

The London School of Economics and Political Science

***Inhabiting No-Man's-Land:
The Military Mobilities of Army Wives***

Alexandra Hyde

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Declaration

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Abstract

This research is an ethnography of a British Army regiment from the perspective of women married to servicemen. Its aim is to question wives' power and positionality *vis-à-vis* the military institution and consider the implications for how to understand the everyday operation of military power. The project is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted on and around a regimental camp in Germany during a period when the regiment's soldiers were also deployed in Afghanistan. As social relations are spun across multiple times and spaces, it analyses women's negotiation of presence and absence, home and away, and distance and proximity. Women married to servicemen emerge as mobile subjects, whose gendered labour and identities serve to trouble the boundary between the military and civilian 'spheres'. The research explores multiple conditions for women's encounters with military presence on a day-to-day basis, from the mandate for international migration and the regiment's production of social cohesion, to the formal hierarchy of rank and the temporal and spatial registers of an operational tour. The analysis highlights the dependence of these structures on a military-sexual division of labour, at the same time as women can be argued to mobilise social, cultural and discursive resources to appropriate or transcend the place they are allocated in a military social order. It is in this sense that they might be argued to bargain with the terms of their militarisation.

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Table of Contents

Declaration	2
Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
 I. Introduction: Follow the cake stall	 9
Study outline	11
Background	13
Access and methods	15
Nationality, race and (in)visibilities of difference	19
In and out of the regiment	20
Public and private spheres, trust and intimacy	23
Organisation of the thesis	25
 II. Literature review	 29
Joining the regiment	29
Married to the military?	32
Gendered differences and discipline	34
Everyday narratives of military power	39
Blurring the boundaries of military bases overseas	43
Rehearsing war, domesticating security	46
The multiple mobilities of Army wives	49
 III. The Military Mobilities of Army Wives	 52
Camp followers?	54
The incorporation of women's paid labour in migration	58
Privilege and its discontents	61
Making the most of an international lifestyle?	64
Hybridity foreclosed	69
Conclusion	72
 IV. Reproducing the Regimental Family	 74
Alternative regimental logistics	78
Citizen-wives?	82
Absorbing shock and sustaining awe	86
Regulating the regimental family	90
Conclusion	94

V. Ranking difference and distinction	96
Beyond stereotypes	98
Carrying rank?	101
Disciplining civilians	104
Spatial and social boundaries of belonging	108
Appropriating geographies of rank	110
Conclusion	115
VI. The Present Tense of Afghanistan	117
Mapping a-place-called-Afghanistan	119
The presence of Afghanistan	123
Gendering everyday Army life	127
The present tense of Afghanistan	132
Conclusion	136
VII. Conclusion: Army wives: The “cotton wool effect”	138
Negotiating military conditions of possibility	140
The militarisation of Army wives?	146
Bargaining with militarisation	151
Conclusion, or, ‘you can’t help who you fall in love with’?	154
Bibliography	157

Introduction

Follow the cake stall

On a rainy Saturday afternoon in March 2012, I found myself standing on a gym mat in the car park of a British Army barracks in Germany, struggling to lift a metre-long tube of plastic piping and manoeuvre it in a figure of eight above my head. Two women dressed in camouflage trousers, caps and Army boots blew their whistles and everyone moved on to the next exercise in the circuit: flipping truck tyres, lunge-walking with water-filled jerry cans or hitting punch-bags. The Physical Training Instructor (PTI) strolled among the rag-tag bunch of Army wives and a couple of officer-husbands, calling me a 'fanny' as I attempted to run with a wet weighted rope slung over my shoulder. When the 'outdoor caveman circuits' were over and my pink *FIT SQUAD* vest was soaked with rain and sweat, I followed everyone back inside to the tea urn and cake stall for a homemade fairy cake. This was the 'Fitness Fiesta', a fund-raising weekend organised by women who lived around the Army camp and to me, a landmark event of my ethnographic fieldwork. When relaying my experience as an anecdote to amuse friends (who are aware of my general aversion to sport), one of them asked with some consternation why I had chosen to participate in such a ridiculous exercise. I could easily have stayed inside and joined the small number of startled troopers who had been roused from their Saturday afternoon naps and commanded to make up the numbers in a *zumba* class for example. And it was true, I had observed soldiers setting out their own 'caveman circuits' in the gym several times, finding the format mildly amusing and scribbling field notes about militarised masculinities.

But had I merely observed this event from the side-lines, I would have missed its peculiar duality, its fascinating mixture of militarisation and mimicry. During the exercise, the husband of one of the civilian women running the circuits shouted out laughingly to ask if this was proving useful for my PhD. Struggling to speak from beneath a heavy object, I answered that yes in fact, I was right there and then being *militarised*! Except that I didn't really feel militarised, rather I felt like I was participating in a trend that I had often observed, where humour and irony are used to parody and undercut military ideals of manhood (brute force at the expense of civilisation and sophistication, hence 'caveman'). Yet at the same time, there was no doubt that by participating in the circuits I was selectively manipulating some of the very same symbolic capital of toughness to mark

myself out as a woman who was physically strong enough and capable of withstanding a “beasting”, which was gratifyingly enforced by the congratulations of some other wives who were spectating and the humorous compliments of the PTI that evening at dinner.

This experience illustrates three important principles at the centre of this thesis. Firstly, that militarisation is fluid and contradictory. In the instance I describe above, it is the very denigration and undercutting of militarised and masculine ideals of fitness (the ‘caveman’) that facilitates the compliance of those taking part. Our inevitable failure to reach the standards of caveman fitness is offset by our implicit mockery of those very ideals, at the same time that we are paradoxically underwriting and reproducing them by striving to meet them at least halfway. Had I not been flat on my back on a gym mat ‘joking’ about being militarised, undertaking a public and personal negotiation with the militarisation of my body and social personhood, I doubt that the double-edged dynamic of the caveman circuits would have registered. The second principle on which this thesis is founded therefore, is that it is only by looking at how militarisation is negotiated at a micro-level that we can understand more about its complexities. Catherine Lutz (2002, p.725) has argued for the need to connect “global and national histories” to “ethnographically understood places and people” to really understand how militarisation operates. It is in order to take the micro-politics of military power seriously that I adopted ethnographic methods for this research. Contrary to studies that conflate militarisation and militarism as shorthand for a monolithic, totalising form of domination, and the military institution as a “total institution” (Goffman, 1961), paying ethnographic attention to the transformative and co-operative processes through which power operates on a day-to-day level reveals that military power is emergent and contingent. Thus, rather than exploring the application of military force as an outcome, or ‘being militarised’ as the fixed ontological status of the subjects who encounter it, this study explores militarisation through its imbrication with other vectors of power.

The third and final principle at the core of this thesis is its attention to the everyday lives and experiences of a group of subjects whose power and positionality with respect to military power is deeply ambiguous and lies expressly between what might be called the ‘military’ and ‘civilian’ spheres. Simply taking account of women’s domestic and reproductive labour for example, can reveal how gender roles and militarisation intersect to confound and not simply to reproduce the military/civilian divide. At the *Fitness Fiesta*, the tea urn and fairy cakes set up on a trestle table in the corner of the gym were an incongruous presence that

represented more than the irony of doing caveman circuits then gorging on chocolate brownies. In my ethnographic experience, the cake stall (and I frequented or helped out on quite a few of them during my time on camp) is an ubiquitous indicator of gender politics. At the *Fitness Fiesta*, the cake stall stands for the initiative of the women who, with the support of the PTI, had negotiated British Forces Germany (BFG) red tape to join the regiment's training course, qualify as civilian fitness instructors and run classes for other wives in the gym, which I also attended on a regular basis. In fact, by considering the *Fitness Fiesta* and attendant cake stall in terms of women's labour, the event can be viewed as a civilian appropriation of military capital that is both material and symbolic. The *Fitness Fiesta* culminated in a raffle where the prizes included a week's personal training with the PTI (accompanied by some humorous innuendo about his physical – read sexual – prowess), three baskets of ironing to be undertaken by someone's husband and free babysitting sessions. As the tombola was wheeled squeakily into a sports hall usually full of soldiers after a run, and the handle cranked by a PTI more accustomed to light artillery, it was women's labour and a familial appropriation of social space that prevailed in de-militarising the gymnasium.

It is over twenty years since Cynthia Enloe (1989, p.7) asked “where are the women?” in international relations, and her work has persistently demonstrated the importance of paying attention to everyday gendered power relations as both a cause and effect of militarisation (see also Enloe 2000, 2007, 2013). Yet there remains a paucity of research, particularly in a British context, on the experiences of women married to servicemen. Where such studies have been undertaken, the opportunity to connect women's experiences to how we might conceive of military force, war and violence through the critical framework of militarisation has often been missed. This study sets out to explore the agency of women married to servicemen and what this might tell us about militarisation; how they actively participate in making and resisting it; are sometimes its agents and sometimes its victims. What it shows is that militarisation both maintains and ruptures gendered expectations. It also shows the importance of listening to what people say and feel about military power, how they respond to its everyday forms, and of paying attention to militarisation at a micro-scale.

Study outline

This study is an ethnography of a British Army regiment based overseas. It undertakes a gender analysis of the experiences and attitudes of women married to servicemen during a six-month period when most of the regiment's soldiers were deployed on combat duty in Afghanistan. As such, the project uses a feminist analysis to connect a set of physical, social and political spaces that include Afghanistan as a theatre of war, the UK as sovereign nation, a British military camp in Germany, and the domestic sphere of family homes. The thesis explores military wives' ambiguous position between global and local arenas, military and civilian spheres and the public and private domains. It documents the everyday mobilities that are subsumed beneath the mass-mobilisation and logistical manoeuvres of the armed forces, less visible but no less significant in terms of their contribution to the configuration of military power at a variety of different levels. The mobilities I explore include the geographical migrations of the regimental community, from the UK to Germany for example, and the temporal shift from periods of training to deployment and 'normalisation'. They include the social mobility inscribed in apparently fixed structures of rank as they intersect with gender, race and class. Finally, these mobilities extend to the fluctuations in human relations produced by real and imagined violence and absence and separation during an operational tour. Ultimately, I use an assessment of military wives' ambiguous power and positionality as both subjects and agents of these mobilities, to illustrate how militarisation is a process that is always in flux: spatially and temporally contingent, socially constructed, non-linear and negotiable rather than fixed and absolute.

The contribution that this research makes to contemporary scholarship on military power is both empirical and conceptual. First and foremost, it provides an in-depth account of the everyday experiences of women married to servicemen who are living overseas during a period of deployment. Using ethnographic methods, it addresses the lack of in-depth, qualitative and critical research on the experiences of military wives, a group who are arguably no less integral to the military institution than servicewomen or sex workers for example (see Moon 1997), but who are persistently overlooked even in gender research on the military institution. Secondly, I use these experiences to question the assumption that women married to servicemen are by default, militarised subjects. This entails paying attention to the ways in which militarisation is contingent on a broad set of power relations that exist in multiple forms outside the military institution, and exploring the ways in which women married to servicemen might be argued to use and move between different axes of power to negotiate or "bargain" (Kandiyoti 1988) with the terms of their militarisation.

Finally, this research explores the implications of military wives' complex and ambiguous relationship to military power for scholarly understandings of militarisation. In contrast to the study of military power as overt, monolithic and finite, for example as strategically deployed by states as unitary actors, this research posits a conceptualisation of military power as more fluid, multiplex and contingent in the ways in which it is experienced in everyday life.

Background

The symbolic visibility of the 'military wife' in British political and cultural life is attributable perhaps to the general increase in the visibility of the armed forces in Britain over the past decade, not only due to combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but more recently the military's civil role within the UK. In the year of my fieldwork this included the pomp and pageantry of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee to security checks at the London Olympics. The figure of the military wife takes up a public role, and captures the public imagination, through media culture such as *The Choir – Military Wives*¹, a popular BBC reality television series first broadcast in 2011, about the wives and girlfriends of British soldiers during deployment. The contemporary salience of militaristic values such as heroism, stoicism and self-sacrifice are also evident in cultural transformations such as the patronage granted to the now-'Royal' Wootton Bassett, a small town in Wiltshire whose residents came to play a voluntary role of collective witness to the repatriation of soldiers killed in Afghanistan (Jenkins et al 2012). Against the backdrop of such spaces and on the pages of the red top press, military wives and mothers become totemic figures dressed in black and pinned with poppies. In terms of the cultural processes by which Britain and other societies come to formulate the meaning of military power domestically, the figure of the military wife (and her pre-figurative capacity for bereavement) is part of a discourse of military service which, although it is always-already constituted by the risk of death, glosses over the violence and aggression that is the cause of that death and the military's *modus operandi*. What happens in these cultural productions is a de-politicisation of the everyday experiences of women married to servicemen and with this, the foreclosure of militarisation as a critical lens that might reveal their co-optation and complicity in the smoothing over of military power as an accepted part of contemporary British political and cultural life.

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0178gcj>, last accessed 23 Feb 2014

Arguably, there has never been a more relevant time post-WWII to take account of the experiences and attitudes of women married to servicemen. Thousands of families are currently being affected by the restructuring of the British Armed Forces to form a supposedly leaner and more agile institution, which will entail a 19% reduction in regular Army personnel and an overhaul of the reserve forces by 2020². Meanwhile, the community at the heart of this study includes a cohort of families who have experienced what in interviews emerged as a significant sea change in soldiers' – and no less importantly, their wives' – exposure to war and violence (both its preconditions and its aftermath). The post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in particular the 2003 invasion of Iraq, were frequently framed as landmark events with respect to understandings and approaches to soldiers' risk of death or disability and family separation or bereavement, as well as the media visibility and political economy of both wars. Combat losses in Iraq and Afghanistan have also highlighted the cause of military families, whereupon a recognition of the effects of military life on a soldier's family has extended the remit of family welfare provision, with the current UK government re-launching the Armed Forces Covenant (an official pact underlining Britain's duty of care to its armed forces) in May 2011, on the basis that "[f]amilies also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces" (UK Ministry of Defence 2011a, p.1).

While the timing of this study and my fieldwork connects it to the most recent war in Afghanistan however, its immediate setting comprises a British Army camp that is located neither at home nor in a far-away combat zone. This study focuses on an enclave of families living within a garrison on the outskirts of a provincial German city, with the regimental camp as its centre of gravity. Of particular significance to the present research therefore, is the most recent basing strategy developed as part of the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (UK HM Government 2010), which announced the drawdown of all British Army units from Germany by 2020 (UK HM Government 2010, p.28). The termination of the British Army's presence in Germany will entail the relocation of thousands of military personnel and their families to the UK. Against the backdrop of such institutional and social change (not least the simultaneous withdrawal of British troops from Afghanistan), this research might be interpreted as a final opportunity to capture the essence of a community the likes of which is shortly to become extinct. This might be argued to undermine the value

² See policy summary of the Armed forces and Ministry of Defence reform at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/providing-versatile-agile-and-battle-winning-armed-forces-and-a-smaller-more-professional-ministry-of-defence>, last accessed 9 April 2015

of studying a population whose numbers are rapidly shrinking, living out the final months of Britain's military presence in Germany in a time warp of Cold-War era houses, fuel tokens and ration cards. It is true that one of the risks of undertaking research on a community that might be said to represent the 'end of an era' is that it fixes them further into a particular place in history. What such a dismissal ignores however, is the significance of paying attention not only to what is new in processes of social change, but also what endures within such processes or indeed, what new modes of power have arisen to keep things the same. The timeliness of this research inheres in the convergence of multiple processes of social, institutional and political change. This in turn makes the experiences of women married to servicemen particularly relevant, given their ambiguous position at the points where many of those processes of change intersect.

Access and methods

Between January and July 2012 I lived on and around a British Army camp on the borders of a provincial city in Germany. The camp is home to a regiment whose headquarters have been located there and elsewhere in Germany for over a decade, and whose personnel live with their families in military housing nearby. My access to the regiment was negotiated via a member of my extended family, who joined the regiment as a junior soldier and served in the Army for over twenty-five years. With this family connection and my relative's continued support and advice, I was able to liaise directly with the regiment in Germany to request permission to carry out my research, communicate its aims and objectives and clarify the practical and ethical conditions under which it would be conducted. My unfunded, independent and small-scale PhD project was also classified as 'informal' in a meeting with a representative from the PR department of the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD), where the consent I had been granted from the regiment was upheld in acknowledgement of the autonomy of the regiment's commanding officer. In short, this study focuses on one particular, close-knit community, my relationship to which was forged through means that were distinctly personal rather than professional. The permission and trust that was granted me as a result requires that the identity of the regiment and those who were part of its community at that time, remain anonymous in this thesis. Not only does this mean that all names have been changed, some have been changed multiple times from one chapter to another, and I have not included extensive biographical details to contextualise each contributor's particular personal or professional situation. This reflects the fragility of confidentiality within such a small community and the difficulty of maintaining anonymity

when representing it. It is also symptomatic of an organisation that relies for its social order on so many structures of difference and distinction, and so many potential modes of identification. On a regimental level, these include its strong national affiliation, its location as part of a particular garrison, the kind of regiment it is (for example infantry, cavalry, artillery) and hierarchies such as rank within it. Any combination of these immediately narrows down the criteria for identifying the regiment. Therefore, particular aspects of its institutional identity (aspects that many within the regiment would describe as fundamental to the particular sub-culture that the regiment represents) are referred to in the abstract (for example, the nature of its operations in Afghanistan, its national and regional affiliations). Within the regiment and its social circuitry, even relatively formal details (such as the precise role or rank of a particular woman's husband or details about her employment status), very soon narrow down the criteria for identifying individual members of that community. This presents a challenge for writing up my research, and there is no doubt that some of the subtleties and nuances both of women's narratives and my own analysis have become lost in translation from fieldwork into a document that must remain accountable to those whom it represents. It is at this point however, that elements of my own ethnographic experience based on my fieldwork diary, are useful in conveying some of the specificities of experience that are limited by the requirement for anonymity elsewhere.

In a technical sense, the regiment as a unit constitutes my research setting and a practical cut-off point for a reasonably sized group of research participants, an accessible institutional and social structure, and also sets the parameters for what this research illustrates about the function and form of what I often heard referred to as the 'regimental family'. Accordingly, I restricted my research sample to women married to personnel in or attached to the host regiment. Over fifty interviews were conducted in total, which includes several follow-up interviews that were conducted towards the end of my stay with women whom I had first interviewed much earlier in the year. The sample also includes one servicewoman from among the very small number of female personnel serving in the regiment, two servicewomen from other units who were married to male members of the regiment, and ten interviews with servicemen. My principal point of contact with the regiment once fieldwork began was the regimental welfare office. The welfare office is an aspect of the unit's support structure that more than anything perhaps, encapsulates the blurriness of boundaries between the informal and the formal, the public and the private, the institution and the domestic sphere. For me, the welfare office fulfilled the role of what ethnographic

field study guides call a “gatekeeper” (O’Reilly 2005, p.91) and was crucial in providing a base for my research and helping me gain access to particular social networks.

These points regarding access also serve to underline one of the further limitations of this project, not only its particularity in time and space as I have outlined, but also its particularity within the reified organisational structure of the UK military, the British Army within it, and one single regiment of a particular type within that. Throughout this thesis I draw extensively on a range of literature and ideas that relate to the military institution more broadly, and in many cases rely on insights from the study of militaries in different national settings. My choice to retain the terms ‘military wives’ and ‘women married to servicemen’ alongside ‘Army wives’, reinforces the analytical connection I seek to make between the everyday experiences of the women I encountered, and the broader workings of military power writ large. At the same time, it must be stressed that ‘the military’, even within the UK, constitutes myriad sites, times and types of service, including conditions particular to the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Royal Navy for example. My findings in this thesis cannot claim to represent the experiences of women married to servicemen in such a diverse range of geographical and institutional settings. It must also be acknowledged that the experiences I document are forged in highly specific conditions that complicate the idea of any kind of unitary military culture (Soeters et al. 2006, Murray 1999). Although regimental identity can be understood as one particular facet of military culture in the British context (Winslow 1999, p.2), it is also necessary to acknowledge the organisational autonomy and cultural particularity of the regiment at the heart of this thesis, and not only in the sense that it set the boundaries of my research sample and access to participants. For example, my fieldwork coincided with a period when particular regiments within the British Army were under consideration for amalgamation. The importance of regimental history, culture and belonging, as well as the singular reputation of the regiment as it currently stood, was vociferously defended during this time. Meanwhile, its day-to-day significance continued to be materialised in anything from regimental ties to regimental mugs and legends about ‘regimental characters’, in which stories about my own family member also took their place. In this sense, the particularity of the cultural milieu in which my study was being carried out, was asserted to me in one form or other on a daily basis.

While I want to acknowledge this particularity here however, I also want to flag up a broader, and more critical perspective and one that is connected to ethnography as a

methodology. Critical ethnography (Madison 2005) provides a range of tools and a deconstructive capacity to question the apparent sanctity and exceptionality of military culture and the British Army Regiment within it, by challenging the “regimes of knowledge and social practices” that attempt to define and determine institutional belonging (Madison 2005, p.5). Ethnography facilitates proximity, duration and depth of exposure for an assessment of the everyday lives of research participants. Working close-up and in-situ, it thrives on the details and minutiae that make up the particular. It also yields particularly interesting insights into institutions such as the military because of its capacity to get beneath the surface of a deceptively formal social order and uncover the messier, informal and more surprising power relations that work both with and against its apparently rigid structure. Where I believe this kind of ethnographic research also makes a valuable contribution to understandings of military culture however, is in shining a spotlight on some basic assumptions about its exceptionality, its necessity, and the effects it produces. It is in this sense that critical research can begin to unpick the ideas that have come to be taken for granted – in academic thinking, in policy and service provision, or just within and among Army communities – such that particular issues and alternative ways of addressing them have become invisible.

Participant observation, facilitated by my decision to live on and around the camp and exemplified by my experience of the *Fitness Fiesta*, is a foundational part of an ethnographic approach. Such methods have not always made it easy to keep track of the researcher in the research however, the traditional aim being to merge with one’s surroundings to the degree that full acceptance by a community is believed to reduce the “reactivity” (Davies 1999, p.73) of one’s social scientific findings. Especially in relation to research that is concerned with the negotiation of everyday relationships of power, feminist scholars have advocated for a reflexive approach to the ways in which research is written up as well as conducted (Stanley 1992), and emphasise the need to resist “mastery” (Alcoff 1991, p.22) over the stories that research is used to tell. Feminist approaches within disciplines such as sociology have emphasised that the messier ties of everyday social relations should be treated as the object of sociological enquiry themselves, without the impulse to tidy up loose ends and set social relations into twinned pairings of binary opposites (Smart 2009). Furthermore, work on reflexive approaches to researching the military more specifically, has revealed the complex web of power produced by the intersection of gender, rank and class from within and beyond the military as an institution, such that researchers must take account of their

insider/outsider status (Higate and Cameron 2006). In the next section of this chapter therefore, I explore some of my own experiences of living with the regiment in order to introduce the spatial and social environment of my study, lay the foundation for some of the themes that will inform my analysis and make clear the methodological insights and adjustments they precipitated.

Nationality, race and (in)visibilities of difference

Spatially and temporally, my fieldwork was somewhat traditionally delineated by a discrete period living among a community overseas. While the overseas setting of the camp where I lived is central to my analysis in this thesis, unlike many studies of military bases overseas (for example, Cooley 2008 and Lutz 2009), the economic, environmental and political impact of this military presence upon the host society is beyond the remit of this study. That is not to say that by focusing on a largely British community abroad, I avoid the othering practices that come with ethnography's traditional focus on 'other' cultures (see Clifford and Marcus 1986, and for a feminist response Abu-Lughod 1991). For example, one might argue that the German town and its local population become instrumentalised as a foil for the experiences and reflections of my (largely non-German) research participants. Thus 'Germany' becomes something of an empty signifier, invisibilised as a generic 'other'. Another category of 'otherness' often active (but not always acknowledged) in traditional ethnography is also largely invisibilised in this thesis: the question of race and ethnic difference. Here the majority white population of both the regimental community and a fairly ethnically homogenous German suburb serve to invisibilise race as an active component in both my relations with my research participants, and their relations with their 'host' society. Between ideas about British and German culture and society for example, race emerges as a salient factor in the smoothing over of other, less visible differences (not least the history of two World Wars), creating the superficial impression of sameness (and indeed, homogeneity) rather than difference. In a similar way, race also functions as a marker of sameness for me as a researcher on the 'inside' of the regimental community. To some degree, my whiteness can be seen as a visible, normative foundation for blending in among the majority white, British regiment, where my racial identity ensured that I remained knowable while a range of other identities were in flux around my interactions with the camp's community. Thus the invisibilised properties of race, ethnic homogeneity and 'sameness' might be argued to have permitted other variations and questions regarding my social personhood to circulate more ambiguously. Race is interesting for the silence that surrounded it when compared to how

people's ideas and speculations regarding my social class, heterosexuality and certain aspects of my physical appearance and their implications for my 'feminine' status frequently became the object of either 'banter', earnest conversation or various avowals and disavowals on my own and others' part. By contrast, the self-evidence of my whiteness, the common denominator of race, was possibly the one thing that might be said to have remained constant and unquestioned across the field of social relations.

Although this might seem to free my ethnographic practice of the potent dynamics of racial difference, this is by no means due to the fact that race is 'absent' as I have discussed. Nor is it the case that race and its impact on people's material and social resources is not a salient issue within the British Armed Forces. My focus on the homogeneity of this particular community and setting for example, glosses over the multi-racial dynamics of the contemporary military institution more broadly, the experiences of black and minority ethnic service personnel and the considerable number of foreign and commonwealth (F&C) troops currently serving in the British Army. In comparison to recent in-depth studies such as Vron Ware's *Military Migrants* (2012), my own research includes just two interviews with Fijian women who moved to the UK and then to Germany as spouses of F&C personnel. It was imperative for me to include some of these experiences in this thesis in order to represent some of the particular dynamics of national and ethnic identity that shaped the community, and some individuals' experiences within it. In contrast to the dynamics surrounding my own racial identity however, this approach might be argued to reproduce the hypervisibility of F&C members of the community as a placeholder for 'cultural difference' and military policies on equality and diversity. Critical race theory has illustrated that "when subjects are hypervisibilised, they remain invisible as social beings: they are not recognised as complex, legitimate, participatory subjects or citizens' (Amar 2011, p.305). Although the experiences and attitudes of the Fijian women I interviewed are represented throughout this thesis and do not always pertain explicitly to race, my analysis of their experiences is relatively limited and cannot be taken as representative, which would require more expansive research parameters to address.

In and out of the regiment

As an organising structure and container for the local community as well as my research sample, what might be called 'regimental participation' had a considerable effect on my ability to include a wide range of attitudes and experiences in my study. Although I sought a

balance of viewpoints from across social relations of class, age and ethnicity for example, the intersection of these factors with regimental identity and institutional ideas about belonging proved a significant constraint. As the welfare office warned me repeatedly when I arrived on camp, a considerable number of wives did not seek to involve themselves in the life of the regiment and some sought to avoid it entirely. On the rare occasions when I met such women, this standpoint of having 'opted out' of regimental belonging was often asserted to me point-blank and somewhat defensively. A variant of this attitude was more broadly expressed when discussing informed consent with many interviewees. In response to my assurances about confidentiality and anonymity, many women made clear that they did not care who knew if they had been interviewed or if the welfare office or regiment found out about their views. These narrower, institutionally-specific axes of belonging – the idea of being part of or outside the regimental community – shaped my research sample on a more esoteric level therefore, namely the difficulty of reaching women who chose to have nothing to do with regimental life and felt no social obligation, inclination or interest towards the research of somebody interested in exactly that.

