abuse or other delinquent behaviors. Studies such as those by Bowen, Mancini, and Martin are now focusing on the importance of community and connectedness. Social indicators that more aptly describe adaptation levels in family members are a newfound research concentration. For example, several conclusions can be derived from rank distinction. I expected rank to be a predictor of wives' adaptation, which proved to be supported by the results. First, as the literature review states, junior enlisted military members are not monetarily secure as compared to a junior officer counterpart. Such proof lies in the preceding analytical results. Contemporary literature concerning community connections and employment were more prevalent than studies focusing on wives' previous military history. Community connections proved to be more significant than the contextual influences. Aspects such as participating in a FRG and having a confidant were, overall, more significant when compared to employment status or geographic location (O/CONUS). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the greater the involvement with formal organizations that facilitate informal relationships, the greater the wife's adaptation. Maguire found that "social networks are composed of both instrumental and affective ties that provide emotional and economic support and information (Maguire, 1983, p. 14)." Tables 5 and 6 also indicated a positive relationship between enlisted wives and higher degrees of employment, whereas officer wives show a negative relationship between adaptation and increased employment levels. Enlisted wives rely more on employment as a secondary income source, which may increase their adaptation because of improved income.

One limitation to my study was the lack of survey questions directly related to informal networks. Only one question concretely constituted a reference to such networks; other survey questions directed toward formal networks implied informal network associations. The above data analysis shows the importance of informal networks, “where it has been recognized that mutual help is a time-honored tradition” (Van Vranken & Benson, 1978, p.212), and how such networks interplay with more formalized connections. Therefore, questions specifically addressing informal support connections within the larger formal connections, such as gaining and/or maintaining friendships while participating in a FRG or AFTB program, would be useful.

Although not a specific indicator of adaptation, the location to the nearest post seems to be implicitly important for wives. Instead of inquiring how far one lives from the nearest post, it may be more beneficial to ask the Army wives if they, first, live on-post or off-post and, second, how important their housing location is with regard to available formal network resources. A subsidiary question that may be important to consider in future studies is whether the availability of military housing programs such as RPP benefit enlisted and officer families with regard to location to the closest post of preferred geographic location.

Aside from financial and emotional well-being, another adaptation indicator not focused on in the original Army data or my study was the importance of spiritual well-being. The prevalence of formal or informal religious attendance to various functions may play a role for wives and their families in their levels of adaptation. For example, it may be beneficial to further investigate whether the guidance of a spiritual leader in times of despair or crisis is an influential factor for wives' adaptation.



Little attention was given to the children of military families in the original Army survey; I gave no focus to the area. However, children's adaptation levels may play an influential role in their parents' overall adaptation. In subsequent studies, it may be logical to consider aspects of children's adaptation such as available resources, social clubs, and other positive networks. How children fare in the military system may be an emotional determinant for their parents' own well-being.

The background for the study was based on the community capacity model. As described in the literature review, the community capacity model supported my initial hypotheses and, once data were analyzed, results proved the data and model still supported one another. The community capacity model states networks are the primary step to community results. My data supports the notion that formal and informal networks are important to a spouse's adaptation. "While participation may take many forms, becoming imbedded in a reciprocal manner in a diverse and dense array of supportive relationships is critical for successful survival as a military family member" (Martin et al., 2000, p.18). Bowen et al. (2001) state when community capacity is high, military members have greater access, resources, and opportunities to the military and civilian community. These indicators are "associated with personal preparedness, family adaptation, and base sense of community" (Bowen et al., 2001, p. 11).

Along with confirming the relationship of the community capacity model and my study, I found other interesting relationships with the results. For example, because rank proved to be the most prominent predictor of adaptation it was necessary to further uncover the most and least predictive indicators of adaptation among the ranks. The use of a sponsor during a PCS move proved to be one of the least significant predictors for enlisted wives, while it was

one of the more important predictors for officer wives. This may be due to location of housing. Most enlisted families reside on base or within a 10 mile radius. While initial results showed officer families reside in a similar trend, more officer families do live farther away from the nearest installation. Although how far one lives from the post proved to be one of the least predictive factors, it may be indirectly important. For example, for enlisted wives, the results showed participation in the FRG and AFTB (both post-specific organizations) were significant predictors of adaptation; the FRG proved to be the only post-specific predictor for officer wives' adaptation. This may also indicate that enlisted wives have less time for participating with such groups because, for example, they are employed more than officer wives, which inadvertently shows that enlisted wives' sources of adaptation differ from those sources utilized by officer wives, i.e employment status versus volunteerism.

For both ranks, having a close confidant proved to be a predictive indicator of adaptation. The above study confirms the more wives interact with formal and informal support organizations and gain greater confidant networks, the more adapted they are. Employment is another avenue for creating friendship associations. Because more enlisted wives are employed, they may rely more on their place of employment as sources of networking. My research supports the literature review and proves how close friends and family act as buffers to general military strain.