In the process of conducting my research, some concerns about my presence and interest in the regiment were raised by women married to servicemen, which provides a further insight into the regiment's complex politics of belonging. One challenging occasion required the intervention of the welfare office on my behalf. The ease with which I was invited into a particular social circle when I arrived on camp is indicative of a community that is used to a high turnover of officer-level personnel in particular, who are rotated to serve with regiments for postings of two years a time. The result is a community and social scene that is founded on a kind of open-ness and a capacity to expand and contract fluidly, welcoming new members with relative ease. Early on in my fieldwork, I was pleased and flattered to have been invited to a dinner party at the house of one of the women whom I had got to know so far. The day after the dinner party however, a member of the welfare staff casually took me aside and mentioned that it might be a good idea to send out another email informing people about my research. Someone had been to see him and explained that my inclusion in the dinner party had actually caused some women to cancel at the last moment due to concerns about what my research actually entailed and more specifically, 'my agenda'. The implication seemed to be that this group of friends and acquaintances would not be able to speak freely if I was there, as if I had slipped in pretending to be just another

officer's wife³. In fact, I had spoken very openly about my research during the evening, explaining some of the ideas I wanted to investigate and some of the feminist principles on which it was based. Moreover, I had enjoyed the stimulating conversation and debate as some of the women challenged my ideas and offered their opinions. The source of the complaint was irrelevant then and remains so in this analysis. What is interesting however, is the way in which it was interpreted and relayed back to me through a lens that combines rank, class and education, along with an odd elision of gender where women's own interests are conflated with their husbands' career. When the welfare staff attempted to delicately explain the nature of the complaint against my presence, the group of women with whom I had been socialising (all of them married to officers in the regiment whom it was pointed out, had all been to university like me) were argued to be more invested in the career progression of their husbands, more savvy as to the politics of military promotions and were thus more likely to 'ask questions'.

This incident, quite awkward for me personally, precipitated two adjustments to my methodological approach regarding the regimental community. The next day, an email was sent out re-informing the welfare office email list (comprising most of the regiment's spouses) about my project, explaining my presence and making clear its boundaries, specifically stating that I would be joining in with general community life to undertake participant observation and explaining what this involved. The email also offered the opportunity for anybody not wanting to be associated with my project to 'opt out' of all contact and inclusion by informing the welfare office of their wishes in full confidence. More than this however, the incident served as a useful warning of the degree to which I was being absorbed into socialising with particular groups, namely the spouses of officers, which potentially risked jeopardising my ability to access and mix with a broad range of different social groups within the community. Indeed, in the first flush of fieldwork, fraught with personal and professional insecurities, the need to forge whatever networks I could, concealed the degree to which these networks were dependent on my educational background, the way I spoke, dressed and my adherence to and adoption of particular social

³ This was indeed what most women assumed at the beginning of my time on camp when I was invited to a range of general coffee mornings and other events etc. They would ask if I was new to the 'patch' and I would say no, that I was a PhD student doing a project with the regiment. They might reply with interest and ask what it was about, in reply to which I would be obliged to say 'Well, it is about women married to servicemen living overseas'. The moment would seem to hang in the air between us as people registered that I had effectively said, 'You'. Still, this mistaken identity – the degree to which I seemed like another military wife – ensured an early opportunity to break the ice, explain my presence, and it opened up a lot of good opportunities to talk further about my project.

conventions. I had been unaware of the degree to which these assumptions about my place in a particular social order were shaping my access to the community. For example, I had been told about the existence of gym classes that I could attend on Wednesdays and Fridays, and which might be a good way to meet some of the women married to servicemen who ran and attended these classes. I had been attending them for a few weeks, when during an interview, someone commented with a knowing nod that I was going to the “officers’ wives’ gym class”. The “other wives’ class”, she said, was on Thursdays and Tuesdays. It is interesting that when I asked the instructors of both classes about this apparent division, the distinction was flatly and strenuously denied.

Public and private spheres, trust and intimacy

Most of my interviews with women married to servicemen were conducted in the private, domestic environment of their homes. This spatial distinction allowed me to physically assert my independence from the regiment by detaching the interview process from the ‘official’ setting of the camp and welfare office. It also established a degree of trust, intimacy and helped to maintain anonymity. That is not to say that all interviews were always ‘private’ *per se*. Although I took the confidentiality and anonymity of my interviews very seriously, many women spoke openly to their friends or in public about our interview, or offered to be interviewed in front of others. Often there were young children present during interviews, some were conducted jointly with husbands, and occasionally if more convenient, interviews were conducted somewhere on camp (in a borrowed office during a particularly nervous hour waiting for a woman’s husband to return from Afghanistan for example). Broadly speaking, conducting interviews in women’s homes allowed me to establish a good level of rapport. It also provided a good starting point for questions about women’s attitudes and ideas regarding the gendered division of space between the camp and the Army housing ‘patch’ where they lived. Furthermore, it helped me understand the spatial arrangement of the community as I began to cycle round the local area on home visits, my to-ing and fro-ing a physical manifestation of my mobile position between the camp and the private realm of family life.

As I got to know particular families, my own spatial mobility extended into a period of time living on various different housing patches myself. As the regiment returned from its tour in Afghanistan and members took Post Operational Tour Leave (POTL), I was offered several opportunities to housesit for friends and acquaintances with pets, starting with two goldfish,

then guinea pigs and finally a dog, before politely declining to look after a horse. These housesitting duties provided me with considerable insight into the dynamics of living within the community, such as grasping the orderly conventions of German recycling or realising the complete lack of privacy afforded by the layout and low fencing of the housing estates⁴. These are 'trivial' observations perhaps, but housesitting provided some important insights about the gendered dynamics that blur public and private space within the regimental community. On one particular day for example, I had helped a neighbour with her newborn baby, and on the way back from that evening's event I was invited into the garden of another woman I knew for a late-night drink. As my field diary attests, I was feeling quite chipper:

It has been a weekend of baking. While I took Sophie for a walk this afternoon, Sarah baked scones. We joked about the clichés while eating them. [...] I have been contemplating whether or not to take some tarts over to Meg and David's to say thanks for having me over for a drink last night. Maybe I will do that. I am conscious of the cliché, and of this all being my performance of domesticity but really it's just nice to be included in something that feels larger and brighter than one small khaki-painted room. [...] I have, I think, actually had a lovely weekend.

My giddy susceptibility to social conventions here illustrates an interesting tension and highlights the degree to which my spatial and social mobility as a methodological resource was deeply gendered. Through the domestic practices of everyday life I adopted while housesitting⁵, and through my research methods such as conducting interviews with women in their homes, I was actively complicit in reproducing a gendered division of private and public space. I divided my time between the feminised zones of coffee mornings, women's homes, the welfare office, book club and all-women dinner parties on one side, and all-male dinners in the sergeants' mess, interviews with servicemen in public spaces and the institutional drabness of my barrack room on the other.

Yet there are important blurrings within this divide that I can still only just make out, they exist at the edges of this research and in many ways lie beyond what I can account for here. Such glimpses were brief and intimate: the home-making, personal lives of the men who

⁴ Although, the lack of privacy is not just due to the fact that the German designed houses on the MOD estates have low wire fences (and basements, a design feature that is seen in a positive light, allowing plenty of room for the storage of Army kit). The lack of privacy must also in part be attributed to the mobility of Army life: many families refrain from planting shrubs or hedges because they know they will not be in the house long enough for them to grow. If other families invest in putting up their own fences, they know that they must be temporary enough to be pulled down to restore the garden's original appearance as part of military regulations when they move out.

⁵ It is perhaps necessary to add here that I don't usually consider baking one of my leisurely pursuits.

lived in the mess, signified by a bottle of scented shampoo and luxurious bath foam left in the bathroom on my corridor; or my last evening on camp when I joined a couple of soldiers in one of their rooms to say goodbye, noting the scatter cushions and wall hangings, offered a glass of Robinsons Lemon Barley while one of them remarked that I could have come by to watch telly at any time. Sometimes this strange interzone was indicated by what I was excluded from rather than involved in, painfully epitomised by the awkward question that came up persistently towards the end of my stay, of whether or not I was going to the officers' summer ball (fraught because of my status as an oddly singular hanger-on, especially when the all-female socialising of the deployment converted back to social groups consisting of husbands and wives). These stolen glimpses of something else going on, whether constituted by my inclusion or exclusion from different aspects of community life, hint at the slippery, elliptical relationship between the public and private spheres and the different levels of intimacy and domesticity that surround and in many ways, are central to, regimental life overseas.

This also represents the uncomfortable methodological condition by which there is always, of course, something that remains obscured or is just too difficult – too personal, on both sides – to transcend. More encouragingly however, it also demonstrates that there is no singular line by which the public and private lives of the regimental community is separated and defined, rather that different aspects of 'public' and 'private' life clash, combine and overlap in different places and at different times, in other words are always being remade, to form myriad positionalities inside and outside. If anything, the methodological constraints of my fieldwork risk reproducing a false divide between different spaces and times of Army life, a pitfall produced by my position between the camp and the housing patch, between men and women, and between different groups and sub-groups of military wives. What these furtive, sideways observations convey however, is the constant need to question any clean, uncomplicated assertion of an immutable divide between different spaces, spheres and aspects of life in or around the regiment.

Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised around four central empirical chapters that describe different but interlinked aspects of women's day-to-day negotiations with the military institution.

In the first empirical chapter, I consider women's international migration with the military institution, as well as the other overlapping and internal circuits of mobility that shape their lives. I explore a number of discourses through which this mobility and its effect on women's labour and social personhood is normalised. While one set of discourses relies on the sexual division of labour, the family and women's role as wives and mothers, another relies on women's conversion of geographical mobility into a kind of social mobility. I argue that military social hierarchies within these serve to produce the paradox of women's simultaneous feelings of 'moving on' and being 'held back'. While women migrating with the regiment might not transcend the boundaries of the national military institution, their ambiguous position weaving within and between militarised hierarchies within it, including their dual citizenship as both military and civilian subjects, offers an alternative measure for women as agents of those mobilities.

In the second empirical chapter, I consider military participation and social cohesion from the perspective of women married to servicemen. Specifically, I explore women's negotiations of the identities and social relations produced through the structure and culture of the British Army regiment. I take account of the multiple modes through which women participate in, opt out of, and understand the terms of their involvement in the regiment's day-to-day activities. In many cases, I find that women's material and emotional support for the regiment is channelled through the family as a twinned institution through which regimental belonging gains its meaning and impact. Here I look at women's processes of translation and their reinterpretation of the meaning of soldiering as a form of labour and its connections to citizenship and state power. This illuminates some of the ways in which women personalise and domesticate the social and cultural values of regimental belonging, asserting the significance of family ties and carving out a space for the recognition of their labour and privileged knowledge as gendered guardians of this emotional heartland. That is not to say that the family represents a neutral or value-free sphere that is somehow cut off or preserved from the public life of the regiment, however. The messy imbrication of personal and political, public and private that regimental belonging represents reaches its apotheosis in the hybrid form of the 'regimental family', a cultural production that I argue is fraught with failure, miscommunication, desire and disappointment.

In the third empirical chapter I consider the multiple boundaries of difference and distinction through which women negotiate their social personhood within the category

'military wife'. One of the most significant foils for the construction of women's identities is rank, which I argue intersects with gender and class to shape women's identities in particularly complex ways. I document a number of social and material conditions that constitute the presence of rank in women's everyday lives. These include the circulation of social stereotypes as well as expectations surrounding women's voluntary labour, patterns of mobility, the spatial organisation of the community and military-organisational discipline. Next, I explore the productive power of rank in ways that extend far beyond these conditions and produce effects through other vectors of power that call into question the division between military and civilian identities. The mutual imbrication of rank with gender and class can serve to camouflage the military institution's disciplinary control over women married to servicemen. However, rank can also serve as an institutionally-sanctioned mode for normalising and perpetuating gendered and classed divisions. Despite the scope and depth of rank as a multi-valent technology of power, women's everyday negotiations with rank demonstrate its relational nature. While hierarchies of rank undoubtedly produce compliance based on recognition and assimilation therefore, they are also subject to disavowal and disidentification, or can be strategically adapted by women to define and appropriate their particular place within a social order.

In the fourth and final empirical chapter of this thesis, I explore women's experiences of a period of deployment, and the continuity and simultaneity between the combat zone and the home. I begin by illustrating some of the ways in which the meaning and significance of Afghanistan as the location of women's husbands, and a perceived locus of war, is socially constructed 'back home' in Germany. I argued that the social construction of Afghanistan constitutes a kind of presence whereby women married to servicemen in one sense come to inhabit that space. Focusing on war and violence through its more diffuse effects serves to trouble the boundaries through which war is confined to a far-away place, and foregrounds the role of military wives in keeping that presence at bay. I argue that paying attention to the temporal register of an operational tour, particularly the rupture of violent events, illustrates the continuation and simultaneity of war in multiple places at the same time. Next, I move beyond those occasions where the fluctuations of global politics puncture everyday time, to explore the far quieter, subtler register of an operational tour as it is lived through the daily routines and domestic practices of women married to servicemen. By paying attention to a temporal and a spatial zone that rarely figures in assessments of military force, I show how women married to servicemen work to absorb and assuage the

effects of that force. This reveals women's ambiguous relationship to war and violence as well as the role of the sexual division of labour, and a host of gendered binaries within it, in sustaining military power. At the same time, women's experiences of the instability of the operational tour and the spectres of violence that haunt its domestic times and spaces, reveals the fragility of any divide between the combat zone and the home, war and peace.

The empirical chapters of this thesis present a range of examples from my fieldwork and analysis based on a broad selection of ideas drawn from gender studies, migration, ethnography, military sociology, cultural studies, political geography as well as international relations. The conclusion addresses the question of how to understand the agency of women married to servicemen, and what these ideas in turn might indicate about militarisation as an analytic. In order to define and contextualise these questions in terms of current scholarship and my contribution in this thesis, I want to proceed with a review of literature that pertains to the focus of this study. In the chapter that follows, I survey recent social scientific research on women married to servicemen as well as research on military bases, particularly those located overseas. This dual focus sets the parameters for my analysis in the empirical chapters that follow, but also and no less significantly, it helps to locate that analysis in the precise spatial and temporal context of my research setting. First, I explore what recent research tells us about wives' labour, their identities and social personhood, and the narratives and affective ties that bind these together and reproduce their relationship to military power. The review draws attention to the lack of critical research on women married to servicemen in particular, at the same time as highlighting the limitations of gender research on military institutions and what I argue is its masculine bias. Next, I extend the grounds for considering the experiences of military wives by exploring the literature on military bases overseas, particularly for what it illuminates about the imbrication of military power (and therefore, those involved in its reproduction) with gender, nationality and war. By combining two such bodies of scholarship and exploring the paradoxes and productive tensions that emerge, I connect the question of military wives' agency to the question of their militarisation, and how we conceive of the everyday operation of military power.

Literature Review

Joining the regiment

When I was first introduced to the regiment through a member of my own extended family, I was given a decorative wristband of the kind that have recently become popular through charities like Help For Heroes⁶. It was like a token of welcome and belonging as well as an invitation to declare my support. Standing awkwardly in an office with the Welfare Officer, I wasn't quite sure what to do with it. I slipped it into my bag. Unworn, the wristband soon assumed the status of an anthropological artefact: it travelled home with me and sat on my desk for a while, one of those objects one cannot use but cannot throw away. It wasn't just that I felt queasy about displaying this instant token of support for the military and presumably, its aims and methods. More than this, I didn't quite feel I had earned the right to become part of the regimental family so quickly and so easily. In other words, I didn't feel I belonged, and to wear the wristband would therefore be at best a presumption on my part.

The significance of the regimental wristband as a starting point for my analysis in this chapter is for what it symbolises about the armed forces community, specifically the ways in which military operations ripple through people's social and family networks. Bearing the colours and insignia of the regiment, on one level the wristbands signify peculiarly localised patterns of support and belonging. Sold by soldiers sent out on fundraising duties to shopping malls and supermarkets in local areas around its UK headquarters, the wristbands tag the geographical catchment area of the regiment's regional affiliation in the UK. Far away in Germany or Afghanistan however, the wristbands are also worn by soldiers and some of their spouses, as a reminder of the heightened circumstances that demanded a public expression of support perhaps. The wristbands also illustrate the centrality of family networks to the armed forces because they are sold to raise money for the regiment's own charitable fund, through which it provides financial aid for soldiers and their families on a loosely defined, informal basis at its own discretion.

I was given my own wristband when I attended the regiment's briefing for the UK-based families of service personnel, the summer before it deployed to Afghanistan. Undertaken at

⁶ See: http://shop.helpforheroes.org.uk/categories/Supporter_Items_/, last accessed 11 April 2015.

its own expense and in addition to standard briefings for spouses back in Germany, the regiment held UK briefings for the wider families of service personnel. Here I met parents and siblings of some of those about to be deployed. This more expansive attitude to family welfare is certainly in line with recent military policy to support - and garner support from - a broader network of family members than soldiers' spouses. As defined by the Armed Forces Covenant (UK Ministry of Defence 2011a, p.4), the family of service personnel constitutes "spouses, civil partners, and children for whom they are responsible, but can where appropriate extend to parents, unmarried partners and other family members". Documents such as this indicate a progressive, inclusive organisation using technically and politically correct terms such as 'spouse' and 'partner' to include military husbands and same-sex relationships in family policies. Looking at the management of military family welfare in practice however, helps to question the diversity implicit in this discourse. For example, the institution of marriage remains a central lens through which military family life is understood. Marriage is the single administrative criterion for inclusion in the yearly multiple-choice survey undertaken by the MOD to monitor the quality of family life for example⁷. Published openly for the first time in 2010, the *Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey* (FAMCAS) (UK Ministry of Defence 2011b, p.15) includes only those "identified as married [...] on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system". The MOD does not disaggregate its data according to the gender of military spouses, underlining the fact that women still constitute the majority of civilian partners of service personnel (Werber and Harrell 2007, p.411). Yet the FAMCAS report (UK Ministry of Defence 2011b) reveals relatively little about the actual lived experiences and attitudes of military spouses, with quantitative findings being divided into technical categories relating to accommodation, living conditions, health and dental care, childcare and education, deployment and employment (*ibid*).

A more detailed focus on the experiences of military spouses has been undertaken by research institutes in the US, often funded by the US Department of Defense (Bourg and Segal 1999; Little and Hisnanick 2007; Westhuis et al. 2006; Castaneda and Harrell 2007; Bell et al. 1999; Hogan and Seifert 2009). Research into military family welfare in the UK is often framed in terms of families' impact upon military effectiveness (see for example Mulligan et

⁷ Although it is essential to note that the Army Families Federation also undertake regular surveys through social media, have supported PhD research into military family welfare and compile their own regular reports for the information of families themselves, and the Army chain of command. See for example the 2014 Families' Concerns Report. See: http://www.aff.org.uk/linkedfiles/aff/aff_famcon_web.pdf, last accessed 11 April 2015.

al. 2012) and is often undertaken through the lens of soldiers' mental health (Greene et al. 2010). In such areas, an instrumental perspective defines the limits of research that must justify its usefulness to its funders, with military wives' experiences implicitly subsumed beneath concerns for institutional effectiveness, military readiness or the retention of service personnel. As Enloe (2000, p.158) has argued, it is here that the social scientist joins the nation state in the reproduction of military wives as a "political problem", where state-funded research might be said to re-militarise its subject and co-opt social science as an apparatus of control⁸. US-led research does however pay attention to broader issues affecting military family life, such as migration or intimate partner violence (Cooke and Speirs 2005; Castaneda and Harrell 2007; Little and Hisnanick 2007; Erez and Bach 2003; Rosen et al. 2003), and much of this takes into account factors that precede or extend further than the military and constitute women's 'civilian' identities, including their employment status, educational background or factors such as race and ethnicity and their impact on women's access to welfare services.

Such research documents a wide range of issues affecting women married to servicemen and argues for further work on the constraints that determine their everyday choices. However, the majority stops short of a more in-depth, critical exploration of the causes of such issues and the structural, cultural and discursive pathways through which they become embedded in everyday life. Furthermore, social science, epidemiological and psychological research on women married to servicemen often fails to make the link between their experiences, identities or feelings and the operation of military power writ large as a national and global apparatus of state power. As a result, the experiences and identities of women married to servicemen remain obscured by easy stereotypes as perpetuated by the British media⁹ and populist accounts that uphold the value systems of the military institution (see for example Stanford 2011). Meanwhile, critical scholarship on military power within disciplines such as IR, sociology and political geography has largely ignored the experiences of this significant majority population, whose feminization in light of assumptions about the

⁸ Although Enloe (2000, p.161) also wagers that the 'problem' of military wives is less pronounced in Britain because of the provision of the welfare state, while in the US military families constitute some of the lowest paid working families in the country (Little and Hisnanick 2007, p.550). That said, it has been argued that "soldiers live in something that bears a strong family resemblance to a social welfare state" (see Lutz 2001 and also Gifford 2006 on "the camouflaged safety net").

⁹ See previous example of *The Choir – Military Wives* and additionally, *The Sun* newspaper's campaign to sell the Help for Heroes "SWAGs" (wives and girlfriends – a reproduction of the acronym popularly used to describe footballers' wives and girlfriends) 2010 naked calendar. See: http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/campaigns/our_boys/2620210/Our-Boys-WAGs-pose-for-shoot.html, last accessed 26 April 2011

military as a masculinist, male-dominated institution, has no doubt contributed to their invisibility. With this, an important opportunity to understand how military power operates has also been missed. These are the twin empirical and analytical oversights that this research seeks to address.

The aim of this research is to analyse the experiences of military wives in a critical mode that is alert to the complexities and contingencies of military power and its effect on everyday life, at the same time as it seeks to connect women's personal experiences to the machinations of national and international political power. The objective is to assess the depth and scope of military power with regards to a subject whose empirical locus is assumed to be the private or domestic sphere (with the attendant assumption that this sphere does not 'count' in international relations for example). While my research follows and builds upon studies of the stressors, coping strategies and continuous attitudes (UK Ministry of Defence 2011b) of military spouses, it goes beyond the question of family welfare support or the provision thereof. Instead, it engages with broader questions of gendered and militarized social relations and the ways in which they shape women's material resources, labour, identities, feelings and relationships. In the first half of this chapter I review in further detail some of the literature on women married to servicemen and identify several areas that are worthy of attention, constituting as they do the battleground for women's negotiations with military power. These include women's reproductive labour and the institution of marriage, the structural and cultural factors that shape women's identities and social personhood, and the intimate relationships and affective ties that bind all of these together. The second half of this chapter broadens the context for my consideration of women's experiences in this thesis by reviewing the scholarship that connects my research setting, the military base overseas, to analytics of gender, nation, war and global politics. It is against this background that the particular conditions for my study of military wives in this thesis emerges, namely their position as geographically and socially mobile subjects, whose movements map the fluidity and contingency of military power.

Married to the military?

It is perhaps easy to forget that the 'military wife' is a compound figure of both military and marital status, whose subjectivity is doubly defined by two heteronormative institutions. This pluralises the impact of institutional structures on women's (and men's) experiences to

include the power relations inscribed through marriage as well as the military (Eran-Jona 2011). The pivotal role of women's reproductive labour as secured and maintained through marriage is implicit in much of the research on military family policy. For example, the concept of "greedy institutions" (Segal 1986, p.9) has been used to argue that the family and the military exist in an inherent relationship of competition (Segal 1986, p.32), a formulation that hints at military wives' position between the two, although this is rarely the main focus of such research. Recent studies argue that there is growing resistance to the idea of "total devotion" to either institution (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.634), as evidenced in the increasing number of women married to servicemen seeking to participate in the labour force and cultural trends that call for men to participate more actively in family roles (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.634). The idea of a more balanced distribution of productive and reproductive labour results in a policy model that advocates closer degrees of co-operation between military and family life:

Family supportive policies and practices are important ways for the military institution to send a message to soldiers and family members that the family is no longer viewed as a competing outside influence. When the organisation is willing to define commitment as something other than a limited resource by supporting family roles, individuals are normatively free to sustain mutually high commitments to both work and family. (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.648)

Bourg and Segal advocate for the creation of social norms that produce subjects who are 'free' to accept the conflation of the military and the family, and to acquiesce to an expansive model of commitment that benefits both institutions at the same time. As well as the material remuneration that a military institution offers its personnel and their families (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.637), the union between the military and the family is secured by the extent to which a subject "*identifies with* and is willing to work towards organisational goals and values" due to a "sense of calling and duty" to both the military and one's family simultaneously and as mutually beneficent (*ibid*). It is this compound mixture of martial and family values that prompts what Bourg and Segal call an "affective commitment" (*ibid*). Reformulated from the perspective of women married to servicemen, the "affective commitment" required to bridge the gap between the military and the family might be argued to depend, as Enloe (2000, p.158) has argued, "on whether a woman married to a soldier will invest her talents and aspirations – and her pride and satisfaction – in the militarized career of her husband". Thus women married to servicemen might be understood to be the principal agents of Bourg and Segal's "expansion" model of resources (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.648), whose labour is invested in smoothing the rupture of Army

life, and whose experiences of marital and martial duty blur the boundaries of what it is to be a wife and what it is to serve in the military.

While it highlights the mutual imbrication of the family and the military as institutions, Bourg and Segal's (1999, p.638) research does not foreground the role of marriage and women's reproductive labour in facilitating and maintaining this connection, focusing rather on Army family policies and unit leader practices. More grounded, bottom-up research on military wives has explored various forms of reproductive labour that are incorporated into military management structures however. Margaret Harrell (2001, p.59) lists a range of "Traditional Officer Spouse Expectations" that include: "Institutional Activities; Morale, Public Relations and Ceremonial Duties; Mentoring, Development and Role Preservation; Entertaining and Socialising; and Unit Readiness Support" (*ibid*). Such responsibilities are emphasised as strictly voluntary in Army handbooks (Harrell 2001, p.70), and yet can be taken into direct account in their husbands' Officer Evaluation Report (*ibid*). As well as documenting the investment of military wives' labour in military-institutional objectives however, it is also necessary to explore some of the less material factors fuelling the process by which labour that is officially 'voluntary' is transformed into what Harrell calls "compelled duties" (Harrell 2001, p.68). Not only does this entail a closer investigation of the ways in which the institutions of the military, the family and marriage work together to shape the constraints and opportunities for women's material bargains with the military institution. It also entails a more in-depth focus on the value and meanings that combine to shape the social personhood of women married to servicemen as part of a militarised social order, and the gender roles and identities it supports or subverts.

Gendered difference and discipline

Many scholars have used gender as a lens to explore the ways in which military power is productive of particular identities and social hierarchies. As Enloe argues:

Ideas about gender, not just about spoushood, have led to the belief that the military spouse can jeopardise military readiness because she is a woman, and as a woman, as a 'feminine' creature, she naturally puts her emotional attachments and loyalty to her children ahead of her husband's professional occupation or the abstract notion of patriotism. (Enloe 2000, p.182)

Gender as an analytic has been especially well used to explore the social construction of military masculinities among service personnel, peacekeepers, humanitarian forces and private security companies (see for example Duncanson 2009 and Chisholm 2013). Scholars

have also argued for the plurality of gendered identities and troubled binaries of masculine and feminine, from warriors to “soft clerks” (Higate 2003) and a range of homosexual or homosocial practices within military institutions (Higate 2012, Belkin 2012). Such research is invaluable for highlighting the politics of militarised identities. However, the study of women’s experiences and femininities as at least co-constitutive of masculinities and men’s experiences, let alone in their own right and for their own sake, has been less popular, and relatively few of these studies are concerned to address the social construction of femininity as anything more than an implicit comparator, masculinity’s constitutive other. My point is not that women, and occasionally femininity as an analytic (Titunik 2008, Sjoberg 2007), are entirely absent from studies of the military (for some examples see Iskra et al. 2002, Woodward and Winter 2006, Lobasz 2008, Taber 2011). Scholars have been quick to explore the construction of gendered identities with respect to servicewomen in the US and British Armed Forces, signified by potent figures such as Lynndie England (Holland 2009) for example. Yet in these too, masculinity and men persist as the dominant theoretical lens, which configures women’s experiences and identities as a mere extraction. My empirical focus on women married to servicemen in this thesis is an attempt to address the relative paucity of research on women, and within this ‘civilian’ women married to servicemen, in the context of the British armed forces. That said, the stereotypes surrounding military femininities, and which inhere in the same cultural and material conditions, must also be interrogated.

Scholars such as Harrell (2000, 2001) and Sue Jervis (2008, 2011) have explored the conditions and experiences that help to maintain stereotypes such as the Army officer’s wife or, at the opposite end of the social hierarchy, “big-haired trailer park babes with too many children” (Harrell 2000, p.12). In *Invisible Women*, Harrell (2000, p.106) faithfully reproduces three American women’s narratives based on life-history interviews to illustrate the ways in which “they both support and challenge the class-based stereotypes of junior enlisted spouses”. While the purpose of this thesis is likewise to document and record the narratives of women married to servicemen in the British context, my analysis goes further to critically deconstruct such stereotypes in order to understand how they gain, retain or lose their discursive power, both as they are socially constructed and subjectively renegotiated. To do this, requires an analysis beyond gender alone, one that can begin to account for the myriad vectors of power that shape women’s access to resources and complicate the ways in which they negotiate their social personhood. Research has shown that culturally-specific ideas

about family life for example, shape the “resources and the meaning that a family attributes to a stressful event such as military deployment” (Westhuis et al. 2006, p.587). A further US-based study found that the importance of community participation to African-American families was a more significant motivation for coping with military life than for families of caucasian background, who were found to be motivated more often by the “opportunity to achieve personal goals” (L’Abate 1998 and McGoldrick 1993 in Westhuis et al. 2006, p.595). Bourg and Segal (1999, p.646) offer several explanations for the ways in which military families in the US are shaped by socio-economic factors such as the underemployment of black working class men in the civilian sector, which means that the income and job security of a military role exempts them from otherwise high family role expectations with respect to paternal labour. The history of race relations in the US military is also considered by Enloe (2000, p.187) to be a significant factor in the experience of American military wives, whom she points out “have become a more culturally and racially diverse group”. Though the history of institutionalised racism in the US might indicate that African-American, Hispanic and Asian-American wives of military personnel have had to cope with an “exaggerated form” (Enloe 2000, p.184) of the problems facing white American military wives, Enloe (*ibid*) also highlights the relative advantages of the US military’s more recent regulation and reduction of racist structures: “That is, we should not assume, in the United States or in any country, that the wives of soldiers who come from groups marginalised in the larger society will automatically be the most alienated of military wives”.

Such research reinforces the fundamental point that factors shaping the experiences and identities of women married to servicemen do not inhere solely within the military institution. Nor should changes in a broader society be assumed to translate faithfully or consistently into a military institutionalised form (for spouses’ perceptions of military culture as ‘lagging behind’ developments in society more broadly, see Higate and Cameron, 2004). Public policy and social change based on broader social movements for gay and women’s rights in countries such as the US and UK for example, have made visible the alternative sexual and gender politics of military institutions (Sjoberg 2007, Belkin 2008, Bulmer 2013). Women married to servicemen should not be excluded from studies on the effectiveness of such policies or understandings of the ways in which social change manifests itself. For example, the discursive reproduction of traditional gender roles and the regulation of femininity with respect to women married to servicemen, might be assumed to support a normative discourse of heterosexuality and gendered labour patterns with respect to the

roles and identities of servicemen and women. But the exact nature of military wives' investment in a heteronormative gender regime warrants much more scholarly attention. Thus it might be possible to ask, does the increase in heterosexual and lesbian women, as well as gay men serving in the military, provoke a defensive reinstatement of 'traditional' gender roles among military wives, or do new conceptualisations and military couplings offer opportunities for recasting the role of military wives and modernising rather than militarising the institution of marriage? Although such questions lie beyond the empirical scope of this particular study, the assumed status of women married to servicemen as heterosexual subjects should not preclude the relevance of their experiences for the study of both normative and non-normative sexualities.

Interrogating the nature of military wives' investment in militarised hierarchies has the potential to reveal how women married to servicemen negotiate their relationship to military power from a range of positionalities, including those located beyond the military institution. Class and its relation to rank is a particular case in point, although few scholars pursue the imbrication of class and rank with race, ethnicity and sexuality to the level of critical detail that Enloe (2000, p.151) reveals in her examination of rape in the military, where she argues that a "class-dichotomized ideology of masculinities is woven into most military chains of command". With respect to women married to servicemen, writing of the subtle and selective dating practices that shaped romantic relationships around a rapidly expanding military base in a Southern state of the US during WWII, Lutz (2001, p.57) points out that "[c]lass has always helped structure marriage choices in America, and so the signs of military rank – correlated but not identical with socioeconomic class – were important in decisions about how to deal with the new permeabilities war brought to town". Yet class and the socio-economic factors that contribute to its power is often overlooked or overshadowed by military hierarchies such as rank. Celebrating the supposed modernisation of the present-day role of military spouses within the British armed forces, Annabel Venning (2005, p.320) quotes an officer who declares "If the CO comes into the mess nowadays and asks an officer if his wife can arrange the flowers on a particular day, he's likely to get the response, "Sorry, she can't, she's a barrister and she's in court that day", or "She's a surgeon and is needed at the hospital" – or she may be in the Army herself". If viewed more critically perhaps, this optimistic view of women's labour power and alternative construction of the military wife is still defined by substitutable and tokenistic archetypes that inhere in class and economic background, and which also serve to reproduce particular ideas about rank. In

Invisible Women (2000), Harrell emphasises the degree to which women's experiences differ according to the rank of their husbands, not only in terms of socio-economic and class differences in their own right, but also in terms of how these divisions become manifest in a military social order:

Another barrier is the separation between the wife's private life and her husband's professional life. This separation is very different from the experience of officers' spouses, who tend to maintain a more active community among themselves and are often expected to participate in unit activities and/or social gatherings. In contrast, the wives of enlisted soldiers are more likely to be isolated from both unit and post activities and resources (Harrell 2000, p.107)

Enloe (1989) has long argued for the need to take the multiple positionalities of different women into account in any gendered assessment of military power. Using the example of a 1987 visit to military bases in Asia by the US Defense Advisory Committee on the Status of Women in the Services (DACOWITS), she highlights the connections between women who are variously positioned within and beyond the borders of the military base overseas:

For the first time in its history, DACOWITS members began to make a connection between the treatment of local women around the American bases and the treatment of American women on the bases. They blamed American Navy women's low morale on the sexist environment created by the 'availability of inexpensive female companionship from the local population and its adverse consequences for legitimate social opportunities of Service women'. (Davis 1987 in Enloe 1989, p.87)

Enloe's example is an effective reminder of the need to pluralise the grounds for the study of the military institution and military power more broadly. In *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1989, p.91), she critiques the "mutually exclusive categories" that maintain a militarized social order between "[p]rostitutes, girlfriends, wives, peace activists and women soldiers". In this thesis I want to pursue Enloe's argument to a further level of detail and interrogate the sub-categories and differences that influence women's experiences of military power *within* categories such as 'military wife'.

The literature I have reviewed in this section demonstrates how important it is to look at the ways in which power relations surrounding gender, class, sexuality and race combine in compound forms with military structures such as rank to produce a range of archetypes and ideals. What also becomes clear however, is the degree to which ideals and stereotypes are far from absolute and are rarely fulfilled in practice. More recent work on military masculinities for example, has shown that the power of such ideals can be attributed to a

complex double bind that produces failure and subversion as well as the promise of fulfilment (Belkin 2012). Thus, while Enloe (2000, p.162) satirises a list of characteristics and attitudes to describe “The Model Military Wife” for example, she makes the important qualification that few women manage to fulfil such conditions, as well as conceding that some derive genuine satisfaction and material rewards from trying (Enloe 2000, p.164). While it is important to take into account the social construction of particular identities that become entangled and embedded within militarised hierarchies therefore, it is also important to pay closer attention to the ways in which such power relations are perceived on a more intimate level, how they shape women’s personal, everyday heuristic responses and sense-making narratives, and the ways in which they are *felt*.

Everyday narratives of military power

In her psycho-social study of the experiences of military wives, *Relocation, Gender and Emotion*, Jervis (2011, p.2) unpacks a particular stereotype using the example of her own refusal to undertake flower arranging duties as the wife of a senior naval officer. In this case she argues, her own deviation from the norms of wifedom were understood as disloyalty to both her husband and her country, in turn questioning two important ways through which her critic, another senior serviceman’s wife, made sense of and identified with the armed forces and its demands on her time. What Jervis is able to tease out from her empirical and reflexive data, is a sense of what ‘Army life’, and the apparently banal act of flower arranging within it, *means* to different people at different times. As I have noted, research has highlighted some of the material conditions, structures and identities that combine to produce the “compelled duties” (Harrell 2001, p.68) and “affective commitment” (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.637) of women married to servicemen. Research on the feelings that constitute (and threaten) this commitment and the narratives through which it is negotiated however, is less common. Instead, the emotions and narratives that are produced when marriage and the military combine are largely instrumentalised in both policy and research on military welfare, to the degree that the material incentivisation of early marriage has been linked to higher rates of divorce in the US military (Hogan and Steifert 2009, p.436). Such research does highlight the conditions of possibility within which intimate relationships are formed however, which includes “injury or death, geographic mobility, deployment and long working hours” (*ibid*), and which are attributed their role in the breakdown of relationships. Here, the occupational hazards of soldiering as a job are presciently matched by the framework of marriage at its most profound - for better or worse, for richer and

poorer, in sickness and health, until death. Yet the more common focus of research that pays attention to such issues, is on the impact of marriage and a soldier's home life upon the effectiveness of military operations rather than vice versa (see for example Mulligan et al. 2012). In a study of soldiers' home lives during US military operations in Somalia (1999), D. Bruce Bell et al. document responses such as "Sometimes after a call from home I feel angry about being in Sinai" (Bell et al. 1999, p.510-11), concluding that "it is not immediately clear if access to advanced electronic means of contacting family members back home is a benefit or a hazard for the soldier and the Army" (*ibid*). Such studies hint at the challenges of reconciling institutional demands with the messiness of human relations. Very little research goes further than this to explore the affective pathways that connect the two institutions as they become merged and mirrored, one ostensibly focused on war and the production of violence, the other on love, nurture and desire, at the same time as both of them are impacted by a heightened and acute sense of human vulnerability that is subject to the fluctuations of global politics.

In terms of exploring some of the textures of feeling and sense-making around military power, some research on the experiences of women married to servicemen analyses what are categorised specifically as their *perceptions*, forming a strand of social science that acknowledges that these may differ from or shed additional light on experiences as represented through quantitative data like the FAMCAS survey (UK Ministry of Defence 2011b). Qualitative accounts allow particular nuances to surface and express the bargains implicit in militarised conditions of possibility. These include spouses' "pragmatic recognition" (Castaneda and Harrell 2008, p.397) of the limitations on their employment prospects for example, and also entail paying attention to the metaphors through which women make sense of the military's impact on their day to day lives. Women's comparison of their experiences to those of a 'single parent' is common for example (Castaneda and Harrell 2007, p.396; Wheeler and Torres Stone 2009, p.553), and some research accounts for the ways in which humour functions to manage expectations:

The frequent moves that characterize a military lifestyle are generally perceived to be the basis of many of military spouses' employment frustrations, and, not surprisingly, some spouses mentioned lessening the number of moves. Those who did sometimes even made the suggestion wryly or sarcastically, or even laughed as they did so. (Castaneda and Harrell 2007, p.408)

What such accounts offer, is a small sense of the everyday narratives and heuristic practices through which power relations are experienced and understood. This is exemplified by Enloe

(2000, p.168) in her attention to details such as a sign re-hung in a series of different kitchens that states “home is where the Army sends you”. Such colloquialisms indicate the close-knit common experience of military families as well as a kind of weary and platitudinous acceptance. In subtler and more serious terms however, the joke is a telling encapsulation of the meaning of ‘home’ for some military families, which must be made to transcend any particular connection to physical location and relate instead to the more fluid operation of social (and indeed institutional) ties and obligations. Beyond academic research, popular narrative accounts provide occasional glimpses of recent campaigns and operations from military spouses’ point of view. David Finkel’s (2009) account of a US battalion’s deployment to Iraq, *The Good Soldiers*¹⁰ includes poignant scenes that explore soldiers’ feelings and narratives of home in dialogue with those of their spouses, asking for example: “Was home the place where children grew so steadily it was invisible, or here, where their father noticed it in increments, like a distant relative?” (Finkel 2009, p.177). Importantly, in the section of the book that focuses on home life, Finkel (2009, p.193) attempts to portray home in what he argues is its “truest form”. That is, not during the brief period of rest and recuperation (R&R) when a soldier would be present, “but on the four hundred days he would not” (*ibid*). Although autobiographical, historical or journalistic accounts such as these (some more critical of military institutions and operations than others) document spouses’ letters, emails, photographs as well as first-hand accounts and everyday practices¹¹, they do less to expose the political origins and function of such narratives, and thus what they work to conceal. Women married to servicemen already occupy a position on the margins of military institutional imperatives, a position that is mirrored in the research. This marginality requires more than an increase in empirical studies or descriptive accounts of their everyday experiences to address. It is because military wives’ experiences have been assumed to inhere in spaces, times, identities and feelings that are insignificant or do not matter to military power, that more work must be done to explore the nuances of the narratives that have developed to make sense of them. Only then will it be possible to connect these experiences, identities and feelings back to the institutional, state and international relations of power that influence their shape, purpose and outcomes.

¹⁰ Which was also featured in an episode of NPR’s *This American Life* entitled ‘Will They Know Me Back Home?’ See <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/429/will-they-know-me-back-home>, last accessed 24 November 2013

¹¹ Such as a 2012 exhibition at the National Army Museum in London featuring archive correspondence between soldiers and their partners from the 18th Century to today, entitled *Wives and Sweethearts: Love on the Front Line*. See <http://www.nam.ac.uk/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/wives-sweethearts>, last accessed 15 March 2013

In this chapter so far I have explored several areas that I argue are key for a more in-depth assessment of the experiences of military wives. The first is women's labour as it is shaped by a range of constraints and opportunities that result from the combination of two gendered institutions, marriage and the military. The second is the formation of women's social personhood through modes of difference and distinction and a range of subject positions produced by gender, race, class and their intersection with a militarised social order. The final area that merits further study, concerns women's narratives and feelings, through which their experiences of military power become manifest in daily life, are understood and made sense of. These concerns are threaded throughout the empirical chapters that follow. In addition to reviewing the literature on women married to servicemen however, it is also necessary to locate women's experiences in the socio-spatial context of their production. Of equal importance then, is the acknowledgement that the attitudes and experiences analysed in this thesis take place against the backdrop of a highly specific location at a very particular time: a military camp overseas during the regiment's operational tour in Afghanistan.

Paying attention to the socio-spatial dynamics of the overseas camp that is my research setting, particularly during the period of deployment and return covered by my fieldwork, provides both a context and a foil for my account of the everyday experiences of women married to servicemen. As such, the research setting of the Army camp overseas is given equal weight alongside the narratives of the women who live around it. As well as accounting for the particularities of my data, this serves to connect the experiences of military wives to some of the broader systems and structures of military power (and knowledge thereon). The additional significance of the Army camp to my enquiry here therefore, is its role as a vehicle to connect the experiences of women married to servicemen to some important pathways of military power that represent more conventional grounds for study within fields such as IR: nationality and war. Firstly, as the camp in question is located overseas, it throws into relief the imbrication of military power with sovereignty and belonging, revealing the combined mechanisms by which the nation reproduces itself militarily. Secondly, as this study coincided with the absence of the regiment's soldiers on combat deployment to Afghanistan, the camp and its surrounds constitute a particular kind of "home front" (Lutz 2001, p.7), a site for the maintenance of familiarity and stability and in many ways, for the smoothing-over of war and the production of a kind of security. In the following half of this chapter I review of some of the recent

literature on military bases, especially those located overseas. This maps out the terrain for my socio-spatial investigation of the camp in this study and the power relations it engenders.

Blurring the boundaries of military bases overseas

Whether military bases are understood as the occupation of land and resources or as vehicles of political and cultural imperialism, their overseas location throws into relief their significance for national and international relations. The global reach of one nation in particular is conspicuous in its domination of the literature on military bases overseas, which qualifies for a strong place within the “American-empire perspective” (Morgan 2006, p.203). As of 2007, the United States had over nine hundred military facilities located in forty-six different territories (DoD 2007 in Lutz 2009, p.1), the scale and permanence of which outstrips the overseas capacity of countries such as Britain, France, India and Pakistan (Woodward 2004, p.19). In his architectural study *America Town*, Mark Gillem (2007) selects the technical term ‘outpost’ to describe US bases in countries such as South Korea, in order to express “the far-off nature of that site” (Gillem 2007, p.xvi). Similarly, Lutz (2002, p.729) seeks to highlight the vast geographical dispersal of US military power by describing a “far-flung archipelago” of installations “euphemistically called ‘forward basing’ rather than imperial outposts”.

Other studies trouble the perception that military bases overseas operate according to any simple, linear relationship of power based on the total domination of military presence at any level. In *Base Politics*, Alexander Cooley (2008, p.218) argues that “the politics of the basing issues tend to be driven by political and institutional changes within the host country itself, not by the actual size of the base or the external security situation”. In another study of political and economic negotiations between Washington, Tokyo, and Okinawa, Cooley and Marten (2006) reject the simplification of power dynamics to a straightforward bilateral relationship between the US and its host territory, in favour of a triangulated relationship between global, national and local politics (Cooley and Marten 2006, p.568). Research also connects military bases to other forms of political, economic and cultural exchange, which depends on the active participation of local populations in the form of labour and consumption. The superior golf and leisure facilities of Osan Air Base in South Korea for example, are open to local Koreans at a reduced rate if they are members of the “Korean Employee Golf Association” (Gillem 2004, p.95). Military bases also have a place in

globalised networks of “soft power” (Gillem 2004, p.21) through the consumption of goods produced by multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola, Nike and NBC, which are not only imported to sustain the home-grown tastes of those living on base, but are also exchanged beyond its borders through the local black market (Gillem 2004, p.92). If as Gillem (2004, p.17) has argued, military power shares with globalisation “the attribute of movement – of goods, services, people and ideas – across national borders”, then the study of military power around such sites must take into account the possibility for multiple forms and patterns of power to circulate in a way that is far from linear or absolute.

Gender scholarship has provided considerable insights into the political, social and economic constraints and opportunities, as well as the sexual, racial and cultural complexities that are created along these lines. This includes work on the local and national politics of women’s anti-militarist movements (Cockburn 2012, Akibayashi and Takazaton 2009), or with respect to the history of the British Army, the control of women and prostitution in relation to colonial forces in India for example (Gillem 2007, p.10; Enloe 1989, p.82). In Katherine Moon’s (1997) study, *Sex Among Allies*, the historical connection between military presence overseas and the control of men and women’s sexuality is reformulated across different national boundaries, no longer regulated by empire but played out through commercialisation and the transnational flow of labour and capital. Moon describes the licencing of prostitution via the America Town Corporation and the Korean Ministry of Health (Moon 1997, p.18), arguing that the formalisation of prostitution into an “R&R system” (Moon 1997, p.28) represents nothing less than a fully incorporated, international mass entertainment industry with other R&R outposts in the Philippines, Thailand and elsewhere in Asia (Moon 1997, p. 34). As the US military rotates its personnel across a network of bases around the world, it facilitates a transnational process of inscription, for example where “racist stereotypes of Asians within the American society have mixed with sexist stereotypes of Asian women to foster American participation in camptown prostitution in Asia” (Moon 1997, p.33). More recently, Gillem (2007, p.60) notes the liberal South Korean visa program through which Russian and Thai entertainers have migrated to replace Korean women in their roles with respect to the American Army. This brings with it a new matrix for the inscription of national and racial identity around the military bases overseas, where “an American soldier can find a Russian wife on Korean soil” (Gillem 2007, p.64). In such ways, research on military bases overseas demonstrates their complex, fluid

and ultimately unstable politics of location, where the boundaries between nation and other are far less concrete than the barbed wire fences marking its physical borders.

While scholarship has exposed the power that circulates *between* the military base and its host however, less attention has been paid to the *internal* dynamics that operate within the base's borders, and which shape this broader relationship. By assuming that the military base overseas (and indeed its host location) represents one homogenous, internally consistent and compliant community, some of the subtler connections between gender, nationality and military power for example, risk being overlooked. For example, Gillem (2007, p.105) catalogues the reproduction of the American suburbs and the reinforcement of national identity on a US military bases overseas, where the space that accommodates families directs what he terms a "Suburban Production". This is a production comprised of cul-de-sacs and low-level housing with lawns and fences, linked by good roads mandating the use of cars, which can be parked next to strip malls and Starbucks (*ibid*). He argues that the effect of the built environment on the experiences and identities of the society its serves can be either transformative or repressive (Gillem 2007, p.50). What he omits from his assessment however, is the gendered division of labour that plays a part in either possibility. If, as Enloe (1989, p.72) has argued, it is the "largely unpaid work" of women married to servicemen upon which the military relies to "transform an overseas base into a 'community'" (*ibid*), then missing from Gillem's (2007) account is the possibility that the base's "suburban production" (Gillem 2007, p.105) depends upon a gendered division between productive and reproductive labour as well as the distinction between the nation and its other. Thus *internal* divisions of difference *within* the base community also serve to reinforce its external borders in relation to the 'outside'. One might conclude therefore, that the reproduction of national boundaries on a military base overseas forecloses any transformation of gender roles beyond that which is made possible by the institutions of marriage or the military. In a paper on the experiences of women married to servicemen around a joint NATO base overseas, Jervis (2008) observes that each separate military's boundaries of nation, service and rank must shift in order to accommodate each other. It is the traditional gender order, Jervis argues, that is first to be reinforced as part of each institution's "unconscious defensive attempts to retain their distinctive identities" (Jervis 2008, p.114). In this mixture of military power and nationality, Jervis finds much that attests to the ongoing relevance of Shirley Ardener and Hilary Cannan's (1984) conceptualisation in *The Incorporated Wife*:

Just as Callan regarded the positioning of diplomats' wives during domestic postings as unremarkable (1975: 88-89), so, I suggest, is the positioning of British military wives within the UK. It is when they accompany personnel overseas that their position often becomes more ambiguous. (Jervis 2008, p.109)

Research that pays attention to the intersection of gender, race, sexuality and ethnicity across the borders of military bases reveals the micro-level, everyday power structures that implicate people's labour and consumption in the operation of military power. Such analyses also shed valuable light on the ways in which these boundaries are socially reproduced and mutually imbricated in particular gendered, racialised or sexualised identities, as well as the reproduction of national identity through ideas about what counts as 'home' and 'away', familiar or foreign. My focus in this thesis is largely concerned with divisions and differences that are *internal* to the regimental community and the spaces, roles, identities and feelings through which they are reproduced. In this sense, the study of military wives' interactions with German culture and society and indeed, the heterogeneity of the local German response by return, is beyond the scope of this research and would be a different kind of project. That is not to imply that the internal relations I analyse are in any way isolated or fenced off from the world outside the camp however. Quite the contrary, my very aim is 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. The military base at the centre of this study also represents a further paradox however: that of the simultaneous presence and absence of war. In the next section of this chapter I review some of the literature that might be used to explore this twinned dynamic.

Rehearsing war, domesticating security

Many overseas bases are posthumous markers of previous conflicts. The end of World War II signalled the consolidation of a British military presence (and that of its American allies – see Hawkins 2001 and Sandars 2000, p.199) in Germany, which was extended by the Cold War. The camp at the centre of this study is also shaped by contemporary conflict through the regiment's successive tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Aside from these historical and operational connections however, war can also be attributed a certain kind of presence that is made manifest through the military requirement for 'combat readiness'. Combat readiness is a condition that has long been understood as fundamental to the nature of the armed forces, which "must keep in view a future moment which rarely comes, but which

must be assumed as constantly impending. Hence it builds its routine on the abnormal, its expectations on the unexpected” (A. K. Davis 1952 in Hockey 1986, p.2). In-depth studies of military bases and garrison towns by scholars such as Lutz (2001) and Kenneth MacLeish (2013) have looked at the visualisation and rehearsal of war through the training activities carried out across spaces on and around military bases such as those in Fayetteville, North Carolina (Lutz 2001) and Fort Hood, Texas (MacLeish 2013). Such research makes clear the connection between combat readiness and the reproduction of the nation state, where even on domestic garrisons, readiness requires the construction of a population to defend as well as an enemy ‘other’. As Lutz argues:

Any military simulation attempts to draw an objective model of the world and its potential situations. But because it involves peering into the void of the future and the blurry shapes of the present, it must also be mythic [...] To look at Fayetteville’s experience with war games, then, is to see certain American anxieties played out as if to tame them” (Lutz 2001, p.87).

As a kind of deferral or projection, combat readiness might be understood as a spatial and temporal ‘state’ of being, one that provides the precondition for the military’s everyday, continuous reproduction of itself, and shapes the conditions of possibility for its personnel and their families. The paradoxical presence and absence of war that this produces, where war is invoked and embodied through training exercises for example but is also constantly deferred either because it is happening elsewhere or because it is contingent on projected, future events, is encapsulated in Lutz’s description of readiness as “war’s shadow” (Lutz 2000, p.7). This is especially evident if one looks at the ways in which combat readiness inflects the public and private lives of those living and working on and around military bases. It impacts the transience and turnover of military bases through the management and rotation of human resources for training, garrison and active combat duties for example (Morgan 2006, p.210), and determines the spatial layout of bases and their division into securitised zones (Woodward 2004, p.72; Gillem 2004, p.121). It includes training activities such as “Mission Oriented Protective Posture” (Gillem 2004, p.35), the periodic requirement for chemical protective gear to be worn on all areas of a base for example, or the declaration of a 2-hour “alert” (Hawkins 2001, p.38), which deems that soldiers must be ready to move from home life to active duty within a short period of time.

Perhaps because it exists as a means and a rationale for the military’s continuous, everyday reproduction of itself, combat readiness not only inheres in the overt management and rehearsal of war through practices such as training and war games, but also in war’s

invisibilisation and normalisation. Thus the socio-spatial function of a military base also includes the practices through which war is kept out, smoothed over or kept at bay, modes of reproduction that attempt to convert or detoxify the military's exceptional mandate for state-sanctioned violence. For example, although military bases such as Camp Bastion in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, have gained totemic visibility as part of current theatres of war, more detailed accounts of the day-to-day workings of such bases attest to a certain degree of ambiguity with respect to their war-fighting purpose: "[t]ours in Iraq and Afghanistan, lengthened to one year like a tour in South Korea, have many of the accoutrements of garrison life, such as gymnasiums, cafeterias, post exchanges, and other qualities that evince a more stable garrison life than a nation at war" (Morgan 2006, p.208). Research that pays close attention to the experience of everyday life on or around military bases, especially that which includes participants other than service personnel, reveals the kind of labour that is bound up in these paradoxical modes through which military power reproduces itself. Military wives who take on voluntary responsibilities as part of "Family Readiness Groups" (Harrell 2001 p.66) for example tackle issues that range from "families without food, sickness, injury, or miscarriage; assorted emotional and legal tangles; and potential spouse and child abuse" to "requests for rides to the commissary, assistance moving personal property, and shovelling snow" (Harrell 2001, p.68). As well as non-serving women's labour (including but by no means limited to their domestic labour), the military's demands for readiness also shape people's identities and relations on a more intimate scale:

Its bureaucratic beauty derived from its malleability: readiness could be used to refer to everything – from the state of truck repair to the quality of the troops' training. Readiness requires, wives' advocates contended, that a wife's depression or impoverishment not make a soldier reluctant to board ship. Readiness requires that a male soldier be sure enough of his wife's sexual fidelity back home that he can give his primary attention to following orders in battle. (Enloe 2000, p.173)

Considering the significance of both nationality and war to the military bases overseas, one can conclude that an essential part of their day-to-day function is the maintenance of a kind of normality (including, as Enloe's [2000] analysis shows, social norms). In such a way, the boundary-blurring, twin threats of war and the nation's other are domesticated by the processes through which military power reproduces itself. The camp at the centre of this study represents an interesting position with respect to both these elements. There is a kind of familiarity implied by the camp's long-term, non-combat location in a European city only a few hours by plane or car from the UK, located in a country whose culture was often noted

by members of its community to be similar to that of the UK, and whose climate, flora and fauna are far from any conceptualisation of a remote exotic location or hostile terrain. As Venning (2005, p.321) comments in the postscript to her historical study of women married to servicemen: “Those who might have been prepared to trade stability for adventure are unlikely to be enticed by the prospect of a fourth stint in an unprepossessing part of Germany”. It is the presumed *familiarity* of the provincial German city as a location then, to the degree that it is listed alongside postings in the UK and Northern Ireland rather than with “foreign postings” (*ibid*) such as Cyprus and Brunei for example, that constitutes the particular simultaneity of home and away in this case, and arguably a subtler matrix for the production of familiarity and foreignness.