However, I deduce some incongruity between need for support networks and use of those networks to families of military members. As my study has shown, informal and formal network resources are available within the military community. "Increasingly, military organizational efforts are being directed toward service support systems which address the

specific needs of the families of military members. There presently exists at most military installations a vast array of...services available exclusively for the use of members of the military community and their immediate families. Experience has shown that failure to provide these family support services results in significant, often hidden, costs to organizational effectiveness” (Van Vranken & Benson, 1978, p. 209). As well, during the 1992 Department of Defense Family Conference, the link between family readiness and soldier preparedness was again emphasized (Brandon, 1993). Further research is needed to analyze this relationship. For example, it is interesting how rank serves as the primary predictor of adaptation for wives in the military. Because research shows families with lower pay grades experience greater financial and/or emotional stress (Buddin & Do, 2002), an important program and policy issue to further focus on is whether or not to increase resources to those families, i.e. benefit and/or health packages that are more substantive for families with lower pay grades. Currently, the military Housing department offers a program, entitled RPP, in conjunction with the civilian community that offers rental housing at a reduced cost and guarantees off-base housing for all military personnel and their families (Military Assistance Company, 2003). For some families, it may be the decision between living in on-base housing and living in a preferred rental community near a beach. Policy-wise, this program is pertinent to military families in that it allows families to choose where they want to live. Most families, specifically enlisted families, have historically been forced to live in on-base housing because of an area’s high cost of living. On-base housing provides cost-reduced housing but at the risk of living in older establishments. The RPP program allows families to reside in the civilian community, meaning that families not only obtain ties to the military community but the surrounding civilian realm. As well, it may be

beneficial for policy makers to consider expanding the RPP program to include obtaining automobiles or other materials at reduced costs.

It is still quite important to re-evaluate the current programs, benefit packages, and resources available to military families. Segal (1986) states that the military family once relied on informal relationships as sources of support but now rely more on the more formal community to serve as support aids. First, current programs such as AFTBs and FRGs should be subject to evaluative measures to investigate whether such services are operating to their full capacity and reaching their intended target population. Especially when considering military families, it is important to research if current programs use a capacity-focused approach to their fundamental program ideas. Kretzman and McKnight state (2002) that previous evidence shows that proper communal and individual development only takes place if the community is willing to invest their resources and themselves.

As always, it is important for human services workers to remember to apply not only military family-specific research but other broad based family studies literature to the realm of military families. As researchers, we have an ability to expand what we have discovered theoretically and analytically and apply such work to those who are being studied. It is important to then apply such knowledge to current programs associated with Army families to assess whether their program's objectives and goals are actually meeting the needs of military families. As my study shows, enlisted and officer families utilize different resources; therefore, programs should re-evaluate their current target population to determine whether the proper population is being assisted.

## Conclusion

As this study and previous established literature has shown, there is an abundance of research possibilities for policy analysts, human service personnel, and other military officials. My study only skimmed the surface of a deep-seeded topic. Military wives are an important aspect of the military community. Not only are they responsible for keeping their home and family when their husbands are away, they are relied upon for support from other military wives. Wives must be stoic in appearance and behavior. However, a wife's strength only goes so far. Resources within the community, formal or informal, are necessary to motivate and uplift. While military personnel protect our country, military wives are left to support themselves, their families, and act as motivators for their husbands when they are home and abroad. Their duties as Army wives are dynamic and, as a researcher, it is imperative for me to find out who and what supports them.

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## Appendix A: Military-Specific Terms

## Military Systems and Terminology

FRG	<p>Family Readiness Group - organization of family members, volunteers, and soldiers belonging to a unit, that together provide information and assistance to others in the group. They provide a network of communication between the family members, the chain of command, community resources, and create an atmosphere of mutual support within the group (<a href="http://www.bragg.army.mil/mwr">www.bragg.army.mil/mwr</a>, 2003).</p> <p>FRGs are used especially in times of deployments.</p>
AFTB	<p>Army Family Team Building is a volunteer-led organization with a central tenet: provide training and knowledge to spouses and family members to support the total Army effort (<a href="http://www.armyfamilyteambuilding.org">www.armyfamilyteambuilding.org</a>, 2003).</p>
MWR	<p>Morale-Welfare-Recreation – is about community, growth, peace of mind, renewal, and self-reliance; takes the form of recreational facilities, recreation opportunities such as camping and canoeing, Child and Family Services, Army Family Services, etc. (<a href="http://www.armymwr.com">www.armymwr.com</a>, 2003).</p>
OCONUS*	<p>Generally, refers to bases in the 48 contiguous states (Bowen, Mancini, Martin, Ware, &amp; Nelson, 2003).</p>
CONUS*	<p>Generally, refers to bases in Hawaii, Alaska, U.S. territories, and foreign countries (Bowen, Mancini, Martin, Ware, &amp; Nelson, 2003).</p>
Family Adaptation	<p>The outcome of the level of fit between families and their communities (Orthner &amp; Pittman, 1995).</p>
PCS move	<p>Permanent Change of Station; this is a scheduled move in which the military member is given written orders to relocate.</p>
Sponsor	<p>Generally, member of the office where the newly relocated member works; the sponsor shows the military member and his/her family around the military and civilian community; acts as a tour guide.</p>

**\*For the purposes of this study, CONUS refers to installations in the 48 contiguous states, Hawaii, and Alaska. All other installation locations are referred to as OCONUS.**

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