In terms of the temporal as well as the geographical specificity of this project, the status of war and conflict is also somewhat ambiguous and transcends boundaries of presence and absence, home and away. I began my fieldwork half way through the regiment’s most recent six-month operational tour in Afghanistan, and so for a large part of my time in Germany, much of the camp was shaped by the absence, not the presence, of soldiers. At the same time, the tour represented a period when the possibility of violence shaped the lives of the community who remained as well as those deployed. Lutz (2000, p.7) describes a domestic military base in the US as a site that “haplessly becomes battle’s other – “the home front””. To explore the “home front” (*ibid*) in this thesis likewise entails paying attention to those who do not train for or deploy to war, the question of war’s presence and absence for those ‘left behind’. More than this however, this thesis illuminates a situation where the “home front” (*ibid*) is not ‘at home’ in the UK or US, but rather is geographically untethered from both the theatre of war and the nation state. What this offers, is a distinct opportunity for understanding the textures of military power as it transcends and complicates simultaneous, mutually constructed and contingent boundaries of home and away, absence and presence, the nation and its other, war and peace.

The multiple mobilities of Army wives

In this chapter I have outlined several areas for further research on the experiences of women married to servicemen. This includes paying attention to women’s relationship to marriage and the family as institutions that are deeply entwined in the military, as either models and metaphors for belonging or as ciphers for women’s labour for example. I have illustrated how analyses of military power and gendered identity might go further than the

comparative study of both military masculinities and women positioned differentially on the inside and outside of the military institution, to explore the matrix of power that inheres within the category 'military wife'. Finally, I have mapped the potential for investigating women's perceptions of military power through the narratives and heuristic responses they develop as they make sense of its manifestation in the times and spaces of their everyday lives. By reviewing some of the literature on military bases overseas, I have established some grounds for connecting these everyday lived experiences to the boundaries of nation and war that are an integral part of military presence. While military bases can be read as a territorial manifestation of military power, the literature I have reviewed here shows that this presence is produced by, and productive of, power that is far more diffuse in its effects.

It is the idea of military power through 'presence' that I seek to address in this thesis, using the experiences of women married to servicemen as my foil. The boundaries of military power extend far beyond what Woodward (2004, p.35) calls "the fact of physical presence". Unlike many studies of military bases overseas, this thesis pays little attention to the physical footprint of the Army camp where I stayed, its occupation of German territory, the garrison's shooting ranges, even its "spillover" (Gillem 2004, p.40). I do not seek to analyse the frameworks of governance (Woodward 2004, p.36) that shape the garrison's history, nor do I attend to the control of information (Woodward 2004, p.35) about the spaces it occupies and the activities it conducts therein. Rather, my interest in military geographies (Woodward 2004) in this thesis lies beyond these subtle and pervasive but nevertheless formal technologies of power, and attends instead to those spaces where military presence is camouflaged and concealed, or indeed, may not be present at all. This means looking at the places where military presence is materialised in alternative forms and structures, beyond the wire. It means looking for places where military presence *is not*, and thus always questioning absence. Looking for military presence in this way also flags up the possibility of not finding it, or that it can be kept out or kept at bay. It means tracing circuitous routes that skirt around military presence, confronting dead ends or getting stuck, paying attention to places where borders are muddled or pathways merge and dissolve¹².

¹² Borne of six months on a second-hand bicycle, pedalling away from a dim room in a half-deserted barracks, out through the gates of the camp and into the flat German suburbs, my approach in this thesis perhaps epitomises the feminist methodological and analytical pursuit that Patti Lather (2007) has called "getting lost".

And it is precisely because the boundaries of military presence are not clear, that I think the movements of women married to servicemen can tell us something new about it. As Callan (1984, p.1) argues in *The Incorporated Wife*, what the experiences of military wives call into question is “the nature of institutional boundaries, mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, and the structural dilemma that arises when, because of marriage, women have to be given a location in, on or outside the boundary of an organisation”. What might be revealed about military presence if we question it from the perspective of a population who occupy a deeply ambiguous and hybrid position in relation to that presence – simultaneously outside and within, occupying multiple and simultaneous positionalities that transcend the so-called divide between military and civilian, public and private, what is political and what is personal? I want to pay attention to the multiple mobilities of women married to servicemen living overseas because they trouble the boundaries intended to keep military power contained and which have also served to construct the limits of scholarship that defines where military presence is, and what it does. As Woodward (2004, p.36) argues, military control of space is “a discursive as well as a material practice”. In this thesis I pay attention to representational practices of a different kind to those discourses, such as security and national defence, that “legitimise military claims to space” (Woodward 2004, p.37). Instead, I ask what other, less conventional, discourses contribute to the social construction of military presence and its boundaries. This involves paying attention to the performances of identity articulated through different spaces, as well as the discourses through which those spaces are inscribed with meaning by return. In this sense, my aim is to *populate* military spaces with the people who move through and indeed, beyond them.

If studied in this way, the question of military presence is an important one because of what it can tell us about the agency of women married to servicemen. In this thesis I trace the multiple mobilities of women married to servicemen as they interact with, acquiesce to and resist military presence and its influence over their lives. What is at stake in these investigations, is the question of military wives’ agency in relation to a range of military conditions through which that agency appears to be foreclosed. The chapters that follow push and pull¹³ in a range of different directions around this question, which after all is concerned with the very ambiguity of women’s position not at the margins of the military institution, but at the centre of any thing called the military/civilian divide.

¹³ My thanks to Katherine Natanel for this helpful way of thinking about the experiences I have attempted to describe, and the ways in which my writing had come to mirror them.

The Military Mobilities of Army Wives

How can I explain - like when I go back to [my place of birth] now, my sisters who have lived there all their lives, grown up, got jobs, gone to school, had kids but still in the same... like no-one's moved on if that makes sense and I feel like sort of I have if that makes sense? But I also feel it's held me back because I haven't really done anything – that's an awful thing to say but career-wise I haven't really done anything with my life.

This chapter is about the geographic and social mobility of women married to servicemen. In Joanne's case above, she feels that travel and migration with the Army has removed her more than geographically from her family and birthplace in the UK, encapsulated here by her sense of 'moving on'. Although Joanne articulates her mobility in terms of space and physical distance however, what 'moving on' actually means remains ambiguous. In this chapter I trace some of the multiple and overlapping circuits of travel and movement undertaken by women married to servicemen. I begin by documenting women's recollections of various postings within the UK and overseas, focusing in particular on the impact on their careers and employment opportunities. I then explore some of the characteristics of women's current location in Germany, their attitude and approach to living 'abroad', and what this indicates about the losses and gains of women's migration with the military institution. This chapter shows just how *mobile* life with the Army can be, at the same time that this mobility can produce paradoxical conditions of fixity and stasis. This begs the question, what reassuring structures and power relations become rooted in place (and who is kept in their place?) so that others can remain flexible according to the needs of the military institution and the fluctuations of global politics? One way to address this question is to look further at the complex and ambiguous dynamic of 'moving on' and being 'held back' that Joanne has experienced, and the multiple ways in which this paradox might be understood.

That military wives are geographically mobile subjects is nothing new, their historical status as "following the drum" (Venning 2005) finds its social science equivalent in categorisations such as "tied movers" (Little and Hisnanick 2007 p.547) or "tied migrants" (Cooke and Speirs 2005, p.343), which describes a "spouse who 'moves along with the other even though his (or her) 'private' calculus dictates staying'" (Mincer in Little and Hisnanick 2007, p.547). Contained within such terms, is an inherent assumption about the limited scope of women's

choices and opportunities for self-determination, which appears to foreclose the possibility that women married to servicemen might be agents of their own mobility. Yet little has been done to further interrogate the nexus of marriage and the military in terms of labour and migration. If anything, the gendered dynamics of men and women's experiences of military mobilities have been over-simplified.

Military families provide a natural experiment for observing how migration affects the economic status of tied movers. Among military families the migration decision is largely made by the military, hence migration behaviour is independent of any gendered migration decision-making process. (Cooke and Speirs 2005, p. 345)

Cooke and Speirs (2005 p.345-347) call for more research into the social and structural processes that lead families to give disproportionate weight to husbands' prospects when making decisions about migration. However, the basic premise that the military institution is unconnected to the sexual division of labour, underestimates its imbrication in the gendered dynamics of migration on a number of levels:

[...] Commanders for generations have tried to reduce any danger the military spouse poses to military readiness by reinforcing the gender ideology that claims that men decide where a family will reside and how it will make a livelihood. (Enloe 2000, p.182)

Feminist research has been helpful in moving beyond the political economy of migration to consider the family relations and social obligations that shape gender roles on the ground (Al-Ali 2002, p.83). Not only this, more recent research on transnational migration complicates the question of women's agency (or lack thereof) in migration. It questions not only the moves women make, but also what they make of those moves by return, allocating women a central and productive, rather than peripheral or reactive role in migration processes. In this way, scholars have argued, "the reproductive sphere, domesticity and households in their various forms are crucial sites for the (re)production and sustenance of transnational communities and mobilities" (Yeoh and Willis 2004, p.148). Nadjie Al-Ali (2002, p.97) has argued that family dynamics and gender roles shift in various different directions in migration, and cannot therefore be formulated according to a binary opposition that posits women's empowerment as deriving solely from wage labour, or as completely shut down by the entrenchment of patriarchal gender relations in the private sphere (see also Franz 2003, p.99). In this chapter I want to bring these more nuanced ideas about women's agency into dialogue with some of the military conditions that shape Army wives' experiences of migration. What happens when migrations are made as part of 'Army life' as well as family life, when men and women's mobilities are militarised? What is the effect on

women's opportunities for empowerment, what losses and gains do they experience? I want to begin by unpicking some of the assumptions about women married to servicemen and their movements, from 'camp followers' to 'privileged migration'.

Camp followers?

Carol's story about getting married and starting a family is somewhat hard to follow, a narrative that twists and turns through multiple upheavals of relocation and mobilisation, the intricacies of which soon become conflated and confused. They include Carol's move away from where she was born in the UK to join her husband in another part of the country, then the regiment's subsequent relocation to Germany and the tectonic shifts that prompted his deployment to Iraq soon after:

C: No, what happened, the regiment went to Catterick in I think 1998. So while Simon was in the UK I met him. We got married in 2000. We'd been unaccompanied all that time in between. Got married, remained unaccompanied. I had [our son] and at that point – because I had a career, a job I loved, and only when I had [our son] went on maternity leave and then resigned – never went back – I then joined Simon in a quarter in Catterick and then shortly after we moved to [Germany] in the summer of '03.

A: Was that when the regiment moved?

C: That was the massive regimental move in '03. That's right.

A: How was that move with all the regiment together?

C: It was massive. But I was – I was incredibly – so new to it [...] I'd given up my job. [...] I had a four week-old baby. I'd left home. Simon [had an important job within the regiment], there were expectations on me as his wife, which I was a little bit resistant to. Simon was fantastic, he said, 'You don't have to do anything'. But I found it really, really tough because I got [to Germany] in January, I'd only been there six weeks and they deployed to the Gulf. To the [Iraq] war [...]

A: That was a really intense operation wasn't it?

C: Very. It was a big, big thing back then. You know. They were front line, we knew that. We knew the roles that they were doing. Simon was [doing an important job] so I knew he was going to be quite involved. Of course I had this baby I had no idea what to do with. And I, I literally hot-footed it home. I just – Simon left and I got in the car. And I remember [my son] in the back of the car, he slept from Catterick down to [my home town], and I cried all the way. And I stayed for three, four weeks and then I felt an obligation to go back. And I dragged myself back to Catterick and I hated it. [...] But I just – I think my obligation to go back was definitely not to let Simon down. To be his wife and to be that dutiful Army wife which you hear all the time. It wasn't to let him down. I suppose I wanted to help where I could. And once I got back – and I think Simon must have had a word with the welfare officer, and they came knocking on my door and said, 'Would you like to come and do the food parcels?' And I went in and I found a purpose. And I loved packing up these shoeboxes for the soldiers. And it became a lot easier. But I think a lot of my issue wasn't maybe... it was [having my son], it was just being a new mum. [...] I

didn't know what to do and here I was in the middle of nowhere, I didn't really know anybody, stuck in Catterick, no husband, with a five, six week-old baby that I wasn't quite sure what to do.

Carol's experiences attest to the intersecting cycles of mobility that were characteristic of many women's memories of moving in to the military. It shows how the routes that women travel are intersected by their husbands' periodic mobilisation on deployment or training overseas. These circuits of movement produce overlapping experiences of absence and separation, which work alongside women's sense of presence and place. Carol is an experienced military wife: she narrates the different mobilisations she has managed throughout her marriage with hindsight and years of accumulated knowledge, which is threaded through her husband's successful military career (through which he rose from the most junior rank to that of a senior officer in the regiment). Despite Carol's composure however, the move to Germany and Catterick become conflated, the absence of her husband a consistent feature throughout, and it is difficult to hold on to what Carol herself has left behind (her home town, her family, her career). Instead, the gaps are filled by her successive roles as a dutiful wife, a volunteer for the regiment, a new mother. Carol's narrative demonstrates the absolute centrality of the sexual division of labour as a way of rationalising, and depoliticising, the effects of military mobilities. Despite the degree to which military, state and global power relations can be argued to have produced these conditions – the 2003 invasion of Iraq being a significant example – the causes are consistently reframed in terms that attempt to normalise their effects as part of marriage and motherhood (“But I think a lot of my issue wasn't maybe... [...] it was just being a new mum”).

That is not to say that women's husbands are entirely in control of their own mobility either, it is just that the resources and discourses available to them for rationalizing this mobility allow for a greater sense of agency and control. The bureaucracy that manages military careers is complex, and demonstrates the relative lack of autonomy with which personnel can determine their own location. The degree of geographical mobility undertaken by personnel and their families varies considerably depending on a soldier's job role and membership of particular units within the Army. Members of 'attached arms' units for example, typically rotate to a new posting every two years. Rob, a senior soldier posted to the regiment from one such unit, describes some of the strategies he deploys when navigating posting procedures:

Most soldiers have the opportunity to put in a PPP [Preferential Posting Proforma]. Which has a first, a second or a third choice [...] So you can elect to go somewhere and usually they try and hit the first, second or third choice. However sometimes they can't. [...] I seem to be slightly out of kilter by one posting every time. [...] What I try and do is take it as a bit of a puzzle, and every different post or position that you hold is a jigsaw piece, so as you've done these, the [full] picture starts to pull together [...] So that's what it's been about, it's piecing it all together.

Rob's full description of the gradual and piecemeal construction of his individual career trajectory, was couched in the terms of institutional bureaucracy and peppered with acronyms pertaining to the very specific structures and skillsets he has negotiated (units, battalions, job type). It is interesting to compare Rob's rationalization of his mobility to many wives' accounts. Their narratives of mobility and movement were more often characterized by a kind of fluidity and flux that was informal, emergent and responsive rather than proactive and bureaucratised. Whereas Rob's narrative gives the impression of a regulated and planned (although it must be said, often diverted) trajectory of postings, the description offered by Annie, who is married to an officer who also rotates on two-year postings, implies a far more ad-hoc experience. Annie's narrative is characteristic of those women who described the active process of making and remaking something workable of their own labour in circumstances that were often less than ideal:

Yeah, well I sort of fumbled around a bit, which is why it's quite nice to come to a new place where people didn't know us, again, getting away, put our identity on who we are now. As I said I've dabbled a bit with working again but it's very limited so I've kind of resigned myself to the fact that at the moment, until we get back to the UK, my identity is Henry's wife, John and Hannah's mum and that's fine actually, I'm not struggling with that at the moment. I have moments when I think 'Ugh, bit unfulfilled' but that's where you go and plug the gaps with the volunteering thing. Next week I'm starting volunteering in a nursery! [laughing] Not my bag at all! Somebody said, 'Oh we're crying out for volunteers' and I thought you know what, it might just make the next five or six weeks [of the tour] go quicker, and it's again something to put on a very pickled CV [...] You can finesse a bit of time out for child rearing but now it's like, right I need to have a few things on there. So if there's not going to be a serious job on there at least I need to... so again, selfish motive, you know actually this has got to work for me as well.

The necessity to respond to the changing demands of her husbands' career places Annie's emphasis on the present ("put our identity on who we are now"). There is a sense in which the trajectory of Annie's career is suspended in both time and place, waiting until the family returns to the UK, a suspension that is again rationalized as coinciding with a career break mandated by motherhood. What the difference between Rob's description of a linear progression from past to future, and Annie's description of 'fumbling around' and 'filling the

gaps' underlines however, is their differential sense of autonomy over their circumstances. Rob constitutes himself as the agent of his mobility ("piecing it all together"), while Annie appears to be the subject of hers.

For women such as Joanne, Carol and Annie, the sexual division of labour naturalises the degree to which they are 'kept in their place' in order to smooth over, sustain and support the multiple geographic and social mobilities that military power sets in motion. At the same time however, Joanne's conceptualization of her responsibility towards her children, and her marriage as a kind of choice (although one that was uninformed) is significant:

And I think if you have children then that's your responsibility because they didn't ask to be born – I knew Steven was in the Army when I married him, I knew he was in the Army but I didn't know what it would entail, but [the children] didn't ask to be born into a military family.

Joanne's assertion is important because it complicates the assumption that she and others are labouring under a kind of false consciousness with regard to the strategies, tactics and processes of rationalization entailed in living with military mobilities on an everyday basis. This is made more striking for the construction of this choice in terms of Joanne's initial ignorance but also, by implication, the knowledge, skills and resilience required to live with it thereafter. All of the narratives I have examined so far acknowledge the conflict, confusion and compromise that this calculation entails, as well as a sense of the personal consequences – the job Carol "loved", Annie's "pickled CV", Joanne's sense of being "held back". Women and men are keenly aware of these consequences, as Joanne attests:

Well also people say 'I hate it', if you maybe have a conversation about them being away or in Afghan. And people say, 'Well you knew that when you married him'. Well I'm sorry you don't know that, you really do not have a clue. But I think it's the old cliché: a lot changes when you have children and they do come first. And obviously because they're away [at boarding school] – that is another thing that wouldn't have happened if we weren't in the Army. I'm not particularly happy about the fact that half their childhood I've not seen them if that's how you look at it, but that was better and they'll even say now that was better for them.

Visiting Joanne during the day and at home, I was struck by her singular, neat and contained presence, a fashionably-dressed woman in her mid-forties sitting in a spacious and immaculate family-sized house, which seemed all the more quiet and tidy for the absence of her husband in Afghanistan and two of her three children being away at boarding school in the UK. For someone whose narrative of 'being ok' centred so much on her husband and children, the emptiness of the temporary family home was a poignant elision. At the same

time however, rather than occupying a position that is entirely surplus, marginal or subordinate to the mobilities that shape her everyday life, Joanne's knowing position at the centre of a comfortable but periodically empty family home indicates her central, pivotal role in the creation of stability at the intersection of multiple mobilities: a role and position invested in *holding everything together*.

While women often asserted the significance of their maternal labour as a rationale for their role within military mobilities, that is not to say that many of them did not also want or need to participate in the labour market through paid employment. As research has shown (Castaneda and Harrell 2008, and as was pointed out to me several times by different men and women within the community), military spouses' motivations vary according to class, educational background, and household income (as well as gender: see Cooke and Speirs 2005). Thus Annie's earlier alignment of her career with her identity, for example, is not consistent with all women's priorities, some of whom worked for the necessity of providing an additional income. For the same reason, the centrality of women's labour as mothers should not obscure their participation in the local labour force around the Army camp. In domestic settings in the US, it has been suggested that "military wives contribute to a surplus of women workers" (Booth 2003, p.25) around military bases. This constitutes "a contextual disadvantage for women in the paid labour force, regardless of whether they are in a military marriage" (*ibid*). Around the Army camp overseas, the boundaries are perhaps a little starker, as I will go on to explore.

The incorporation of women's paid labour in migration

During the time I was with the regiment, some women I knew decided to re-enter the labour market. They seemed to find work quickly and with relative ease, although the kinds of work available were largely limited to clerical or educational roles. The majority of wives found work through informal garrison networks, or the Garrison Labour Support Unit. Together, these constitute an internalized labour market that in many ways functions on a win-win basis and helps to stabilize the temporal and geographic mobilities of Army life: women who move with their husbands leave jobs behind, while the high turnover of military personnel moving through postings mean that new vacancies of a similar nature are constantly opening up. Thus the conversion of women's skills and careers in migration is understood not so much in terms of jobs that can be done 'in' Germany, but jobs that can be done 'in' the military. For example, a London-based events manager working for a luxury hotel chain

becomes a journalist for the BFG newspaper; a public sector PA becomes a 'leave and movements clerk'; a project manager for the National Trust of Fiji becomes the garrison family liaison representative; and a marketing executive is employed as a careers trainer for service personnel about to leave the Army. In many ways of course, this represents a direct co-optation of women's productive labour, and sets up a rather limited formula for wives' agency. If women seek to counter the effects of migration and their relegation to the domestic sphere, they do so at the ironic cost of increased exposure to, and the direct incorporation of their labour into, the military institution.

This double bind emerges most starkly in the experiences of non-British women married to servicemen. For example Jacquelyn, who came straight to Germany from Fiji via only a short period in the UK, explained her attempt to use German law as a way of circumventing British Forces Germany (BFG) rules stating that her Fijian driving licence would be invalid after an initial period of 6 months, after which she would be unable to continue driving her British car. Facing the prospect of having to pay for another test to obtain a European driving licence, Jacquelyn found out that by German law, her Fijian licence was still considered valid:

I went to the German guy that was doing my driving and he goes, 'With a Fiji license do you realise that you can drive in Germany?' And I said well I was told that [...] you can only drive a BFG car for 6 months with a Fiji licence. But under German law, you [can] use your Fiji licence. So [...] I actually wrote to the master driver in Garrison Headquarters but he said, 'No, [you have to abide by] British Forces Germany law'. I thought he was supposed to make things easy for me! I could have got a German car to drive but that's the thing, if I get involved with an accident, I have to go through the German authorities and I need translation for that.

On this occasion, circumventing British law and its proxy application through BFG was not considered a viable trade-off with other conditions of security and citizenship that come with it – the fact that British citizens in the military community in Germany are subject to prosecution but also protection by the British legal system as enforced in Germany by the military police. Käthe, one of several German women married to a British soldier and living within the community, might be understood to be more mobile in her capacity to negotiate the sovereign terms of her relationship to her husband's employer. And yet, the extent to which the military provides for its community overseas leaves little room for Käthe to manoeuvre:

K: I trained as a geriatric nurse in Germany, but that doesn't count in the UK so I can't really transfer much of that to life in Britain, and now I'm a child-minder.
A: But you're in Germany, so could you...

K: I could but it's just the fact that my husband is a soldier and my kids go to an English school, so if I were to get a job with the Germans I would have to explain to them well no our school holidays are slightly different, that's why I need holidays there and no I can't work weekends because [...] I can't interfere with [my husband's] work enough for me to get a decent shift pattern out of it, so that's why I can't work as a nurse in Germany anymore. [...] I know lots of German women that have got the same problem 'cause it's just so different. I don't know why but the German employers don't really like it when you're married to a soldier because they know, 'Oh she's probably only going to be here for a year or year and a half and then they're going to go again and if the husband's deployed she might have to stop working and...' They know that we're not as reliable as a German family with mum and dad living next door so... [...] me living here as a German doing my job in Germany, it doesn't work with me being married to a soldier.

Although in an arguably privileged position with respect to working and living in Germany – speaking the language, having German citizenship and qualifications – Käthe has chosen to import a British framework for her career options to match the 'British' life she leads. The combination of the Garrison Labour Support Unit, British Forces Germany regulations, and a whole host of other structures intended to support families posted overseas, converge so comprehensively it seems, that any opportunity for the kind of "flexible accumulation" (Ong 1999, p.136), borne of "mobile [...] professionals seeking to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes" (Ong 1999, p.112) is foreclosed.

Given the foreclosure of these transnational strategies, it is ironic that the BFG labour market does in fact create the conditions for British women to transcend the boundaries of both their home and their host nation. Women married to servicemen who enter the labour market through the Garrison Labour Support Unit, qualify as "Locally Engaged Civilians" (LECs) (UK Ministry of Defence 2012)¹⁴. Unlike service personnel whose employment is centrally managed, taxed and remunerated through the MOD in the UK, the 'civilian' jobs available to women married to servicemen do not qualify them as 'civil servants', nor are they accompanied by the same pay structures or pensionable benefits. Instead, LECs are paid in euros and are exempt from tax payable to either the UK or Germany. As one woman employed by the garrison explained to me, these tax breaks and the flexibility of many of the roles are supposed to compensate wives for their unequal employment status in relation

¹⁴ The Quarterly Location Statistics (UK Ministry of Defence 2012) for the period of my fieldwork in Germany states that "LEC employees are recruited overseas exclusively for employment in support of the UK Armed Forces deployed in a particular overseas theatre and on terms and conditions of service applicable only to that overseas theatre or Administration. This includes the dependents of UK military personnel [...] LECs are not civil servants." In this year there were 4,670 LECs employed by BFG.

to both civil servants and service personnel working in the garrison. However, LEC status was also seen as justification for the institution to pay them less in the first place. Interestingly, the flexibilisation of women's labour in this way is something that does correspond to the study of the global political economy (Peterson 2002), although in this case women's labour is invested in the global reach of military power more explicitly than in global flows of capital. To focus solely on the co-optation of women's labour by the military institution overseas however, would be to ignore some of the less tangible benefits of paid employment for women themselves. For example, Carol explains why she wanted to work when she returned to the regiment in Germany after a posting in the UK:

I'd been in Bulford for three years and that was a mix of – because we were on a posting, we lived patch life, great, but lots and lots of civvie influence in our life. The children had civvie friends so we had friends that were doctors, solicitors, binmen, you name it. So we had that nice balance. And then I came back and it was – I did find it rather claustrophobic. I was having lots of invitations to go everywhere [...] Maybe a little unnerved, lacking in confidence. And I said to Simon – he went off to Afghan – 'I've got to get a job'. And Alex, that job was my way of having a very convenient reason not to do lunch, not to do coffee.

Carol's insight underlines the local and far less material currency through which women assess their relative losses and gains in migration. As they navigate a social and structural system that would appear to pre-empt their every move, it is important to note the gaps women perceive and the spaces they create within it. In the next section of this chapter I will pursue the insight that Carol's experience offers and consider some of the less tangible dynamics produced by military mobilities. I begin by exploring the possibility that women's geographical mobility is experienced as a kind of social mobility.

Privilege and its discontents

Gender scholarship on "global professional mobility" or "privileged migration" (Coles and Fechter 2008, p.1) has paid attention to women's experiences of migration in a range of national contexts, especially where women's experiences are shaped by marriage and globalisation. Such studies chart women's movements as they are determined by the careers of their husbands within networks of corporations, multilateral aid agencies, NGOs, international diplomacy and joint military forces for example (see Coles 2008; Gordon 2008; Jervis 2008; Hindman 2008; Walsh 2008). At the same time as this research focuses on new forms of globalised mobility however, it also highlights continuities with the colonial history of migration (Fechter 2010; Coles and Walsh 2010; Fechter and Walsh 2010). For example, what Coles and Walsh (2010, p.1197) call "expatriate continuities" might still be argued to

shape the experiences and identities of women married to servicemen living overseas today, such that they might be considered “the successors – in the broadest sense – of colonials” (*ibid*). The material conditions that undergird these continuities are evident in Rob’s account of his posting to Kenya. Rob describes his spouse’s experience from his own perspective and with some hindsight regarding their marriage, which had since broken down, with Mel having returned to live in the UK:

R: In Nairobi or in Kenya, um, Mel had a visa to come into the country but she was unable to work. [...] So she's kind of you know, I'd get up and go to work before first light, gone, and I'd come back when it was dark. Um, she was getting up, making sure the kids were done, on the bus, off to school. And then she waits until the kids come home. It would have been helped I dare say if we didn't have – 'cause we were fortunate enough to have a housemaid and a gardener, because out there everything gets dirty-dusty very quickly -

A: And do you automatically get that allocated to you?

R: Well it was automatically allocated, kind of um, I'm not sure if it was part of the agreement with the Kenyan government that you've got to employ a certain number of.... But it's kind of the way of life out there. And you tend to inherit the maid that was there before, sort of thing. So Mel was left with very little to do - a lot of time on her hands... [...] And I think in hindsight [it] would have worked better if I'd [...] gone married unaccompanied¹⁵. Because Mel then would have been able to [...] have a career, a job, um because you know, there's only so many... I mean the girls there, Mel isn't one of these who's into you know, coffee mornings, going making cakes and things like that. Um, but there's only so many times you can go for a manicure, a pedicure, a facial, a massage, a spa day. Because believe it or not they get boring! And although the opportunity's there and the money's there to do it, you get bored of it.

Rob’s self-conscious description of the privileges that came with the posting to Kenya, demonstrates the difficulty of classifying the experiences of women married to servicemen within migration studies. Feminist research on migration has more conventionally addressed the gendered power relations affecting “disadvantaged and low-skilled women” (Fechter 2010, p.1281) migrating from the global south to industrialised nations for work. Scholars have explored issues such as “partial citizenship, the pain of family separation, contradictory class mobility, and non-belonging” (Parrenas 2001, p.23). At the same time however, a gendered analysis has helped to counter the “triple oppression model” (Franz 2003, p.87) that posits women as automatically subordinated “by class, gender, and ethnic minority” (*ibid*). In a similar way therefore, it is necessary to look beyond the archetypes of ‘privileged migration’ for what comparatively favourable material and social conditions conceal about the gendered power relations they reproduce.

¹⁵ ‘Married unaccompanied’ is the institutional term for classifying service personnel who move to postings within the UK or overseas and are not accompanied by their family. They usually ‘live in’, occupying rooms and facilities on camp and taking their meals on camp.

In some senses, the privileged migration of women married to servicemen is ambivalent and even traitorous in its effects. In the experience Rob describes for example, a normative gendered division of labour is partly elided by a racial division of labour. The colonial continuities of this arrangement are structurally and socially clear, and are expressed in Rob's discomfort perhaps. The anonymous Kenyan housemaid – literally understood as an accessory to Britain's Status of Forces Agreement with Kenya and an extension of the property that is passed on to successive occupants - becomes the housewife's imperial other (Spivak 1988). Because gender relations here are reconstituted through an imperial division of labour that shifts some of his partner's domestic responsibilities onto another, 'privilege' creates a void that is filled with a brittle and feminised performance of leisure and luxury. Paradoxically, this brings Rob's understanding of his wife's experience in line with traditional migration research that argues that women in migration experience a loss of status and the entrenchment of traditional gender roles, although the means of this loss here include practices and identities of wealth and leisure rather than poverty and domestic labour.

Privilege has its discontents therefore. In some of my interviews with women married to servicemen, privilege emerged as an object of dissent and disavowal, although not so much in terms of the imperial continuities it represented than the military hierarchy it threatened to disrupt. This is evident by the near-outrage articulated by Joanne when she considers the luxuries others experience on postings 'abroad' (compared to her current posting in Germany, which fails to qualify as 'overseas' in the same way).

J: If you get a posting abroad, you get a cleaner, you get a cook, you get a... why?! Whoever you are...

A: Whatever your rank?

J: Yep. Well I don't know about the lower but I've got friend who – the more bizarre the country, the more you get: you get an ironing lady... why?!

The object of Joanne's consternation is not simply that families moving 'overseas' would automatically be allocated a local housemaid. If considered more carefully, Joanne's consternation skips over the naturalised imperial division of labour, to focus instead on the disruption of a complementary military-sexual division of labour: what is the point of having a housekeeper when work such as cleaning, cooking and ironing are written into the sexual division of labour within military households? As Rob attests, disruption of this naturalised equilibrium left his wife "with very little to do". But it is the fact that these resources are allocated "whoever you are" that is also problematic for Joanne. This contravenes the

system through which material resources such as larger houses and housekeepers are allocated to personnel according to their rank (and not, for example, according to the size of the family and their needs). Joanne's reaction reveals that the mobility engendered through a posting overseas gains its meaning and value not simply as an act of travel to another country, but also as a touristic and somewhat vicarious excursion in rank (and the material trappings associated therewith). What is significant in Joanne's narrative is the *social* mobility travel facilitates, rather than the particularities of geographical relocation. Moreover, this social mobility derives not from travelling to a particular place and the opportunities that can arise from the creation of new, transnational social networks for example, but in a social mobility that remains rooted in military conditions. This subtle tension between geographic and social mobility begs the question of how to *locate* military wives' mobility if the cultural particularities of their location are almost incidental. To interrogate this apparent elision requires a better understanding of women's local movements and the particular social and cultural practices and identities articulated through them. In rest of this chapter therefore, I focus on women's everyday lives as located in the suburbs of a provincial German city.

Making the most of an international lifestyle?

And you know I've been to Canada, I've been to Kenya, I've been on tour. We've been to you know, crazy balls in Vienna. I've been down to Luxembourg, I've been all over Germany. I've drunk more champagne than I have water, I've met some amazing people, been to some incredible dinners. You know. And just seen some beautiful dresses and silverware.

Sophie, a young officer posted with the regiment and recently returned from Afghanistan, gives a thrilling account of her military career – it exudes glamour, beauty and a giddy but sophisticated youthfulness. Her account illustrates that military discourses of travel and adventure rely as much on social geographies of gender, class and rank, as they do upon landscapes and terrain. Scholars have identified some of the ways in which soldiers' identities are constructed discursively through the spaces of basic training (Woodward 1998) and more recently, deployment in desert camouflage (Gonzalez 2010). These discourses rely on masculinised constructions of wildness and rurality or an orientalist adventurism. Yet military identities by no means exclude the production of a kind of glamour and sophistication as recalled by Sophie. My interviews with women married to servicemen, particularly those married to officers such as Natasha below, also revealed a repeated trope that relies on the construction of Army life as cosmopolitan: if not glamorous *per se*, then at

least productive of “well-travelled experience, sophisticated style and *savoir faire*” (Vertovec 2010, p.63).

A: With the travel and everything do you view yourself as having this international outlook?

N: Yes, we do. It's not a Singapore posting, it's not a you know, glamorous... We've had lots of friends who've had much more glamorous postings and we've only ever done Germany and no-one's raging to come out to see us because it sounds like a glamorous one! But we've done a lot of travelling which we wouldn't have done if we'd been in the UK I'm absolutely convinced of it, and yeah no we actively pursue the international...

Coles and Fechter (2008, p.4) have questioned the applicability of the term ‘cosmopolitan’ to describe the migratory experience of women such as those married to servicemen, “because most of those involved retain much of their native culture abroad”. This brings such women’s experiences closer in line with that of traditional “sojourners” (Schiller et al 1995, p.48), where for example the experience of Japanese housewives accompanying corporate executives overseas, are expressed through the metaphor of a “long vacation” (Kurotani 2007, p.22). Kristin Atwood (2013, p.6) has argued that military families exist in a “grey area” between migrant and expatriate categories, such that their experiences “can usefully complicate reductionist understandings of the impact of globalization on family life” (Atwood 2013, p. 19). In a similar vein, scholars of transnational migration argue that cosmopolitanism inheres not simply in the ontological conditions of travel and movement and the question of where people go or how long they stay. Rather, cosmopolitanism represents a set of dispositions and capacities (Amit 2007, 9), a particular “orientation” (Vertovec 2010, 64). Cosmopolitanism might come close to the kind of outlook invoked by Natasha above, as she attempts to make the most of the opportunities afforded by living overseas. A further example might be the Anglo-German coffee morning.

Shaped by the garrison’s long history in the German city, the Anglo-German coffee morning is a genteel form of cultural exchange between local German women associated with the garrison and women married to officers within it. The event was characterised by a combined sense of quaint curiosity and inherited obligation on the part of the women I accompanied there. We arrived at the home of the German woman whose turn it was to host the event and joined a group of about twenty other women. We complimented the host on the enormous Christmas tree twinkling at the centre of the house, and proceeded to mingle around a large table laid with patisseries, meats and cheeses. There was much admiration of the tea service, some interest in my curious research project, and I received

advice from one of the German women on where to purchase a second-hand bicycle. The Anglo-German coffee morning also came up in my interview with Pippa, who had not long been posted to Germany and was married to a younger officer in the regiment. Although it was not clear whether she had attended the coffee morning herself, she was aware that such events were somehow exclusive, bound by internal divisions of (husbands') rank that were transferred seamlessly onto women whom she conceived of as 'senior wives': "Some of the more senior wives they do have these Anglo-German circles and I personally think they should open them out a bit more and publicise them a bit more". As is implied by Pippa, not only are such events loosely determined by rank, their exclusivity is upheld through unspoken or informal and self-perpetuating means, such that one gains access to the coffee morning by invitation or association, rather than by public announcement like other events in the garrison.

As well as being the most overt, contrived mode of 'cultural exchange' between the British military and German civilian community that I encountered, the Anglo-German coffee morning is just as remarkable for the social structures it mirrors and reproduces *across* the Anglo-German (and military/civilian) divide. This represents what Vered Amit (2007) describes as the boundedness as well as the apparent fluidity of people's mobilities, in the sense that:

travellers' voyages are critically implicated in the development of differentiated circuits of travel that encapsulate even as they facilitate movement. As a result, travellers moving through these specialised circuits are most likely to encounter other travellers like themselves" (Amit 2007, p.11).

It is certainly possible to argue that the regimental community in Germany represents a particular circuit of travel, one that brings together people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds in the UK, who may not otherwise have socialised together at home (Amit 2007, p.2). However, it is also important to recognise that this circuit of travel is by no means the only one in operation, and that people are also encapsulated by other "overlapping categories of travel" (Amit 2007, p.5). The categories of travel that encapsulate the Anglo-German coffee morning as a social circuit, are not simply to do with nationality or military status, but a subtler equivalence that connects hierarchies of rank and social structures such as class. It is here that 'senior wives' find their well-matched, local equivalents in a group of women married to business and civic elites. Moreover, it is a shared system of social conventions, a kind of cultural competence and *savoir-faire* (the

offering of a tastefully wrapped pot-plant as a gift for the host, the correct use of the tea service) that oil the cogs of this machine.

In 'The Militarisation of Opulence' (2012), Olga Demetriou considers a luxury hotel in Cyprus as a site for the overt and glamorised performance of a kind of business-as-usual peace, which normalised the investment of wealth in a nationalist project and armed conflict. The methods through which women are "maneuvered" (Enloe 2000 in Demetriou 2001, p.58) to support these patriarchal and military imperatives include a kind of "objectification that confines agency to consumption habits" (Demetriou 2001, p.57). What the Anglo-German coffee morning highlights, is the role of culture as "content or product" (Anthias 2001, p.627) in women's attempts to make the most of their 'international lifestyles'. The refined gentility of the coffee morning is a world away from the drab or dangerous machinery of military power as it grinds on elsewhere, in the garrison or indeed, in those parts of the world where women's husbands were at that time deployed. While the Anglo-German coffee morning is facilitated by continuities of class and social status, it was consumed in a way that emphasised otherness. The way the coffee morning was narrated to me beforehand as something I should 'experience' or 'see' for my project, our consumption of the food, our curiosity, and some women's less reverent comments, after the event, about provincial German tastes in interior design, all contribute to the sense of what women *make* of the conventions they perform and the location in which they find themselves.

In a study of NATO internationalist discourse entitled 'Cosmopolitan militarism? Spaces of NATO expansion', Merje Kuus (2009, p.550) concedes that "militarism and cosmopolitanism appear to be incompatible at first: the former associates with nationalism and statism, while the latter eschews these notions". If a military lifestyle can be aligned with a progressive, global perspective inflected with a sense of travel and adventure however, then perhaps "anyone can become a glamorous cosmopolite" by association (Kuus 2009, p.558). Although the exclusivity of the Anglo-German coffee morning might appear to constrain cosmopolitanism to a class of British and German elites, many women's everyday practices are shaped in important ways by the experience of living in another country, through tiny slippages and dis-locations that prompt a mixture of escapism and frustration, as Pippa recounts:

P: There is always that little feeling that, I mean you're not always on holiday but there's a little bit of – it's quite cool that you're living in a different country [...] In other ways I find it quite frustrating – life isn't as convenient as the UK,

you know you can't go to one supermarket, get everything – well, you could but, um, you know you can't get lamb! [laughs] Everywhere you go you can't get lamb except the NAAFI – little sort of foody things...

A: So how much do you shop in the NAAFI and how much do you shop in...

P: Um I mainly shop in [a German supermarket] out of principle. Again I just feel if you're in a country you should throw yourself into it. I mean, that is a culture shock in itself the supermarket, and you know most of them don't have baskets [...] They don't have shopping bags and still I forget to take them with me so I've got 4,000 in my cupboard because every time I go out I have to buy one! [laughs] So there's those little nuances which I half love and half hate because they're frustrating if you don't get your head round them. But the NAAFI, I think it's such a shame to limit yourself to limited and not particularly good quality food and the NAAFI really is overpriced. I mean if there's some things you can't get anywhere else that you really want, you go to the NAAFI

A: Like what for example?

P: [laughs] Just like some brands, like Marmite – Tom likes Marmite – things like that. Umm... this is going to be embarrassing... Roast Beef Monster Munch! [laughs loud]

Scholarship on migration has looked closely at material culture and its constitutive role in the production of identity and 'home' (see for example Ayşe Şimşek Çağlar's (2002) discussion of the meanings invested in a coffee table and its positioning in Turkish migrants' homes in Germany and Turkey respectively). Scholars such as Ruba Salih (2003, p.68) pay attention to women's negotiation of "the flow of objects" to accord subjects "agency in the constitution of society and of their own identities" (Miller 1987 in Salih 2003, p.68). Within this framework, homemaking is considered as a way of "mediating a sense of belonging through the familiar" (Gordon 2008, p.30). Heather Hindman (2008) focuses on a range of ways in which women in privileged migration are positioned as guardians of familiarity. While corporations provide monetary compensation packages designed as far as possible to maintain an 'equivalent' lifestyle for the families living abroad she argues, such economic incentives are nothing without the women's work which, through consumer choices and homemaking decisions, converts them into social capital: "Thus if it is male labour that brings the couple abroad, it is the woman's job to erase that move" (Hindman 2008, p.42).

Despite the instrumentalisation of women's domestic labour in this way, the attitudes and practices that Pippa espouses might qualify as "actually existing" cosmopolitanism (Malcolmson in Robbins 1998, p.2). This is not the kind of cosmopolitanism that functions as "a luxuriously free-floating view from above" (Robbins 1998, p.1), but one that inheres in everyday practices with an emphasis on pragmatism and tactics (Vertovec 2010 p.64). As Amit (2007, p.12) argues in his consideration of the dual dynamic of escape and encapsulation that structures travellers' movements, military wives "may not be seeking to

ride cosmopolitan waves of international mobility, but in their efforts to win space for themselves in new places, their unavoidable and mundane encounters with “others” may well effect more or less subtle changes in perspective and organisation”. Women such as Pippa may not, perhaps, be argued to transcend the gendered boundaries that confine her agency to domestic consumption and, ultimately, a choice of supermarkets. However, this apparently banal choice between national and international, at least affords some escape from the over-determined sovereign conditions of military mobilities represented by the NAAFI. Furthermore, if cosmopolitanism inheres not simply in the ontological conditions of travel and movement but also a set of orientations and capacities (Amit 2007, p.9; Vertovec 2010, p.64), could it be possible that women’s active construction and performance of an international lifestyle serves as an imaginative landscape that substitutes the militarised terms of their mobility for terms that are far more ‘civilised’? The example of the Anglo-German coffee morning and Pippa’s practices of cultural consumption both demonstrate a set of micro-practices which, although often predetermined by the material and social structures of British Forces Germany, in some ways offer women the opportunity to transcend national borders, as well as the border between military and civilian, by seeking out their German equivalents, whether in the form of social conventions or consumer produce. In this sense, women’s micro-practices of border-crossing might be read as a “symbol of liberatory articulations between place, culture and identity” (Salih 2003, p.5), through which they renegotiate the militarization of their mobilities.

Hybridity foreclosed

The “liberatory turn” in migration studies (Pratt and Yeoh 2003, p.159) reformulates migrants as “icons of hybridity” (Salih 2003, p.5). Hybridity is a contested term that has been used as a model for the cultural transformations posited as arising from migration and diaspora in a globalised age (Hutnyk 2010, p.59). However, further examples of military wives’ cosmopolitan imaginaries and in many cases, their abrupt collision with reality, indicate the degree to which their liberatory potential fails to materialise as the transformative – and indeed transnational – effect it implies. As well as a potential site for both cultural consumption and familiarisation, shopping was frequently used by women as a measure of language proficiency, whereby multiple women equated their level of vocabulary as sufficient to be able to ‘get by’ in the supermarket, or not, in Stacey’s case:

I don't feel like I'm living in Germany until I hit the shops, and find a shop that no-one speaks English, that's when it... you think, you know... But nine times out of ten you go in and you go 'guten Morgen', and whatever [you say] they

can tell you're English just because [of] the way you dress, we stand out like sore thumbs. So they know and they end up talking English to you anyway. But it's not until really you hit a German shop that doesn't speak English then you think 'oh god' you know. But in general I like it, if I could move all of this back home it'd be better obviously, just because of being close to family and stuff like that but no, I like it.

Through an implicit mode of return, Stacey's narrative soon loops back to a desire for the familiar, or the incorporation of the foreign into the familiar at least (if Stacey could move all she liked about living in a provincial German city 'back home'). As I encountered these contradictions more frequently, such as when talking to Kirsty, who was married to a junior soldier and had not been in Germany long, I struggled to maintain the innocence of my questions, especially with regards to learning the language (and began to feel much less concerned about my own lack of efforts to do the same):

K: [B]asically it's more of an experience while we're over here 'cause, well, [you] kind of get the chance to learn the language sort of [laughs]

A: Yeah, have you done any of that?

K: No! [laughs]

A: Nor have I! [laughs]

K: I think it's an experience more than anything else 'cause in the UK it's, I don't know, it's not as much of an experience, you can't really go out and indulge in the culture and stuff like that 'cause it's all English isn't it?

Kirsty's invocation of 'culture' as an 'experience' that she has in fact failed to pursue, renders it something of an empty signifier and posits the cosmopolitanism that is constructed through it, a kind of wilful misrepresentation. This is in complete contradistinction to the form of culture that learning a language actually represents, involving a detailed, processual and long-lasting transformation on the part of the language learner and a long-term commitment rather than a one-off event. Moreover, where the German language might be viewed as an object of cultural acquisition and experience, it was also frequently cited as the most significant obstacle blocking women's access to German culture in any form, the "language barrier". The foreclosure of this transformatory aspect of living overseas is emphasised by Pippa, whose own efforts to learn the language had been thwarted multiple times when she signed up for free German lessons provided by the garrison, only for them to be cancelled due to lack of subscribers.

P: But I don't know whether people just have a lot going on in their lives with their children and then they just get comfortable in their community and they don't generally show an interest in you know, embracing German life and culture, um and whether that's, I think that does tend to be more on the soldiers' wives' side.

A: Yeah – do you think it's to do with your outlook, how you've been brought up, your socio-economic means, your education things like that?

P: Yeah I do think, some of the wives come out here and they are really young, I mean I was twenty-nine, thirty when I came out and some of them are just seventeen or eighteen and it's not what... you're not mature enough to say 'Ooh I'd like to embrace the culture' or say, go on a course. No, you just want to go out and get hammered, as in every country, that's as hybrid as it gets, going to Bar Negroni's and a few of the cocktail places, and I think maybe it's only when you become a bit older do you realise the benefits and the interests of being in a different country.

While Pippa distinguishes between different women's attitudes to consuming culture, these are distinctions she attributes to age and in so doing, resists reproducing value judgements based on rank, class and socio-economic status. Her portrayal of some of the younger women married to junior soldiers is sympathetic to the degree to which, through age and inexperience as she perceives it, the consumption of culture (or rather, what she implies is a misguided version of culture constituting the over-consumption of cocktails in a bar that was broadly known as the go-to venue for British military wives in the city) represents women's limited choices but also, ultimately, the fulfilment of their desires at that particular moment.

But it is Pippa's invocation of the idea of hybridity (and significantly, its failure) that is most interesting to me here, particularly for what hybridity implies about the liberatory potential of border-crossing as a process of transformation, where migrant experiences are argued to produce new, emergent subject positions that are neither here nor there, but which constitute a "Third Space" (Bhabha 1994, p.55). It is essential to note that the material and social context in which Pippa deploys the notion of hybridity differs considerably from the origins of the term in the work of scholars such as Stuart Hall (1988 in Anthias 2001, p.625), Homi Bhabha (1994) and Paul Gilroy (1993) for example. Like Kirsty's desire to learn the German language, Stacey's incorporation of the foreign into the familiar and Natasha's espousal of an international lifestyle however, women assert agency, choice and discursive control over their social and geographic mobility through their micro-practices, sense-making narratives and imaginaries. This captures a sense of the more fluid social mobility that women *make* of their highly bounded geographic mobility for example. However, like Joanne's sense of 'moving on' and 'being held back', the limits of these transformations ("that's as hybrid as it gets") betrays a complex set of contradictions where micro-opportunities for transgression and reinvention also reproduce their own encapsulation. The reliance of women's mobilities upon military hierarchies of class and gender for example, and the military's structural and material reterritorialisation of British sovereignty and nationality overseas, can also have the curious effect of fixing women in place, for example

through a military-sexual division of labour that confines their opportunities for empowerment to motherhood or the direct incorporation of their labour into the institution. In many ways, the failure of hybridity here underlines Anthias' (2001, p.619) critique of "the stories we tell ourselves that we are all becoming global, hybrid and diasporic". Like "globalist militarism" (Kuus 2009, p.558), the hybridity and culture that women desire or imagine are "constructions of social reality" (Young 1996 in Anthias 2001, p.619). Furthermore, these are undergirded not only by privilege but ironically, by the fixing-in-place of normative – and far from transgressive – gender roles and relations. As Anthias (2001, p. 628) argues, the "alternative adaptation to that of translation (where new and more transgressive forms emerge)" is something of an "enclavisation process, a living in a 'time warp', a mythologizing of tradition"¹⁶.

Conclusion

It is clear from the examples I have explored in this chapter that the experiences of women married to servicemen are difficult to compare, in any straightforward way, to recent frameworks for understanding gender and migration. Yet, as scholars who have tackled the counter-intuitive possibility for transnationalism illustrate (Kuus 2009, Atwood 2013), military subjects – particularly as families – are not detached from globalised circuits of power (not least because globalisation and militarism are mutually imbricated at the macro level of international politics [Enloe 2007]). That said, this chapter has demonstrated that the military model of migration remains in many ways rigidly confined to the reproduction of the nation state within a 'foreign' territory. This only makes it more important, however, to pay attention to flows of power at the micro-level and specifically, the local movements of women married to servicemen. As I have illustrated in this chapter, this reveals the ambiguous, in-between spaces where military migration is lived and moreover, is lived through the multiple mobilities asserted by military wives. These are informal, iterative, circuitous and highly localised, and are constituted through the practices and discourses of everyday life. Most importantly perhaps, this chapter documents the push and pull of women's mobilities as they sometimes work with, and sometimes against, the reinforced borders of state and institutional structures.

The concomitant feeling of 'moving on' and 'being held back' articulated by Joanne at the beginning of this chapter however, perhaps limits the scope available for an assessment of

¹⁶ For a nuanced account of this dynamic through migrants' metaphors of "living in a bubble" see Fechter 2007.

women's role as agents of their mobilities. It also poses the problem of how to account for the imaginative geographies and desires they articulate as anything other than a kind of false consciousness. But very few of the women's narratives I have explored in this chapter make possible the argument that they are accessories to their own mobility in any unquestioning way. The narratives and experiences I have documented are often ambivalent, so often turn on an implicit compromise, frequently acknowledge some kind of failure, or are knowingly and humorously undone by their own contradictions. But the push and pull of women's mobilities, makes clear their "struggle to control the concepts and symbols by which current experience is evaluated" (Scott 1985, p.27). While this struggle might be "singularly undramatic" (*ibid*), it reveals how women keep moving and refuse to be kept in their place. In the rest of this thesis, I shift my focus from the external to the internal boundaries shaping the mobilities of women married to servicemen. I begin with the boundaries of what might be called the 'regimental family'.

Reproducing the Regimental Family

J: Basically the short version of it is, at the Battle of Waterloo they were running out of food and supplies in the officers' mess. The officers had done the usual and binged and drunk everything in sight. So what they decided to do is, the officers and the sergeants messes would join together and share their rations. So that's where it... it dates back all the way to then and they still do it every year. But what happens is, the sergeants have to go and invite – all the officers wait in the mess, and a couple of sergeants go up to the mess and invite the officers down to the sergeants' mess, to come and join...

A: Oh! Sorry so it's all of them together?

J: Yes, all together and they all go into the sergeants' mess because you can't go - you can't go into a mess higher than your own. That only happens with troopers.

A: [silence]

J: Oh, ok. Troopers can go into the corporals' mess if they've invited. I mean anyone can go into any mess if they're invited but the rule is - that's why most events that are multi-rank, like all ranks, happens in the corporals' mess because troopers can go into the corporals' because it's not an official mess. But a corporal can't just go walk into the sergeants' mess or officers' mess, it don't work like that.

A: I never knew that, interesting, so yeah...

J: And then after they've eaten they play random games [...]

A: I've heard some stuff about it from the lads at dinner - rugby with a...

J: Cabbage...

A: Or something.

J: You know the mats in the gym? You know where you eat lunch and dinner?

A: Yes?

J: That gets padded out, it's deadly.

A: And then I guess the next morning everyone is, well...

J: Minging...

A: ...ill, yup. And do you get to hear about it in the office?

J: Oh yes.

More than any other interview, my conversation with Jamie, who was married to a middle-ranking soldier in the regiment, seemed to unfold in terms that were particularly instructive. Much of the interview took the form of an animated, engaging account of the regiment's quirks and traditions, each new fact that Jamie elaborated requiring a further layer of explanation. Jamie demonstrated a comprehensive and affectionate knowledge of the regiment, which derived in part from her job as a civilian clerk working in regimental headquarters. Throughout the interview she emphasized her privileged access to, knowledge of and acceptance by the service personnel with whom she worked, to the degree that she perceived she had transcended her identity as a military wife: "People

generally relate to me more as Rupert's PA as such, rather than 'Oh, Dylan's wife'." Jamie was also clear about the emotional ties she had invested in the regiment, which were particularly acute at the time of our interview, just before the first group of personnel were due to return from Afghanistan.

I work with [the senior officers] more than I see [my husband]. It's really weird 'cause I'm really excited for Sunday, for them all to come home, 'cause like, they're all my babies [...] if you think about it I spend more time with the boys in RHQ than I do actually with Dylan, so for me I've not just got a husband out there, I've got a whole regiment out there, 'cause I know everyone out there. Every single person down to the last trooper I know, even if I don't know them personally [...] it feels like I've got 400 husbands out there!

Although through her employment with the regiment, Jamie might be argued to have transcended the limits of Army spousehood, her relationship with it remains couched in gendered terms of exchange. Jamie's metaphors of mothering, nurture and marriage as a frame for expressing – and conflating – her personal and professional investment in belonging to the regiment, reveal the social reproduction of the military institution as it is rarely acknowledged in research. This chapter then, is about the reproduction of the 'regimental family' as a vehicle for belonging and social cohesion.

How the military produces and sustains social cohesion is the object of debate within sociological research on British Armed Forces (see for example Ware 2012; Basham 2009; Kirke 2009; King 2006 and 2007; Thornborrow and Brown 2009). Missing from much of this research however, is an equivalent understanding of the role of military families, and particularly wives, in supporting and sustaining this cohesion¹⁷. Still less explored, is the nature of wives' own investment in structures designed to facilitate social cohesion, or the ways in which women's labour, identities and emotions articulate alternative modes of belonging. Scholars have argued for the existence of a "*loyalty/identity structure*" (Kirke 2009, p.747 emphasis in original) for social cohesion, based on the importance of close personal bonds between troops, as well as a "*functional structure*" (*ibid*), where cohesion is thought to be produced primarily through task-oriented training and activities (see King 2006; Siebold 2007; King 2007 for a detailed debate). Harrell (2001, p.68) has demonstrated the role of military wives' labour in the form of the "compelled duties" that sustain "family readiness groups" (*ibid*) in the case of the US military. However, there is little else to connect the study of military wives' experiences to the material, social and cultural frameworks of

¹⁷ Although Ware (2012, p.209) has focused on the social networks – or lack of them – that shape the experiences of foreign and commonwealth spouses.

social cohesion as they are centralized in accounts of the relations between personnel.

Perhaps this is because including the experiences of women married to servicemen somewhat muddies the divisions through which military command is assumed to operate, particularly “the creation of insider and outsider categories” (Higate and Cameron 2006, p.224) around the idea of a military/civilian divide. Going back to Jamie’s experience for example, at another point in our interview she asserts an alternative positionality in relation to the military institution, based expressly on her status as a civilian. Indeed, Jamie’s civilian status is a salient aspect of her professional competency, as she explains: “because a lot of wives would be coming in so it'd be you know, wives not having to come in and deal with military, you know you can come in and deal with a civvy, you know just ease that tension like, just to make it a bit easier and a friendly face all that kind of stuff”. At the same time, Jamie’s civilian status also enables her to opt out of the regiment’s hierarchical ethos:

J: Like when [the Commanding Officer] first turned up it's like 'Yes Colonel, no Colonel', you know blah blah blah whatever. But now, it's like [he] comes in and [...] he'll say like, 'Can you make me a brew?' and I'll be like 'How many you had today?! Do you think I've got all the time in the world to stand here and make you brews?' And you know, you just have a joke and a laugh with them so instead of them being your boss, it's like...

A: Well you just grow a nice working relationship don't you?

J: Yeah, but like some of the wives don't understand that, 'cause they're like [...] 'You can't talk to the Colonel like that'. I'm like - he's a *person*!

A: But you're not in the Army as well, like....

T: Exactly! It's like, he's a person, he's - yes he is the Colonel, yes he is kind of my boss, but... I'm not going to treat him any different to how I'm going to treat a normal friend or colleague.

In many ways, Jamie might be argued to be an outsider in relation to the regiment, a position that is explicitly aligned with her civilian status (Higate and Cameron 2006, p.224). Feminist standpoint theory proposes a more nuanced account of Jamie’s subject position in relation to the multiple categorisations of military culture, however. As an “outsider within” (Hill Collins 2004. p.103), Jamie might be argued to occupy a position that, although in many ways subordinated, enables her to perceive and articulate the absurdities of regimental hierarchy in a way that can speak truth to power (if only in small, everyday practices of subversion, for example by at least joking with the Colonel about the cup of tea it is her pseudo-domestic role to make). Yet at the same time, Jamie’s status is also subject to the vicissitudes of multiple and intersecting boundary lines, as she explains with respect to her relationship with the wives of senior personnel. Here too, Jamie must negotiate the terms of

her subordination and carve out room to manoeuvre among other military wives, who expect her to uphold the formal conventions of regimental hierarchy and discipline:

I work with so many different ranks from the troopers all the way up, to even the Brigadier when he comes in, you know so I know so many different wives, but some wives look at me as if to say 'oh, she's a corporal's wife talking to an officer - officer's wife' [...] And you'll get people like [senior officers' wives] who think that me, I work for them!

Jamie's interview illustrates that her ideas about regimental culture and belonging combine with aspects of her social personhood in a way that is incredibly dense, complex and confusing for all concerned. Negotiating the multiple categorisations of the military hierarchy – not only the overarching division between military and civilian, but a range of intersecting differences and distinctions that stretch across and call into question that divide – Jamie selectively mobilises aspects of her status as a civilian wife to rise above or opt out of the social hierarchy to which she is nevertheless formally subordinate. Her mobilization of ideas about wifehood, reproductive labour and nurture to articulate her position on both the inside and the outside of the military/civilian divide are striking, and indicate the importance of gender not only as part of the conditions through which women are marginalized as civilians in the first place, but also as part of their capacity to renegotiate the terms of their relationship to their husbands' – and often their own – employer.

Perhaps this marginal, hybrid status is also part of the reason that military wives – and their paid and unpaid labour – do not feature in conceptualisations of social or unit cohesion in the British Army. Some of the (mainly US-based) research on military families frames the study of spouse employment (Cooke and Speirs 2005), coping mechanisms (Westhuis et al 2006) and support services (Bourg and Segal 1999) in terms of its impact on "the commitment of male soldiers (and their wives) to the military institution" (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.644). Yet very little has been done to remove wives' experiences from a bracketed sub-clause and question the precise terms through which they make sense of, perform and renegotiate the terms of this commitment, either on behalf of their husband or on behalf of themselves. Simply to state that military wives understand their relationship to the military institution in terms that are "occupational" (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.637), through the material benefits they receive from welfare support for example, would be to exclude them from any investment in the kind of affective ties - and reproductive labour – that military sociology argues is also a fundamental part of social cohesion and organisational commitment in military institutions (Siebold 2007). While much has been done to

understand military participation, without also questioning the commitment of those with a less formal, and less visible, role in sustaining that participation, the picture will remain incomplete. In this chapter I want to do more to explore what might be termed the “organisational commitment” (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.637) of military wives. What hybrid forms might women’s commitment take when the military combines with marriage and the family? Where do women’s loyalties lie, how are such loyalties constructed and maintained? I begin by expanding the frame for a consideration of the work involved in maintaining both the regiment’s “loyalty/identity structure” (Kirke 2009, p.747 emphasis in original) and “functional structure” (*ibid*).

Alternative regimental logistics

It was spring when the regiment began its staggered return from Afghanistan and the hitherto sleepy camp was transformed by the inimitable presence of soldiers. Troops gathered for inspection in the morning or hung around smoking cigarettes after lunch, squadrons of soldiers sweated in the gym and there was the sound of boots marching across the parade ground. At such times, whoever was in the Welfare Office might look out and watch the soldiers marching past on drill. ‘Bless them’, we seemed to be saying, it was funny and endearing, their marching round and round, wives trying to spot their husbands among the identically dressed lines of men and women. The ritualised activity of drill, designed to prepare “individuals to act as components of a larger machine” (Ware 2012, p.106), is one of the military institution’s defining vehicles for social cohesion. Anthony King (2006, p.495) has argued that collective tasks such as drill (and the hierarchies of command as well as cooperation they promote) are central to unit cohesion. The drill imposed upon the regiment’s troops on return from Afghanistan, was in preparation for a series of ceremonial homecoming parades, which included a trip to the UK to march through the regiment’s home city. With all the buzz of the return from deployment I decided to follow the regiment back to the UK to watch the parade. To drive into the regiment’s UK barracks and see the same soldiers in the same uniforms doing the same PT routine, was to witness a kind of seamless replication, a double-take moment in which the regiment, captured in duplicate from the soldiers’ sit-ups to the same faces sat at desks in a different office, appeared to be a machine made of composite parts that could be picked up and re-assembled with striking continuity. In this I was witnessing the primary organisational function of the regiment within the British Army, a single specialised unit, a body, composed of multiple parts moving in well-ordered and practiced formation.

Yet the picture presented above is only a partial, cropped image of the logistical movements of the regiment at that time. In one sense, this functional picture privileges what Kirke and York (2005, p.308) have characterised as “enlightenment” paradigms of British military doctrine founded on concrete and coherent patterns and structures. Accounting for the human mechanics of regimental logistics however, omits the messy attachments and informalities that produces the possibility for postmodernist command (Kirke and York 2006, p.313). A more transient, experiential picture of the regiment’s syncretic movements might include for example its inefficiencies (something I frequently heard about at dinner in the sergeants’ mess) as well as insubordination (Kirke 2010, see also Hockey 1986). But it is also possible – and necessary – to widen the frame even further beyond these considerations, in this case to reveal the itineraries of those ‘following’ the regiment back to the UK for the parades. For a fuller picture of regimental logistics in this case, one must look beyond the well-rehearsed illusion of straight lines and tight turns in parade practice, and beyond the commercial coaches and ageing minibuses that transported squadrons of hung-over soldiers to the UK. The informal, messier mobilities at the margins include the women married to servicemen and the majority of the regiment’s families, who travelled independently back to the UK in order to take up their role as supporters and witnesses of the parade. Unlike the formal provision of transport to take soldiers back to the UK barracks, there was no formal provision for their families, at the same time as there was no formal expectation for families to attend the parades in the UK. However, the regiment timed its ‘harmony leave’, a period when the whole regiment is given time off in one block, for the week following the parade, which also happened to coincide with half term in the British school calendar (to which MOD schools in Germany conform). Though families’ attendance at the parade was in no way obligatory, it made practical sense for many of them to return to the UK and stay on to visit relatives. In this sense, the formal structures of regimental life were managed to combine rather than compete with – and as such, compel – a certain degree of integration with family life (Bourg and Segal 1999, p.648).

This snapshot – the regiment travelling in convoy by coach and the family estate cars weaving at various intervals behind – reveals an additional form of regimental logistics, and an example of what might be described as military wives’ own “task cohesion” (MacCoun 1993 in Basham 2009, p.732), comprising a “shared commitment among members to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group” (*ibid*). For many, the

regiment's requirement and provision for soldiers to travel *en masse* disrupted a marital division of labour. Usually, the journey back to the UK would be undertaken by husband and wife together in order to share driving, navigational and childcare responsibilities. The subtraction of husbands' labour from this equation resulted in an alternative form of collective organising however. This comprised a flurry of lift sharing between wives of soldiers who were also mothers of small children, who teamed up so that one woman could drive the twelve hours back to the UK and the other could feed, entertain or cajole toddlers in the back seat. These lift shares created new, female-headed family units in cars buzzing with sat-nav, iPads, i-spy and directions given over mobile phones, connecting the nuclear family based in Germany to extended families in Europe or the UK, meeting mothers-in-law at service stations in France or staying at grandparents' houses for half term. These military mobilities – wives' parallel logistical movements yes but also the gendered redistribution of tasks and resources – must also be considered as an integral, but seldom acknowledged, part of the adjustments and adaptations prompted by regimental practices. Furthermore, these mobilities arise from the collision of multiple institutions and ties (the military, the family, marriage) that stretch across multiple locations (different parts of the UK and Europe). While the soldiers were transplanted from the German to the UK barracks as a single unit, their wives ensured the regimental family stayed together and fell in behind.

These joint or solo journeys to and from the UK by car emerged as a source of stress and inconvenience but also pride and achievement in many women's narratives. In casual chit-chat in the welfare office, regimental shop and at social events, different women's plans for the journey were often discussed, and frequently construed as a challenge of everyday resilience for which women planned carefully in advance. In many conversations, the journey seemed to take on the status of a rite of passage¹⁸. Women who had done it before had tips and knowledge to pass on about the infamous interchange at Antwerp under misdirection from sat-nav systems; women who were doing it for the first time surprised themselves; there was collective organising, the provision of packed lunches and often a sense of empowerment summed up by the necessity to 'crack on'. In this sense, the journey back to the UK provided an object for women's public performance and recognition of self-sufficiency. The military idiom of the need to 'crack on' was so widely and frequently asserted, that it can be interpreted less as an expression of assimilation, than as an appropriation of ideas about resilience and resourcefulness. It is in such ways that

¹⁸ See King 2006, p.501 for a Durkheimian analysis of the ritualistic function of British forces training activities.

stereotypes of the “model military wife” (Enloe 2000, p.162) become sanctioned and gain their disciplinary power, but if the assertion that one must ‘crack on’ with a task comes at the end of an extended conversation about how troublesome, challenging and unreasonable that task is, it also serves as a permissible way to register a good deal of complaint as well as, ultimately, compliance. In such ways therefore, women participate in the collective and vociferous assertion of the value of their own labour as part of regimental logistics.

Beyond the functional terms of keeping the movements of the regiment and the family in sync, these informal practices can also be connected to the production of social cohesion by sustaining women’s sense of belonging as a collective in their own right. Sociologists arguing for the significance of “bonding” (Siebold 2007, p.288) rather than task-oriented training to the military’s production of cohesion have emphasised the importance of “the social relationship, both affective and instrumental, between service members and their group” (*ibid*). This approach prioritises “bonds of trust and loyalty between members on many different levels” (Ware 2012, p.106). At the closest level, research has emphasised the importance of “primary group cohesion” (Siebold 2007, p.289) characterised by “cooperative, holistic, supportive, face-to-face relationships” (*ibid*). My own experience of regimental logistics yielded something of an insight into the bonds – both affective and instrumental – forged through even the most mundane or banal activities of the regimental community and called upon for the collective task of mass mobilisation. Although I had declined the offer of a place on one of the squadrons’ coaches and booked my own flight back to the UK for the parades, I ended up travelling by car in order to accompany one woman who had been unable to find a companion for her journey home. My field diary from the time shows that I did not see any particular value or propriety in approaching the journey as a field study experience in its own right (such as I am now ironically deploying it here). Rather, my compulsion comes across as a principled ‘opting out’ of field study, drawing the boundary between a professional and a personal investment in the act and transcending the notion of work in favour of a moral imperative to help. It is clear that this act of volunteerism puzzled me for its negation of both financial and logistical convenience, and also surprised those observing my decision from the outside:

What was my motivation for doing this? [My partner] thought I was mad volunteering. Was I trying to blend in, be popular? Partly I suppose, wanting to be liked, but I think I did also genuinely want to help out. Also, apart from the fact of doing this I think it’s been important to me not to treat this as a participant observation opportunity, not to be making mental notes. Partly this is because I genuinely like Sarah – she’s been one of the easiest to talk to. And

partly because it felt like a fairly normal thing to do even though it wasn't at all. And did I possibly feel a bit junior in terms of aptitude with children? Possibly. Certainly aware of not having any, though in not entirely negative ways!

Hence in the end, I found a role in these alternative regimental logistics. I cycled to Sarah's house for our appointed departure time, she had made me a packed lunch of cheese sandwiches (though was surprised when I ate them all within two hours of being on the road), and my proxy maternal labour was expended on feeding dried apricots to her young son with a fairly low ratio of apricots eaten to apricots spat out. It is important to note that none of this – the hours of planning, the lift-shares, the packed lunches, the stressful motorway interchange at Antwerp, nor the soldiers napping in the kind of touring coaches more generally associated with groups of old age pensioners or school children – was visible to the passers-by who eventually watched the parade pass through the regiment's home city. In the end, all the attention was on the smartly turned-out troops and the mesmerising rhythm of their synchronised movements. Yet it is also true to say that without the dedicated spectatorship in which wives and children, dressed in their best clothes, also took up their role¹⁹, the parade would have been devoid of both personal and political meaning. As a vehicle for the projection of national and regional pride given weight by the return of soldiers from a far-away war, the public performativity of the parade shows little sign of the cumulative labour it took to produce. It is this broader connection between the performance of regimental and national belonging that I want to consider next.

Citizen-wives?

In conventional understandings, soldiers' military participation is often understood as secured at least in part through elevated notions of national service, through which personnel are understood as fulfilling a social contract as a citizen-soldier (Woodward 2008, p.364). Woodward (2008, p.375) has addressed the link between this more abstract idea of national service and the social bonds of primary group cohesion by exploring what she calls "mateship" as a way in which soldiers might be understood to "do" citizenship (Woodward 2008, p.377). On this close-contact scale, she argues, "identifiable individuals – the members of the group – stand in lieu of the nation, and loyalty to this group provides something that rationalises participation" (*ibid*). Gibson and Abell (2004, p.885) have argued that even though national frames of reference are more usually absent from or disavowed in soldiers'

¹⁹ For an interesting consideration of women's role as witnesses to men's political acts see Peteet 1994.

accounts, the idea of national service remains “an available trope” that permits a “de-emphasis of the role of ‘patriotic’ motivations to serve in the armed forces, while still assuming a banally nationalist frame” (Gibson and Abell 2004, p.886). In light of the connections I have explored so far in this chapter, it is appropriate to consider the ways in which women married to servicemen experience and adapt elements of the regiment’s national and regional identity as a mechanism of their own and their husbands’ role in the regiment.

The geographic affiliation of British Army regiments to particular regions and nations within the UK provides a “tribal” (Ware 2012, p.76) focus for its cultural identity, and also delineates the recruitment pool for the majority of its junior troops (*ibid*). The regiment with which I was based took seriously its national and regional affiliations, and was heavily invested in the cultural work involved in sustaining them. In practice however, the regional focus of regimental belonging is somewhat less absolute than it appears, emphasising the degree to which regimental belonging is socially produced (as epitomised in the adaptation of regimental belonging – apparently so geographically-bound and regionally-specific – as a container for what Ware [2012, p.256] has called “militarised multicultural”). Looking at military wives’ discourses of national service indicates that its usefulness is performative, rather than vested in any absolute essence of national belonging. Jacquelyn, a Fijian woman married to one of the regiment’s handful of Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) personnel, explains:

A: What is ‘doing your bit’?

J: As in, if there's an event like the families event they had last year, we try our best and [...] we did a fundraising [event]. The Fijian families and the [Regiment], we put in 30 euros each and we bought all the food, did the earth oven Lovo thingy [and] gave [the food] out. We got about 400 euros; we gave it to SSAFA as our contribution.

A: And is that also an important thing for you to do - is there lots of organising between the Fijian families?

J: I think we stick together [within] a regiment, yeah. As in for us it's a small regiment, we live our own individual family life, but if there's something that crops up that we need the whole crew to be part of, yeah the guys just spread the word and that's us.

A: Do you feel like a member of [the regiment], like regiment and traditions?

J: I would say I'm not very good at observing traditions. I know they do the St Patrick's Day or something, which I have no... I mean I know I've done research on the computer and read through a whole page of what St Patricks mean and what not, but I think I don't really pay much attention with that, I do the bit that they require my help with or if there are events I try and show my appreciation as attending events, and um, popping into welfare now and again.

In Jacquelyn's account, the instrumentalisation of Fijian culture is matched by her strategic deployment of it as a way to 'do her bit'. While the Fijian cultural production satisfies the regiment's demand that its Foreign and Commonwealth personnel and their families are seen to 'belong' in a way that is consistent with the "multiculturalisation" of the British Army (Ware 2012, p.262), there is also a sense in which this somewhat superficial engagement frees Jacquelyn from anything more than a functional engagement by return. This is tellingly illustrated in her mistaking of the national holiday to celebrate the regiment's regional affiliation, for the national holiday of the Republic of Ireland, St Patrick's Day. Any symbolic or ideological investment Jacquelyn might perform for the regiment is countered by her own matter-of-fact declaration of interest: "I just know the people who I need to know - sort of need to know basis - welfare and the facilities they provide, whatever I need to use that's about it".

That said, a further example of the performance of belonging through the symbolism of nationality and ethnicity complicates the functional picture implied by Jacquelyn's motivations. Towards the end of the operational tour, the welfare office began to arrange Sunday afternoon craft sessions for soldiers' spouses and their children. At these times, women came to the camp's family room to make 'welcome home' banners out of bed sheets supplied by the Quarter Master's stores. Of all the events held for families during deployment, these sessions were the best attended, attracting women from different social groups whom I had not observed socialising together previously. Very soon in the creative endeavour, smaller groups of friends and acquaintances formed to produce separate banners and allocate tasks between themselves. Although ostensibly an activity for children, the event was attended by a couple of women who did not have children and some banners were worked on almost exclusively by wives. Following a debate about the colour of some lettering among one group of wives, someone highlighted the lack of representation for soldiers of a particular nationality on the banner. As the regiment has its origins in one country within the UK, the banner was somewhat dominated by a very large national symbol pertaining to that country. Some women pointed out that their husbands weren't of that nationality, and that it wouldn't be right if their national symbol weren't represented too. Separate national flags were considered before someone suggested that the Union Jack might do the job, although it was considered too difficult to paint and not sufficient to redress the representational bias. In the end, it was decided that the national flower of the missing minority nation would be added above the somewhat dominant symbol, and

national flower, of the majority one. To me, the banner painting was a surprising occasion for tensions between national difference and ethnic belonging to emerge. After all, it had brought together a wide range of women based on their shared experience of the deployment. Furthermore, the other signs and symbols through which currencies of duty and service were traded, pertained to the idea of soldiers not as citizens but as family men. These were expressed through mothers' encouragement of their children's sentiments in expressions such as 'daddy my hero' and 'welcome home daddies', further personalised by pink paper hearts and children's handprints.

This personalisation of military service and its reformulation in the emotive terms of soldiers' role as fathers raises the possibility of an alternative interpretation of national and ethnic belonging too. Contrary to the idea of citizenship as an overarching framework that foregrounds the relationship of soldiers to the state, the banners portray a kind of family tree comprising ethnic origins, naturalised symbolism and the pre-military idea of where an individual soldier is 'from' – such that might be represented (and is also feminised) by a national flower rather than a flag for example. In this public expression of military participation created by wives, national identity emerges as something that precedes or predates the co-optation of a soldiers' labour by the military institution and its prescriptions about identity and regimental affiliation. This is an association that is underlined by Tai and Sonika, a Fijian couple whom I interviewed together:

A: For you in terms of who your friends are in the regiment, do the Fijian soldiers stick together or is it to do with rank?

T: No I think it's normal for us, when we see a Fijian we just want to go and stand and just talk to them. But then –

S: Because we miss speaking our dialect [...] So it gives us an opportunity to just talk Fijian and –

T: And then you... like, some of my friends and all of the higher ranks as well, they will say, 'Oh why you don't want to come and stand with us, do we smell?' I say, 'No it's not that, we [are] just used to do[ing] this'. 'Cause when you see another Fijian, even though I don't know that Fijian guy, I will just go to him and say hello. [...]

S: I think it's just part of our cultural tradition you know, when you see someone you always – you have to acknowledge them.

T: But that's what they – they say that only Fijians do that but then I [...] would tell the [English] guys as well, if you say you are [English] and you were in Fiji now, and you saw another [English] guy, you would want to go and talk to him and say 'oh how's things back home' and all.

In the banner painting and in Tai and Sonika's conscious mobilisation of ideas about "cultural tradition", nation and ethnicity come to stand for a kind of belonging that is expressly pre-

military, through which people can be argued to renegotiate the terms of their investment in the regiment as something that is also bound up with personal, and not only institutional, histories. Like “mateship” (Woodward 2008, p.375), these familial modes of belonging illustrate “just how contested and negotiated the idea of military service as citizenship is” (Woodward 2008, p.379). Furthermore, the example of the banner painting can be argued to represent women’s elision of regimental belonging. In its place, they assert the individuality of the soldier with a personal history of his own, their own privileged knowledge and role in that history, as well the centrality of both the nuclear and the extended family to the meanings and motivations behind military service. This can be read as a strategy of self-affirmation (Woodward 2008, p.377) that, like Woodward’s soldier narratives, relies on the reinforcement of particular boundaries. Woodward argues that soldiers affirm the exceptionality of their social bonds and sense of regimental belonging by reinforcing the boundary between military and civilian spheres, often with pejorative reference to “civvy street” (*ibid*). The example of the banner painting demonstrates how military wives might also be argued to reinforce this boundary between military and civilian, only by asserting the primacy of family ties over military forms of belonging and kinship. Yet as Woodward (2008, p.376) argues of “mateship”, there is more to this version of national service than “merely romantic notions” of a soldier’s family tree. Arguably, such discourses reach the apotheosis of their political function in the work women do to translate the job of soldiering into terms that are liveable for families on a day-to-day basis. It is at this point that practices of domestication and personalisation are used to rationalise the state’s deployment of its human resources. And it is here that women married to servicemen become part of the very processes through which war is justified and sustained.

Absorbing shock and sustaining awe

One of the primary tasks that military wives maintain during the tour is the necessity of translating the job of soldiering and the absence of fathers into a form that is palatable and comprehensible to children. Not only do such discourses draw on particular ideas about masculinity, fatherhood and soldiering, they are also helped (or hindered) by the ready socialisation of children according to gender norms, as Francesca elaborates:

I think, speaking to my friend whose husband is away and has a boy the same age as Tessa, [...] he's into guns and stuff like that and he knows dad carries a gun, where I say he's helping children to go to school, you know to protect them to go to school, to make everyone happy and get rid of the bad people because they can't go to school if the bad people are on the street.

As well as ideas about masculinity, femininity and violence as they are used to mark divisions between mothers, fathers, girls and boys, the narratives adapted and circulated by wives also depend on a range of well-worn, public discourses of contemporary warfare. This includes the image of soldiers as peacekeepers or the framework of humanitarian intervention as analysed by scholars such as Claire Duncanson (2009). Jacquelyn for example draws on ideas of international peacekeeping that derive from her Fijian background, through which she undertakes a selective translation of the meaning of her husband's 'national' service:

They do ask questions about guns and what daddy's doing. I felt from my point of view to explain to the boys, what he's doing I explain to them the other side is in the peace-keeping manner; that what daddy's doing is more like peace-keeping, trying to keep the peace, rather than getting their head into [...] this whole war thing. [...] What I understand as growing up in Fiji, is what the Fijian soldiers normally do when they go Lebanon, Sinai, it's always called the peacekeeping forces. So I thought that would be better explaining to them rather than thinking of them as a war as in 'a war'.

Jacquelyn's narrative permits an outward-looking, humanitarian worldview that can be aligned with Kuus' (2009, p.558) formulation of "globalist militarism". At the same time, her narrative serves to re-assert the Fijian national identity of her family and disassociate her husband's labour from national service as constituted through British identity (and presumably, the colonial history that contributes to Fiji's commonwealth status and thus ironically, the broader determinants of her husband's recruitment).

These examples reveal an active process of translation in women's discursive construction of their husbands' identities as soldiers and fathers, drawing on a range of narratives that mediate between political and personal perceptions of their implication in state violence. Given the fragility of the boundaries that women struggle to uphold, it is perhaps not surprising that there is a degree of narrative slippage between soldiering and paternal labour expressed in the trope that fathers are overseas protecting other children from harm. Most often, such statements were made by women with reference to the soldier not by his name, nor as 'my husband', but as 'daddy', for example: "She knew that her daddy was still out there looking after little children and keeping them safe". When repeated in a conversation between adults, the mother's use of a child's phrasing works in the gap between the 'story' told for children and the political reality that is left hanging in the adult air above it, a knowing disparity or dissonance that it is implicitly the mother's burden to bear. Such narratives are heavily loaded with the discourses of duty, sacrifice and heroism

that are integral to representations of the role of the armed forces in contemporary British society. Importantly, they also serve to incorporate the duty and sacrifice of the entire nuclear family. The father is deployed as the modern humanitarian actor, literally transferring his paternal labour to children who are less fortunate than his own. The deficit of care created by his absence from home is in turn absorbed by the mother. Children are also given a role in this narrative, in a formulation of soldiering that elevates the notion of self-sacrifice not only on the father's part, but also on the part of the child who is willing to give him up so that another child can benefit from his care. It is interesting, however, that the transferral of paternal labour does not preclude or is not seen to be at odds with images and ideas about the physical and technical prowess or skills of the British soldier in contemporary combat operations, as Laura explains:

So you know, daddy helps them go to school. That's how I've explained it, not that daddy carries a gun. She's got pictures of him in uniform, where he hasn't got a gun. I know he's got a pistol to the side of him but she doesn't know that, but he's in his helmet and his glasses and his body armour.

As evidenced by the photograph of the hyper-technologized, well-equipped soldier (but with his gun hidden), families are proficient in creating the myth of awe without the shock.

The translations and conversions that women undertake are invested in making sense of the labour of soldiering, especially the violence and vulnerability this labour potentiates. These examples demonstrate the everyday struggle to reconcile the peculiar global and political status of the military institution and its state-sanctioned role in the production of violence, with soldiering – as well as parenthood – as a form of labour. What these examples indicate, is that the realm of the family is far from insulated against the geopolitical dimensions of military service. People are far from unaware of the political dimensions of their complicity in war and its justification, although this is rarely acknowledged as openly as Laura's concurrence with her husband's views:

Pete says people brag about things in the mess. He said those things happen, but it's not a thing to big up in the mess you know 'I'm such a hard person' you know I, I quite agree on that. Because obviously [our daughter] as well, when she grows up, he said well actually she might think 'Dad's a murdering bastard' [laughs]. Yeah you know - Afghan in years to come [...] the whole thing could change around like us Brits and the Americans were really bad and we shouldn't have gone into Afghan you know? And then if she sort of knows that, I think as she gets older... He said 'Yeah I was in Afghanistan but I don't want her to know those things'. He said 'It's not for little girls' ears and not for my daughter to know that things happened over there that she might disagree with and not like me for in years to come' [laughs].

These narratives reveal the false innocence of the scripts surrounding soldiering, as well as the kind of labour entailed in reconciling (or at least smoothing over) the confusing and contradictory relationship between the national family, the regimental family and the nuclear family. Women's narratives show how ideas and ideals about the family and in particular, its preservation and protection, are propped up and patched over again and again. People struggle to keep things clean and distinct but they often merge: soldiers are fathers, soldiers are fighters. Families attempt to preserve some space, create some distance, yet things so frequently fold into one another. As is clear from these same scripts, ideas about gender are recruited in the service of strengthening these fragile and failing boundaries – ideas about dads and little girls, about women's work, resilience and the burden of translation, all of it part of the work of normalisation.

Paying attention to these practices and discourses helps to qualify the significance of citizenship and national identity in military participation. The family, as well as the regiment, emerges as an important sphere where the value of military service is also configured and where women married to servicemen work to rationalise the terms of their own and their husbands' commitment. There is a tacit acknowledgement of the violence of soldiering in many of these narratives, which connects them to the sense in which Cowen and Gilbert (2008, p.263) have argued that trauma as a national event "is made interchangeable with familial grief". Critical research on military power post-9/11 in countries such as the US, Canada and the UK has illuminated the growing significance of the family as a "*model and metaphor* for political relations" (Cowen and Gilbert 2008, p.266). In the "wartime familialization of citizenship" (*ibid*) in the US for example, metaphors such as 'homeland security' have been mobilised to "make international relations understandable in new ways" (*ibid*, see also Kaplan 2002). Not only, Cowen and Gilbert (2008, p.262) argue, is the family a significant discourse through which assumptions about war and nation are perpetuated, it is also "emerging (again?) as an increasingly important sovereign political 'body'" in its own right. As Yuval Davis (1997) has long argued, women can be argued to occupy and embody the symbolic borders of the nation. As "security moms" (Grewal 2006, p.25) however, women are not only subjects but also agents of a politics of fear that is countered by a performance of security and protection at home²⁰. This scholarship connects citizenship to the production of state security and sovereignty in ways that account for the blurring of the

²⁰ And specifically, Grewal argues, through middle class consumption practices and the spatial politics of suburbia (Grewal 2006, p.32), which can also be connected to wives' role in the reproduction of home and familiarity in migration as explored in chapter three.

public and private spheres. My analysis in this section demonstrates that military families propose a particularly dense configuration of these dynamics.

In this chapter so far I have shown how military wives' reproductive labour as part of the nuclear family helps to keep the 'regimental family' together. Considering unit cohesion through the lens of wives' experiences is one way to begin to address the lack of attention paid by military sociologists working in this area, and explore the nature and meaning of spouses' role and investment in military communities. What a gendered analysis again reveals, is the degree to which women's role and investment in the military institution is repeatedly understood in terms of their reproductive labour. Taking account of women's labour in turn exposes the degree to which the military institution and the family as an institution are intimately connected. This is dependent on gender in a way that far exceeds the terms of social cohesion as viewed through the lens of military masculinities for example (see for example Higate [2012, p.452] on "fratriarchy"). It also goes beyond conventional understandings of the family and the military as opposing "greedy institutions" (Vuga and Juvan 2013). In his history of the regimental system, David French (2005, p.77) argues that "the willingness of officers and other ranks to invest the same emotional commitment in their regiment as they did in their family did not spring ready-made from the ground". Like "anything that passes for inevitable, inherent, 'traditional', biological" (Enloe 1989, p.3) then, regimental belonging and unit cohesion must be manufactured and, moreover, maintained. It is to the disciplinary power of the regimental family as a cultural production, that I now turn.

Regulating the regimental family

The material and symbolic role of the family as a social unit and as a metaphor is threaded throughout the history of the British regimental system (see French 2005, p.2 and repeatedly thereafter: p.77, p.180, p.290, p.308, p.332, p.348). Many times during my stay in Germany, I heard the regiment referred to as a 'family regiment'. While the family metaphor was intended to reflect the small size of the regiment's close-knit community, it was also explained to me in various other terms. These included connections of British upper-class family lineage²¹ on the one hand, or a more paternalistic tradition of raising wayward youths

²¹ The particular conversation that yielded this information also yielded a pertinent insight into the relationality of class and the rigidity of the regiment's classifying structures and social stratification. During an intellectually stimulating and animated debate with a young officer in the regiment, I noted what I believed to be the regiment's representativeness of a cross-section of society, from the

on the other; of sons following illustrious fathers into the regiment, or of the regiment rescuing multiple brothers in the same family from a deprived area of the UK. Like family metaphors found in the biographies of military “father-figures” (Jervis 2011, p.31), the idea of the family regiment represents a mixture of discipline and benevolence. However, it was also used as a way of declaring a progressive, liberal and forward-thinking approach to family welfare or the regiment’s status as a family-friendly employer, and does indeed reflect the duty of care that the regiment fulfilled not only towards its soldiers but also their families. Christopher, an officer in the regiment, insisted that family policies in the Army compared favourably to the conditions he had experienced while working in the private sector. This was despite the constraints of his current situation living ‘married unaccompanied’ in the officers’ mess while his wife and young daughter remained in the UK:

C: On the flip side the Army – because it’s [...] so family orientated, I think it’s much more understanding when you have to leave to go look after your daughter or something [...] Or you know, just sitting in the office while you work and stuff [...] so you know all those negative things, the flip side is it’s really family friendly and you can do that, you can bring your daughter in and people are understanding.

A: Yeah. That is if they’re in the country.

C: That’s if you’re in the country, that’s very true.

A: Sorry to point out your misfortune...

C: No no no. [...] You know I’m just about to leave regimental duty and I won’t come back for three years. But that’s fine because I’ll have my family with me. So maybe being back in the regimental family culture [at the moment] makes up for not having my family with me [now], and makes it bearable.

Family life was certainly a very palpable part of the regiment’s day-to-day operations, and was highly visible in the spaces of the camp and as part of people’s public lives. Children and family pets often played around the camp or in a playroom equipped with a ball-pit and gaming consoles for example. The welfare office organised regular events and activities for children (including baking sessions in the camp’s kitchens and a trip to Disneyland Paris, although this was disappointingly undersubscribed). Especially after the return of the regiment from Afghanistan, wives popped in with babies in tow and fathers returned home for lunch or in time to read bedtime stories. During one lunch-hour, a high-ranking officer temporarily lost his daughter during a game of hide and seek, whereupon most of the

working class to upper class origins of its members. It was quickly pointed out to me that the regiment currently included no ‘upper’ class members, who derived for example from the British aristocracy. While this undoubtedly served to put me in my place as someone completely unacquainted with the higher echelons of elite society, it serves as an interesting illustration of the difficulty of stepping back from social hierarchies to view them from any other perspective than one’s position within them.

welfare office were ordered to join in the search. In such ways, the conditions for the mutual incorporation and conflation of family and regimental life as encouraged in policy recommendations (Bourg and Segal 1999) might be argued to be ideal. Although productive of a fairly limited, normative, heterosexual and ethnically homogenous idea of marriage and the family, both men and women's family responsibilities were permitted generous physical and discursive presence in regimental life²².

There is a distinction however, between a 'family regiment' that provides support for the welfare of its extended community, and the 'regimental family' as a cultural production and mode of belonging, as Annie implies:

Well here there is [pause]... a very noticeable level of you know... you're [...] supposed to be 'part of the family', but... there is a '[regimental] family', and within that family there is very noticeably a rank structure.

One particular event towards the end of my fieldwork illustrates a lot about the ways in which the regimental family is produced and publically performed, but is also structured by divisions and inequalities that result in tension and disappointment. On a scorching hot day in early summer, the regiment held its 'medals day' parade, where soldiers marched round the parade ground in full regalia watched by an audience of wives, girlfriends, children and some visiting parents, to receive their medals. Speeches were given and honours awarded while soldiers swayed in the heat under berets and hangovers. To follow the parade, the welfare office had organised a 'families day' barbecue, which had been set up on the playing fields next to the camp. There was a large marquee where the cookhouse team had set up food stalls, a PA system for music, a free raffle with prizes including a brand new vacuum cleaner, a children's entertainer, multiple bouncy castles, tugs of war and inter-squadron sports fixtures. The regiment's new shop was also represented, having rearranged a choice selection of toys, scented candles and clothing under the sweltering canopy of a khaki tent for the day. In the welfare office the next day, some of us were discussing how it all went as my field diary attests:

²² The family-friendliness of the regiment must be qualified however. It is difficult to imagine a junior soldier losing his daughter during a game of hide and seek on camp for example, or indeed anyone but a senior officer being able to send a young lieutenant out with the order that he spend half an hour throwing pine cones across the parade ground for his dog to chase. Likewise, although many wives would concede that children were accommodated in many areas of regimental life, the giddy performance of fatherhood on camp is undergirded by wives' domestic labour at home. Multiple women cited their inability to go out in the evenings without checking first with their husbands for childcare, as compared to the occasions when their husbands are expected to attend social functions in the mess on a compulsory basis, which relies on the automatic and unquestionable assumption that women will remain at home.

[One of the staff] also suggests that perhaps they should have done one of those social mixer games where people hand out cards and have to match up with a pair to get to know each other. Mild weariness as [they] ask if I noticed that all the officers sat in a crowd right at the opposite end of the field to where the majority of the people were. When I said I had noticed, and that the Fijians were also all sitting apart, [someone] quickly said 'Yes but that's just cultural difference'.

From the welfare staff's disappointment, it would seem that divisions of rank were suddenly inappropriate on families' day. Indeed, the event did have a distinctly 'off duty' feel: there were crowds of families and their friends occupying sets of picnic tables under the large central marquee, and circles of junior troopers standing at makeshift bars. Young officers, tired and hung-over from a dinner the previous evening, clumped together in lethargic groups on the grass at the edge of the field, while a group of women married to older officers sat on chairs with babies and dogs sleeping in the shade of the trees. Still further out, were the group of Fijian families and their children. Yet in the perception of welfare staff, this ethnic division was wilfully flattened and naturalised under the banner of permissible cultural difference²³, while other differences were considered reproachable.

People's struggles to perform regimental belonging (as opposed to slipping into the groupings of rank, class or ethnic belonging) betray the emotional labour (Hochschild 1983) it requires to maintain. The labour involved is ironic considering the performance of familiarity, belonging and leisure that the families' day barbecue promoted. And yet, the groups of officers and soldiers *did* appear to suspend their obligations for the day, with families retreating into comfortable groups to speak their own language, relax in the familiarity of common backgrounds, and opt out of the effort to perform their professional duties. The ironies multiply the further the performance slips, with the officers in particular failing in their responsibility – a responsibility that comes with rank – to transcend the very divisions that structure this collective and define their obligations in the first place. In fact, the closest performance to the ideal of belonging was the children playing musical chairs to an over-amplified PA system. Even here, the disillusionment of the welfare staff was triggered again the next day by complaints that the children's entertainer had failed to entertain *all* of the children *all* of the time.

What staff at the welfare office had expected from the officers on families day, was in fact the suspension of their own social groupings in favour of a continuation of their working

²³ Which Ware [2012] has argued can so easily reproduce racism, despite being invested so earnestly in militarised ideals of multiculturalism.

relationships. As Arlie Russell Hochschild (1987, p.7, emphasis in the original) makes clear, emotional labour is a mode of extraction like any other: "I use the term *emotional labor* to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value*". The functional objective of the families' day as it was explained to me, was part of normalisation. Within this, officers were expected to mingle informally with 'their men' and get to know their families, a reconnection that was seen as particularly important in restoring the equilibrium of the regiment after their staggered return from Afghanistan and soldiers' scattered retreat into family life and post-operational tour leave. It is Jacquelyn who articulates the exchange value of emotional labour most clearly:

J: You know I always tell him, this regimental thing, I'm always telling you it's important - show face. For me that's professionalism, it's part of work. Show face - you don't have to go and drink your head off - show face then if you want to come and [...] chill at home you can do that. But, for me in that respect, the Fijian boys [say] 'oh no we don't have to go, we can have our corner of drinking party somewhere else', which really frustrates me [...]

A: Why? Does he prefer...

J: He prefers their do's to the regimental do's, probably 'cause it's easier, sitting down and joking in Fijian, the language - probably just sitting down and talking and having no barriers or talking nonsense and what not, rather than getting involved in talking in a more formal manner. Yeah but I always... from my point of view that's important, that's part of work, it's part of what the regiment does. So if you don't want to go fine, don't be part of it, but show face. Go show our faces, that's support and appreciation that you're part of the regiment and that's it, get out of it.

Through her own instrumentalisation of the regiment's demands, Jacquelyn becomes the mediator of these complex ties of duty and obligation, holding together but also regulating the relationship between her family and the regimental family. It is in this sense that Jacquelyn rationalises the demands of regimental belonging to keep its demands at bay.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated some of the ways in which women married to servicemen work to sustain social cohesion within a regimental community. What these experiences also make clear however, is women's central role in mediating the demands of the regiment as it blurs the divide between public and private lives. Again and again, women can be seen to meet the demands of the regiment half-way, frequently relying on their position as outsiders within, or on an ambiguous status between military and civilian spheres, to selectively co-opt and convert the discourses and identities upon which regimental belonging relies. In this sense, they assert the value of their labour and seek recognition of their place within a

culture ostensibly maintained by hierarchies of command, soldiers' productive labour, national identity and state power. My analysis in this chapter reveals a broader framework for the reproduction of regimental belonging however, and one that is equally dependent on the family as a mode through which both its functional and affective bonds are secured.

The connections I have explored go beyond conceptualisations of the military and the family as "greedy institutions" (Vuga and Juvan 2013), not only because they demonstrate mutual imbrication rather than antagonism as others have argued (Bourg and Segal 1999), and not simply because I include the experiences of women married to servicemen (French et al 2005). The gendered norms, discourses and feelings through which people's belonging is socially produced and performed, illustrates the complexity of social relations as they blur the distinction between civil and military, public and private. The gender relations I have explored also counter and expand the terms for research on gender norms as delineated by the study of military masculinities. The practices I explore indicate a wealth of terrain for the exploration of gender and the military that foregrounds the family not as a supplementary or derivative sphere of influence, but as deeply embedded and co-constitutive of military social relations and culture, as well as the identities of men and women, service personnel and spouses alike. What my analysis also makes clear, is the degree to which the roles and resources available to civilian women in their negotiations with the military are defined by a further institution with patriarchal origins: marriage. Like the family and the nation, the regiment is a production fraught with the pressures of proximity and belonging, the meting out of discipline and care, multiple vectors of power and inequality, and emotional labour fraught with conflicting desires. As feminist scholarship has shown (McClintock 1993), this complex and contradictory web of power makes it especially important to look for women's agency in relation to the structures that shape their everyday lives. I now want to shift from women's emotional labour and its exchange value in relation to the military and the family, to explore "these same acts done in a private context where they have use value" (Hochschild 1983, p.7). In the next chapter therefore, I turn from women's movements between the public and the domestic institution, to explore their negotiations between themselves.

Ranking Difference and Distinction

It's like I said earlier we're all over here, we're all in the same position, in the same boat. You would think that everyone would go out of the way to make you feel welcome and help you and stuff but we didn't get any of that when we came here.

The British Army regiment overseas is a compelling site for an exploration of gendered belonging. However, this is not only because of the assumption of shared experience, solidarity and community through which that belonging is produced. Also key is its fallibility, as expressed by Kirsty's disappointment above. In many of my interviews and conversations, the assumption of shared experience between wives was frequently expressed through the refrain of being 'in the same boat'. Tellingly however, the social, spatial and temporal boundaries of this collective metaphor varied, such that it referred variously to the shared experience of being 'in' the Army, 'in' the regiment, 'in' Germany, or 'in' a period of deployment. Thus, being 'in the same boat' covers a multitude of experiences that trouble the sameness it seeks to express. In this chapter therefore, I look further at the vectors of difference and distinction negotiated by women married to servicemen within and between themselves. I reveal the multiple identities that circulate through the category 'Army wife' to subvert the idea of social cohesion from within. These shifting boundaries and mobile forms of belonging, I argue, constitute wives' negotiation of their insecure place in a military social order.

My time with the regiment revealed that people's membership in formal or informal groups is temporally-, spatially- and socially-specific, as well as highly selective according to a range of criteria. In the context of such mobility, synergies drawn along one line reproduce differences along another. Feminist scholarship has long emphasised the need to be concerned not only with connections that unify the experiences of women and help form collectives, it also draws attention to the operation of difference *between* women as well as in relation to men. Avtar Brah (1996, p.115-127) offers a framework for difference conceptualised as experience, social relation, subjectivity and identity. According to Yuval Davis (1997, p.11) in *Gender and Nation*, this involves looking at the "status and power of some women versus others within and between the collectivities they belong to" (Yuval Davis 1997, p.11). As I have demonstrated so far in this thesis, women married to servicemen take an active role in the production of home and national belonging around an

Army base overseas, as well as the social cohesion of the military institution and the regiment within it. The significance of women's labour in this sense creates an intricate web for their social personhood to emerge – a complex mesh of sameness and difference produced at a number of levels and through multiple vectors of power. Perhaps the most significant example of this is women's relationship to rank, a rarefied social structure and a military technology of power that constitutes a particular kind of *presence* in women's everyday lives. In this chapter I explore rank as an effect of military power that is socially produced, but at the same time profoundly complicated by women's geographies of belonging around the Army camp overseas.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Michel Foucault uses the Army barracks as a template for his theorisation of social control, involving “*enclosure*” (p.141) to hold a population in place, then further degrees of more flexible and detailed “*partition*” (p.143). According to Foucault (1975, p.145), the power of rank inheres in “the place one occupies in a classification”. If rank is relational in this way, then it is also dependent upon recognition for its value and meaning (as ‘higher’ or ‘lower’ for example). Feminist scholars such as Bev Skeggs (1997) have emphasised the importance of recognition in mediating women's processes of subject-formation:

The women of this study are aware of their place, of how they are socially positioned and of the attempts to represent them. This constantly informs their responses. They operate within a dialogic form of recognition: they recognise the recognitions of others. Recognitions do not occur without value judgements and the women are constantly aware of the judgements of real and imaginary others. Recognition of how one is positioned is central to the processes of subjective construction”. (Skeggs 1997, p.3)

In *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming respectable*, Skeggs (1997, p.74) is interested in the “relationship between positioning and identity”. In this chapter I explore the social structure of rank from the perspective of a group of subjects whose positioning is argued to be beyond the reach of rank, who are formally constituted through the identity of a ‘civilian’ rather than a ‘military’ subject, and who occupy a space expressly beyond the “*enclosure*” (Foucault 1975, p.141). What is military wives’ experience of rank from this externalised position? What do these experiences indicate about the possibility that the place one occupies in a classification is variable, indeed that there are multiple places available at different times, and that in the case of women married to servicemen, these hinge on one's ambiguous position on the very boundary of inside and outside? Skeggs (1997) uses the title *Formations of class and gender* to refer to the multiple positionalities adopted by women in

their negotiation of difference and distinction. In a similar way in this chapter, I want to explore military wives' negotiation of multiple "formations" (*ibid*) of rank and class and gender. In this, I seek to counter the ease with which the relationship between rank and military wives comes to be simplified in a range of essentialising stereotypes (Harrell 2000, p.12). Considering the composite nature of rank might also help to explain the slippage and elision that rank produces. As a container term with particular explanatory appeal, rank allows highly complex and multiple structures of power to be naturalised as an institutionally sanctioned and functional necessity for maintaining order and discipline. Paying attention to the mobile positionalities of women married to servicemen troubles the exceptionality of rank, as well as any easy assumption about its hegemonic power.

Beyond stereotypes

In my six months' living with the regiment, I never completely grasped the categories and sub-categories of rank and the correct nomenclature that accompanied them. Nor is it within the scope of this chapter (or even this thesis) to document the fascinating patterns of rank that were suffused through almost every aspect of my fieldwork experience, including that which related to my own position on the boundaries of multiple categories of belonging. The effects of rank are acknowledged in the literature on women married to servicemen (Harrell 2000 and 2001, Enloe 2000, Jervis 2011). However, more could be done to analyse its manifestation in forms that in many ways might be understood as expressly 'civilian' (or at least not exclusively military²⁴), such as through gender and class for example. Military wives' position on the borders of formal military structures entails looking beyond rank in its most obvious forms. This includes the necessity to look beyond particular typologies such as those implied by Elise, a young woman who was relatively new to the community in Germany:

Some Army wives carry their husbands' ranks. So they will make it clear when they first meet you what their husband's rank is, and you just take it - look you're not my type of, cup of tea. So if I'm not your type, you're not going to be my type, so let's not talk. Although we're in the same community, there are wives that are very um, how do you... bitchy. That's the word. I was trying to be polite.

There is no doubt that rank as a social hierarchy reinforces the profusion of negative stereotypes that attach to the figure of the military wife, for example in respect of women

²⁴ In a study of the parallels between the German military ethic of austerity and the country's history of ascetic Protestantism, Ulrich vom Hagen (2005, p.141) has argued for the recognition that aspects of military culture are not necessarily military in their origin at all.

married to officers (see Harrell 2001). My fieldwork data includes a wealth of material that might contribute to a sense of 'military femininities' in their complex multiplicity. Importantly, paying attention to how stereotypes work in women's narratives also demonstrates how ideals and pariahs of wifehood for example, are co-opted and managed by women to make particular identifications. Moreover, stereotypes work less through the recognition of a particular value than women's "constant refusal to be fixed or measured by it" (Skeggs 1997, p.75). One example will suffice to indicate the forms these stereotypes take, for which Elise has a ready-made list:

This is my way of not just pinpointing something, because I... I don't want to put a tag on people. Okay so I'll just say there's three types. There's the strong-willed [sic] ones, which I like to class myself as because for someone my age and has a baby and my husband's not been home, I've kind of kept it cool. You know. And I do things on my own, off my own back. Yeah. Then there's another type of Army wives that aren't suited for the life. And that was someone I knew. And her husband wasn't away on tour but every time he was away she would break down and [...] she would just crumble [...]

Although throughout our interview Elise repeatedly insisted that as a young woman who had not been married long, she was "new at this" or "just learning", at the same time her stories – by no means unique or particularly extreme – made clear to me that of the women who were "either made for it [...] or not", she was in the former category. What stereotypes of military wives provide for Elise, is a clear framework for the assertion of her strengths and capabilities with respect to the demands that the military institution makes not only of her labour, but of her social and emotional resources: her capacity to feel, act and relate to individuals and the institution in a particular way ('keeping it cool' versus 'crumbling'). When Elise expands her typology to include a third category, she reveals that women's identities are also regulated by ideas about sexuality that are far from secured by their containment within the framework of heterosexual marriage and an emphasis on domestic labour:

And there's another stereotype – um how can I put this? So there's a homebody, then there's the crumbling type and then there's the – I met on a Saturday night and just married her type [...] That when husband goes away they're out on the loose, on the wild side. The, 'Hey I know you from Saturday night, do you want to marry me?' and then [gasp] husband's away, so what do I do? And then, shit happens.

It is interesting that in elaborating her typology of wives, Elise makes no mention of rank. In terms of gender however, the typology is far-reaching and general in its reliance upon familiar ideas about resilience at one end and sexual infidelity at the other. In Elise's portrait of a soldier's whirlwind romance, marriage is the framework that governs sexual propriety, compromised by the unfaithful wife. Less explicit however, is the fact that it is the military

that produces the conditions of haste, absence and abstinence to test that marriage (Hogan and Seifert 2009). Despite the rich narrative data that this and many of the examples so far in this chapter represent, I am less interested in the content of the stereotypes elucidated by Elise, nor is my aim to measure the “truth value” of stereotypes (Fechter 2010, p.1282). Rather, I am interested in understanding their “social or political functions” (*ibid*). What Elise’s typology also underlines, is that women such as military wives “are not just ciphers from which subject positions can be read-off; rather, they are active in producing the meaning of the positions they (refuse to, reluctantly or willingly) inhabit” (Skeggs 1997, p.2).

It was very easy during interviews to become mired in the slippage between personal and professional power relations and some degree of regimental gossip when talking about rank. This is perhaps one reason why it was frequently framed as a kind of regression by comparisons to being at school, as exemplified by Nick, a senior soldier:

A: Do people carry the rank of their husband?

N: Yeah yeah yeah they do, ‘specially at a certain level.

A: And is that acquired or...

N: I think it's what they've been used to, so maybe when she was a trooper's wife, she was treated like shit maybe, and then she's got to the point now where... [...] well I think, well - it's like when you get to high school again, it's like top year? You're being what you were treated like when you were at the bottom, you're the top of the class, you're the top of the tree, so it's your turn.

Nick’s explanation here is evocatively close to Deniz Kandiyoti’s (1988) formulation of women’s reproduction of patriarchy, where she argues:

The cyclical nature of power in the household and their anticipation of inheriting the authority of senior women encourages a thorough internalization of this form of patriarchy by the women themselves. In classic patriarchy, subordination to men is offset by the control older women attain over younger women. (Kandiyoti 1988, p.279)

Much of this chapter (and indeed, this thesis) is concerned with unpacking this dynamic and what it proposes about the experiences I present. For now though, Kandiyoti’s (1988) observations about the cyclical nature of power highlights the mobility embedded in rank, a mobility that is sometimes lost in the idea of a rigid disciplinary hierarchy. In short, the fact that the same people occupy different positions of rank during their military service. While rank may remain a fixed administrative structure, people’s relationship to rank and thus the ways in which it is understood, enacted and socially reproduced, is not: people ascend and descend, some progress quickly, others get stuck at certain points, everyone, it seems,

aspires. It is in this sense that rank provides a measure of the social mobility that the Army offers, as Carol explains:

In our regiment, we have two boys from [an area] which [...] if you looked at the socio-economic stats in the UK, must be in the top ten of the poorest areas in the UK. Those boys – I’m not saying what may have become of them if they’d have stayed in [their home towns], but what has become of them are two very hard-working, decent senior NCOs. Happily married, no nonsense, fantastic children. And already those children are more social – they become more socially mobile than where their father started off. And those children have far greater opportunity. And the only reason why is the British Army. That’s – it gives you that opportunity to make something of yourself. It really does.

While the Army is the catalyst for social mobility in Carol’s framework, it is not the sole measure. Rather, social mobility is measured in terms that extend far beyond rank, reaching into the realm of marriage and the family and moreover, into future generations of the family. In all of the examples I have analysed here, rank is somewhat elliptical – overtly present in conversations and stereotypes but oddly unsubstantiated, sometimes overwritten and elided, a stand-in or a citation for other things. It is this quality of rank that I pursue in this chapter – the difficulty of grasping its intricacies, of pinning it down. In order to move on from military wife stereotypes and keep some of their infantilising dynamics at bay in my analysis, I want to begin by describing some of the institutional and structural modes through which rank affects women married to servicemen.

Carrying Rank?

One pathway through which rank shapes the experiences of women married to servicemen is through their voluntary labour as Natasha, who was married to a senior officer in the regiment, argues: “although there shouldn’t be rank structure through wives there is, because it’s all to various members of the regiments’ wives to organise various things”. One of the tasks expected of Natasha is described in careful and conflicted terms by Victoria for example, who was married to another high-ranking officer²⁵:

V: Um. No there could, and I would hate – and I said to all the [...] wives, who - when they came, I said, ‘Listen, you don’t have to do anything. Don’t feel obliged to do anything. When [her husband] was made [a particular rank] I went straight to Natasha and said, ‘Normally the [officer’s] wife would do the flowers in the mess because [that officer] is in charge of the mess, so that’s sort of your job. I don’t want you to do it if you don’t want to do it. I’m not making you do it. If you want to do it, brilliant. If not, I’ve been doing it, I’m

²⁵ For a reflexive discussion of the same see Jervis 2011, p.2

very happy to keep doing it, if you want to come and help fantastic. What do you want to do? It's up to you.

A: Then does it stop at you – why do you have to take it on?

V: Well [...] I like the mess to look nice and you know, I want it to look really pretty. For all the girls going in and you know, I'm proud of the fact, you know, that it's the regiment and proud that [my husband is part of] it.

As Victoria implies, the expectations regarding women's labour are formalised to the degree that they are often tied to the particular job role and rank into which a soldier has been promoted. For Victoria, the voluntary role that she clearly embraced and invested with time and meaning, included informal but nonetheless public 'duties', such as hosting coffee mornings, or roles where she was positioned as standing in for her husband, on a windswept parade ground judging an array of fancy dress costumes and novelty skits for a 'family day' competition for example. The public visibility of her role underlines the influence of rank not only in terms of Victoria's sense of self, but also in terms of how she is perceived by other wives. Far from being confined to officers' wives, the same kind of expectations are also managed (and again with some sense of conflict) by Jane, who was married to a high-ranking soldier in the regiment:

A: Do you think some people have an unfair perception of stereotypes like military wives?

J: Oh probably yes I would think so.

A: How do people avoid becoming those? Have you avoided becoming a stereotypical [senior soldier's] wife?

J: Yes I've tried to be true to myself, I've done as much as I can, my family are my priority. So I won't mention any names but some of the other women before really took it so seriously and immersed themselves and did everything. There are a couple of things I haven't done that my predecessors did [laughs], which is go and deliver plants – welcome plants – to new people, go and knock on their doors. And I tried to do it initially for the first couple of months and I hated it so I stopped doing it. So you know I think to myself is that really awful, should I have done that? But I just didn't want to do it, I felt like I couldn't fit it in and you know... it wasn't me, so I thought sod it, I don't care! No I've done as much as I can.

A: Does [your husband] accept that?

J: Yes he does, sometimes I say oh 'I don't want to go to coffee morning I get fed up with it' and he'll say 'just keep doing it Jane, just keep showing your face please while I'm [in this job]'. [...] There is rumour that depending on how your wife is and how she behaves depends on how further up the ladder you go. Whether or not there's any truth in that whatsoever I have no idea at all but that's the rumour.

A: Do you ever feel under pressure to bake a cake?! [laughs] Would you naturally....

J: No I'm not naturally a cake baker although I have got quite good at it recently! [laughs] It's out of duty that I do that, not out of love of cake baking!

A: I've noticed that you've baked cakes and you're always helping but....

J: But that's part of the expectation I think, of being [a senior soldier's] wife. I don't mind doing it I really don't, I'd rather actually be doing stuff than sitting around making idle chat sometimes.

One other mode through which rank shapes the social circuits and activities of women married to servicemen is geographical mobility itself. In a study of the humanitarian response to natural disasters in Haiti and Indonesia, Lisa Smirl (2008) draws attention to the social distinctions between 'the international community' and the local community. She argues that many of these can be connected back to the fundamental privilege of mobility that allows humanitarian workers to leave if their personal security is considered at risk (Smirl 2008, p.240). Though the divisions between international aid workers and local populations cannot compare to the uneven distribution of rank within the regimental community, Smirl (2008) makes an important point. The Army's management of human resources likewise creates a two-tier system of mobile and stationary subjects, divided according to rank - an internal split between those who stay put and those who move on, as Pippa relates:

I do think that there's [...] parallels in terms of Army rank and social hierarchy or whatever you know? [...] I think that the officers' and the soldiers' wives, there's a lot of differences that are there because of age, because of the jobs. The officers' wives are on rotation [...] they're only [in one place for] two years, so why would the soldiers' wives be bothered to get to know them when they're just going to leave again?

The differential retention and rotation of personnel further cements the division between officers and soldiers. For personnel joining the regiment as a junior soldier, rank represents a ladder of sequential job roles through which a soldier acquires experience and responsibilities, working their way through promotions over a period of many years with the potential eventually to become a 'late entry' officer. For the majority of that time, soldiers and their families remain with the regiment²⁶, living together as a community wherever the regiment's headquarters is based (which may be in multiple locations over that time). Officers on the other hand, commonly rotate around different regiments to fill different job roles every two years²⁷. Within the category 'officer' however, there is a further division between late entry (LE) and direct entry (DE) officers. Direct entry (DE) officers, who have

²⁶ Although some senior soldiers reaching particular ranks may be promoted to different roles within other areas of the Army for periods of several years, returning to the regiment again afterwards.

²⁷ By implication therefore, not all of the senior soldiers in the regiment are 'from' that regiment originally, another point that emphasizes the social constructedness of regimental identity as a performance of belonging.

commonly joined the Army straight from university via the prestigious Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, enter just one rank below LE officers, who have more than fifteen years' service and are often around the age of forty. While age is a convenient container for these sub-divisions of rank, the social distinctions they produce are complex, subtle and hard to define, as Pippa explains:

P: I think they all get on fairly well, the LEs and... Some direct entry officer's wives can be a bit snooty you know, I've heard a couple of 'Oh well, you don't mix with the Late Entry wives' but I think that's just...

A: [...] Do you find yourself getting sucked into it or can you resist in any way?

P: Yeah well when I first arrived I got on quite well with a few of the late entry wives but I don't really see them any more and I'm not quite sure why [laughs] [...]

A: Maybe you have similar experiences?

P: Yeah yeah, you're from similar backgrounds you know, for example some of the LE people have teenage sons and daughters and they're in their forties whereas many Majors' wives are in their early thirties and have young kids.

While rank is frequently materialised and understood in ways that appear linear and contained then, it contains many sub-categories and, like international mobility, creates overlapping circuits of encapsulation (Amit 2007, p.12). Furthermore, these sub-categories represent a complex intersection of vectors of power based on subtle registers of gender, class, age and socio-economic factors, as well as through marriage and the family. The examples I have reviewed above demonstrate the subtle but nevertheless institutionally sanctioned ways in which rank affects the collectivities of women married to servicemen. They also beg the question of how any woman is able to avoid 'carrying' the rank of their husband if there are so many pathways through which it can be argued to structure her labour, identity, relationships and feelings. These examples show that even where women resist or opt out of the labour that rank demands, they must still navigate the multiple and shifting ways in which they are positioned and placed by it. It is in this sense that rank gains its (self)regulatory power. Even where rank in the form of the 'chain of command' enforces a rigid hierarchy of discipline, its effects can be traced horizontally as well as vertically. It is to rank and its role in formal and informal discipline that I now turn.

Disciplining civilians

Arguably, it is the association between rank and discipline that underwrites functional explanations of its necessity (thus Pippa comments: "I think the Army has to have the rank structure to work effectively. You know you can't have people... you know the authority has

to be there"). Käthe's narrative complicates the division of military and civilian in ways that are surprising and complex:

A: So you feel that rank doesn't transfer to you and that...

K: No - rank, with me personally rank's got nothing to do... but I know that it has impacted on [my husband] in the past... I heckled the Colonel

A: He told me!

K: In one of the briefings... yeah and [my husband] got pulled in the office and I went livid, he came back and I was like how dare they pull you! I did that and I just...

A: So what happened... it was in a briefing?

K: Yeah [the Colonel] did a briefing for the last Afghan tour and he announced that instead of giving the guys two weeks off like planned, he would pull them away from us for another two weeks and put them on light duties and everything, so I went 'Wooooooo' like that really loud, and got lots of abuse and I was the only one and I looked round [to the other wives] and I was like 'Why are you all quiet?! We spoke about this, you were all outraged by this decision!' Most of them were agreeing with me but none of them was stupid enough to say it out loud [laughs]. So then [my husband] got brought in - I don't know if it was the Colonel's office or the Welfare Officer's office but he got pulled up for that, and I was like look you know, if a dog bites somebody in the street, you don't go slaughter that owner, you go to the dog.

A: And so what was your husband's reaction to that?

K: No he laughed, he was just like 'You have to do it don't you?' He was laughing - I think he sees the point of how ridiculous that really was. [The Colonel] gave a speech to civilians so by all means expect a civilian reaction, you know?

It is Käthe's assertion of her civilian status that is interesting to me here, and the way in which she uses it to contest the proxy-discipline to which she is subject via her husband. The fact that there were mild disciplinary consequences to her actions is not the primary object of her irritation (although she points out how "ridiculous" she perceives this to be). Rather, what generates Käthe's frustration is the fact that in the military social order, she was replaced by her husband as the disciplined subject and thus erased (silenced, in a way) as the agent of the resistance she articulated during the meeting. Her metaphor of the dog and its owner is striking for the degree of subordination (between a husband and wife) that it implies, as well as the irony of its deployment as part of a story through which Käthe articulates her insubordination (and her husband's supportive response). Presumably, what was also denied Käthe when her husband took her place as the subject of military discipline, was the opportunity to articulate her defence. In a further contradictory twist, Käthe's defence is based on the concept of civilian immunity to military discipline (the Colonel's obligation to "expect a civilian reaction" when talking to civilians): the very immunity that has caused her husband to be disciplined in her stead.

Paying attention to the encounters between female service personnel and women married to servicemen also reveals that disciplinary power does not simply flow from one side of a military/civilian divide to the other, nor is it contained by the binary separation of public and domestic life. Laura for example, a servicewoman married to a soldier in another regiment, frequently deals with military wives in a professional capacity, but manages her disciplinary power by using her first name and trading on her identity as a mother:

So a lot of the younger wives have never seen a sergeant [and] they think 'Oh my god, my husband's platoon sergeant shouts at him', and then I come to the counter and I say you know, 'Hiya, I'm Laura' - if I introduce myself as Laura [...] or they bring the children in and I speak to the children or I say I've got a little kid myself, they're a bit more... but a lot of them, the younger ones [...] they probably think 'Oh god she's a female and a sergeant' and it's a bit sort of daunting for those.

In her dealings with younger wives, Laura makes an active choice to mobilise a 'civilian' identity to counter military hierarchies of rank. That said, it appears that the conversion from military to civilian is difficult to achieve without some degree of conflation or elision, and that military identities forged through rank are particularly hard to shake off, as Laura concedes that she might remain 'daunting' to some wives despite her efforts to play down her rank and official status. Even the narrative terms available to her for expressing these differences in the first place – her use of age to distinguish 'younger wives' – loops back to rank, age betraying the fact that these younger wives are most likely married to junior soldiers who are in a subordinate position to sergeants such as Laura. Thus in Laura's narrative, age is really a metaphor, is willed into use as a euphemism even, and indicates the difficulty of making a clean break between military and civilian; the difficulty of civilianising rank. Moreover, this example shows that in an encounter where power relations are pre-structured by rank, even the power to underplay rather than assert its significance is Laura's prerogative, such that as Skeggs (2004, p.107) has argued, the possibility for subversion or reappropriation remains with "those who have the symbolic power to make their judgement and definitions legitimate".

Later in our interview, Laura narrates her encounter with a woman who "spoke to me like shit basically, whose husband is a rank above me". In this case, Laura perceives a civilian spouse to be 'carrying' her husband's rank, which because it is higher than her own, reduces her power as it had functioned positively in her encounter with the wife of a more junior soldier. Her response on this occasion is to reassert rather than renegotiate the boundary between military and civilian, by foregrounding her disciplinary power as military personnel.

Ironically however, the resolution she seeks can only be achieved through the unofficial channel of the woman's husband:

And he was like, 'Well tell my wife that'. Well actually [...] she's not military so if I went 'Hang on a minute, shut up and get out of my office' like I would a private soldier or a corporal who spoke to me like that, I said your wife would be straight to the families office. So I'm speaking to you as military-to-military that I don't appreciate [it]. So can you speak to your wife about how she speaks to people in my office?

While Laura's strategies call into question any neat or clean division between 'military' and 'civilian' identities, they also expose "the lack of equivalence between people and the problems with exchange" (Skeggs 2004, p.17), which would explain her selective mobilisation of both. In *Bring Me Men*, Aaron Belkin (2012, p.41) formulates three aspects of military discipline, including "discipline-as-surveillance", "discipline-as punishment" and "discipline-as-collapse". The last of these, he argues, hinges on uncertainty, confusion and contradiction to produce compliance and social control:

By demanding compliance with masculine myths from those who have been ordered to be unmasculine, the military has fragmented service members' identities and generated a series of double binds that intensify their desire to become masculine while making it impossible to live up to that standard" (Belkin 2012, p.40).

"Discipline-as-collapse" (*ibid*) certainly resonates with the uncertainty, confusion and contradictions that emerge from women's multiple positionings in relation to rank. Looking beyond Belkin's (2012, p.5) example of the conflation of masculine and unmasculine²⁸, it is possible to see how categories of military and civilian also function in the same way. In women's experience of discipline above, and in the other formations of rank I have explored thus far, the military and civilian work together as a confusing double bind (Belkin 2012, p.40) that secures the compliance of those, such as military spouses, who are on the very margins of military belonging – neither insiders nor outsiders. To explore this contradictory relationship further and trouble the military/civilian divide, I want to move on from the overt structural and discursive conditions through which rank shapes women's everyday lives. Instead, I pay attention to the places where rank blends into the background. For this, I want to explore the 'civilian' spaces beyond the camp: the borders and geographies of belonging, the movements of women within and across them and the meanings they

²⁸ In this way I view my analysis as responding to Belkin's call to assess "whether these observations come together in different ways at different sites" (Belkin 2012, p.42).

produce.

Spatial and social boundaries of belonging

The spaces I illuminate in this section are unremarkable in many ways, yet they reveal a great deal about the mutual camouflage and co-constitution of military and civilian around a garrison town overseas. One prime example is the visibility of the British Forces Germany community as manifest in the cars people drive and the routes they articulate. The BFG workforce is arguably one of the most asset-rich in terms of brand new people carriers, SUVs or souped-up saloon cars²⁹. Whenever one approaches an area where the MOD has built or rented housing to accommodate service personnel, the gradual profusion of bright yellow registration plates with their large, unfussy combination of numbers and letters produces a strong impression that one is entering a kind of British zone. When cycling between interviews, British number plates came to function as a reassuring indication that I was nearing my destination, in the right place: a spatial boundary-marker. A further effect of this out-dated clause of Britain's Status of Forces agreement with Germany, however, is the familiarity these cars inscribe as they weave their way around the garrison. For me, wherever I happened to be, seeing a car with a British number plate provoked the secondary response of looking closer at the driver and then, potentially, giving a wave. As well as a national boundary marker therefore, the British cars are productive of practices of internal (for example, regimental) familiarity and recognition, whereupon one is hailed and hails the other as simultaneously a British and an Army subject.

The routes traversed by the British cars are also productive of an alternative version of the German city in a way that scholars of everyday life have shown how "the users of the city, in their daily circulation, create a second, metaphorical city within the first [...]"(Sheringham 2006, p.224). The routes traversed by the BFG community inscribe a circuit that connects a string of British-run facilities, including schools overseen by the MOD and named after English poets, the Navy Army Air Force Families Institute supermarket (NAAFI), and the camp. In a sense, this re-configures the map of the city, bypassing local landmarks, defining

²⁹ Rob explained the material advantages of this condition as part of the Army's overseas package: "they used to have 2 cars you could buy a year, tax free - one for you, one for your spouse. So you could buy a car, have it for a year, trade it back in, get a brand new car because your trading value is about the same or higher as a brand new tax-free car. So you could actually keep going throughout your time over here, changing every six months and end up with a brand new car which is all paid for."

what is considered 'near' or 'far' and reshuffling centre-periphery relations, as Natasha comments:

A: How central is the space of it to what happens, when they're all back like...

N: Well I think it's where it all happens, so I mean if you're someone who's been posted out in [another small town roughly 3 km away] you may as well be living on Mars.

Thus the community's sense of place is constituted by the centrality of the camp, more so than the German city centre with its cathedral, rail station or regular Saturday farmers' market (one of the places I regularly went and very rarely saw anybody I knew, for example). Furthermore, the remapping of the German city also includes the alignment and re-ordering of its spaces according to the hierarchy of rank, whereupon particular spaces are colonised by particular groups or designated as particular zones, as Laura summarises when advising me on where to visit:

L: Have you been down town with any of the guys?

A: No

L: I think you should go downtown.

A: What's it like when they go out?

L: Go to Bar Negroni's – 'cause you'll find that most of the wives in there are senior NCO and officers' wives. And then [the guys can] take you to the Blue Box, which is where you've got a mixture of senior NCO to private, and then go to Henrick's.

A: What's Henrick's?!

L: Every squaddie - I hate the word squaddie - every soldier in every garrison town, there is always a crap pub, and Henrick's is one of them, it attracts the younger [people] - single, Germans, and just married young troopers and lance jacks.

A: So there's zones in [the city] where different groups socialise?

L: Yes. You wouldn't see an Army officer's wife in Henrick's [laughs].

A: Blue Box?

L: Yeah you'll get a spectrum of people there, maybe LEs will go in there, maybe not officers' wives. But you need to go downtown...

These multiple geographies of sameness and difference – oscillating between German and British, military and civilian, with rank creating further sub-divisions among them – produce competing and overlapping categories of distance and proximity, familiarity and otherness around the camp overseas. And they are further intersected by gender. This is revealed if one considers the cultural meanings and identities ascribed to the particular *kinds* of British registered cars that are imported to Germany, as well as their drivers and the routes they take. Pippa for example, is aware of the discursive mechanisms through which family life and the circuitry of school runs and supermarkets it entails, is separated from life at the centre of the regiment, on camp:

There's lots of different terminologies I'm still finding out about. Like for example we're called 'DABS'³⁰, I can't remember what that stands for but it's basically you know, families, Army families. All the single soldiers living on camp call the ones with families [...] DABS, with their DAB-Wagons, which is the Ford S-Max or the people carriers all driving around [laughs].

To the young unmarried officers or junior soldiers on camp, the "DAB-Wagon" is an overt signifier of family life, the butt of many jokes and the marker of a low-adrenaline zone characterised by the herd-like circulation of sensible people carriers. This kind of discourse is actively invested in naturalising the boundary between military and civilian, as well as further distinctions between junior and senior or younger and older personnel, and gendered ideas of productive action versus reproductive domesticity that feminize the camp's external zones. My aim in this rest of this chapter is to populate and animate those zones with women's narratives and experiences, in particular their appropriation of space and the meanings, values and classifications negotiated through it. For this I espouse a fluid conceptualisation of the social production of space that is especially important with respect to sites that are overtly securitised and appear so tightly bounded.

Appropriating geographies of rank

Scholars have focused on the military control of space and military power as a site where "the connection between privileged geographical knowledges and the pursuit of power becomes most obvious" (Harvey 2001, 214, see also Gillem's study of military architecture and designation of social space [2007]). At the same time, the dynamic aspects of spatiality that are central to postmodern ideas of the social production of space demonstrate that "military geographies" (Woodward 2004) are incredibly diffuse³¹. Research that considers the socio-spatial construction of security in such ways troubles the tangibility of borders and the control of citizens across them to the extent that the very notion of 'security' can be viewed as "having no independent reality outside of the social relations through which 'it' is constituted and sustained" (Higate and Henry 2009, p.100). Higate and Henry explore the UN's 'zoning' techniques in peacekeeping missions in Haiti. In addition to the restriction of people's physical mobility, the authors emphasise the curtailment of the everyday human relations that flow across and beyond that zone, for example through social networks and patterns of labour or consumption (Higate and Henry 2009, p.64). This flattening of "social

³⁰ This acronym has been changed.

³¹ In his elaboration of "new military urbanism", Stephen Graham (2009, p.389) goes further to argue that the temporally and geographically discrete boundaries of war for example have been replaced by the amorphous concept of 'battlespace'.

complexity and dynamism" (*ibid*) into a two-dimensional "red zone" (*ibid*), they argue, homogenises and stigmatises every slum-dweller as a threat to security. While such conditions are far removed from those of the regimental community in Germany, these ideas bear some comparison to the housing 'patches' that surround the regimental camp.

The 'patches' of service family accommodation around the garrison are sub-divided according to a formal, administrative hierarchy where accommodation is allocated to married service personnel according to rank. There are 'patches' where only officers live, with larger houses and gardens allocated the higher the rank. Likewise, there are 'patches' where families of junior service personnel are housed, where accommodation in flats and apartments is exchanged for houses of varying quality the higher a soldier moves up the career ladder³². This as much as any other military-strategic technique is a prime example of what Higate and Henry (2009, p.63) argue is a "military-cartographic [...] impulse to distil dynamic social spaces into quantifiable, fixed territorial entities that provide for rationalised strategies of engagement". As Stacey implies, the system can appear arbitrary in the ways in which it categorises and flattens social relations, which in her case include friends married to officers from whom she is spatially segregated by the rank of her husband:

A: So, what about moving - have you been in this house since you came here?

S: Yes

A: Are you happy being on the patch, this is a 'patch' isn't it?

S: It's alright. I still don't understand the reason why you have to divide yourself from the officers. I can understand maybe the Colonels...

A: So there aren't any officers on this bit here?

S: Nah. And officers don't really come down this bit either [...] this is all soldiers, so WO1 and below [...] Um, officers' patches are up by the stables where Heather and Amy live.

In her subtle register of self-regulation (having to 'divide yourself' from others or the fact that 'officers don't really come down this bit either'), Stacey's experience testifies to the panopticism (Foucault 1975, p.209) of rank as a schema of "generalised surveillance" (*ibid*). Paying attention to the geographies of belonging reproduced through rank broadens the terrain for taking account of the ways in which rank shapes the identities and experiences of women married to servicemen, as well as the vectors of difference and distinction they negotiate between themselves. Rank is a technology that if known through its effects, is far

³² This represents one further layer of physical, geographical mobility on a micro-scale, where families can move house multiple times in a very small number of years due to the promotion of the serving member and the necessity that the family lives in the corresponding type and area of housing commensurate with the job, and so that the house they leave can be filled by the person who takes over their former job role.

more than simply the chain of command. In fact, rank is rarely singularly 'rank' at all - what these multiple examples show, is that rank is less a singular apparatus that operates within an institution, than "a type of 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" (Foucault 1975, p.215).

As part of their co-operative, composite power, geographies of rank combine easily with stereotypes of class and gender, as Joanne's describes:

You know anyway, you know by – certain [officers' wives] you can just tell, by the way they dress, speak, their children's names – you just can [...] it's generally the scruffier they are the higher up they are. But even if you couldn't tell and you got in a conversation with somebody, you'd know by where they lived, like it's well known that this patch is officers' houses.

In this sense, geographies of rank render people knowable in a way that puts them in a particular place. At the same time however, it is essential to complicate some of the more visible assumptions and stereotypes that attach to these spaces by studying how they are used and inhabited. Every weekday for example, the children of military families are transported by bus to the local MOD-run and Ofsted-registered schools located around the garrison and named after figures from the English literary canon. The bus stops where they congregate every morning and afternoon are an example of "the patterning of material entities and social relations" (Woodward 2004, p.9) that can reveal so much about military power. The boundaries of belonging demarcated by the bus stops are established in part by the demographics of their use, in that they exclude a minority of married women such as Tessa, who does not have children:

Um, it is quite weird 'cause all of my friends are - have got kids. There is a lot of kids, there's only one couple really that haven't got kids [...] So you do find that not having kids you kind of take a step back. And also if you have got kids when you first move out here, you're going to do the school run so you meet people on the school run. If you don't have kids you don't get that opportunity.

For Jane, who lives in a different area of the town to many of the women in the regiment, the bus stop is a somewhat singular site for her encounters with the neighbours, especially when compared to her husband's network across the various camps in the garrison:

No I don't know my neighbours, and obviously [my husband] has met a few of them round the different camps and stuff but in terms of here I only speak to my neighbours really when I go to the bus stop to pick up the children.

The bus stops constitute a socio-spatial network that is part of the circuitry of the garrison,

but operates according to an alternative rhythm, one tuned to the clockwork mechanisms of family life. The feminisation of the bus stops as a maternal space camouflages the degree to which the belonging they facilitate is a product of the chain of command. At regular times each day, the bus stops draw people out of their homes to gather at the end of the street in a space that is proximate, intimate even, as well as publically visible. As such, the bus stop is host to the fluctuations of everyday intimacies between women, becoming a site that forces but also facilitates their compromise between public and private lives and performances, as Annie states:

Well we call it the 'bus stop test'. In the morning we take [the children] down to the bus stop and most of the other wives on the street – well not all of them but you do see most of them in the course of the day down there – and people have just got used to saying, 'I'm in a bad mood today' or you know, the majority of the time it's just stick up and let her get on with it kind of thing but we know one another well enough now just to kind of say 'Yes, having a bad day!' or what have you.

While the bus stop remains part of the community's self-disciplinary apparatus (the 'bus stop test'), it can also be argued to engender its own modes of transgression and resistance, where the social rules can be adapted to make allowances, where appearances are public but do not have to be polished.

The bus stops that surround the military camp overseas also emerge as a site for gendered and classed visibility, for sightings of different women and their citational practices (Butler 1990). Woodward (1998) has revealed the reciprocal relationship between space and social personhood and its role in the construction of militarised identities, where she has argued for example that "the countryside produces the soldier's body, which is in turn reinscribed and projected back onto the countryside" (Woodward 1998, p.291). It is perhaps this kind of relationship that prompts Laura to recommend the bus stops as a site of particular anthropological interest for my research:

It's great when in a morning, 'cause half of them go out in their pyjamas and Ugg boots with a coat over the top [laughs] [...] Then you get the one with full make up on, can't go out the door without full make up on, it is interesting to see... even if you go by on your bike on a school morning, just come by on your bike and see what the bus stops are like, for people.

Laura's advice to observe the bus stops "for people" underlines the public visibility of the ostensibly 'private' zone of the housing patches as a physical, embodied space through which particular militarised identities (in this case again, femininities) might be argued to crystallise. Cheryl, a woman who had not been living in Germany for long, provides an

important counterpoint to Laura's view of the bus stops and the stereotypes she believes they will confirm. For Cheryl, visible evidence to substantiate the stereotype of the 'glamorous military wife' has proved elusive:

I think it's a myth because my brother-in-law's soon-to-be-ex-[military-]wife, she was saying [...] she felt like she couldn't even leave her flat without putting make-up on and stuff like that. Me? I go down in my pyjamas to put my [child] on the [bus] – I don't care. You know. We call them the 'bus stop crew', all the mothers. You know we're in hoodies, pyjamas, trainers, knowing full right that as soon as we go back up we're just going to veg out, you know? And I was thinking, well I've not come across the glam Army wife. I've only seen one or two but then I naturally assume that maybe they've got jobs.

Cheryl's experience offers an important counter-point to Laura's perception of the different women waiting at the bus stops, and also helps to illuminate the complex social function of military wife stereotypes. Both Cheryl and Laura's emphasis on visibility makes clear the significance of appearance as a primary mode through which a woman is "categorised, known and placed" (Skeggs 2004, p.100). Skeggs has argued that femininity is persistently "read as a class-based property" (*ibid*), and the bus stop scene denotes something of the ideas she develops around working class femininities and physical excess, both in terms of "excessive style" (Skeggs 2004, p.99) and "letting go" (Skeggs 2004, p.102). While Cheryl places herself as belonging to a particular group or 'crew' and even fulfils some of the visible criteria Laura describes pejoratively, her narrative from within allows her to be author of her own social positioning. Like Laura, she is dismissive of the artificiality of the "glam military wife". Rather than seeking to exchange the excess of make up and glamour for the "restraint, repression, reasonableness, modesty and denial" (Skeggs 2004, p.99) of legitimated middle-class femininity, however, Cheryl counters glamour with "irresponsibility and lack of care of the self" (Skeggs 2004, p.102). By refusing to trade up³³ in this way, Cheryl disavows the symbolic order – the whole legitimating framework – that values certain cultural dispositions and styles of dress over others. Instead, she appropriates the place she occupies – for now – within that order, making particular meanings out of the small apartment she has been allocated on a part of the patch occupied by other families of junior ranking soldiers. What Cheryl's 'bus stop crew' proposes, is something about women's strategy of *staying put* within the bounds of gender and class, and appropriating their place within geographies of rank.

³³ These terms can be linked to Bourdieu's configuration of social, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1984), and borrow heavily from Skeggs' analysis as well as other feminist reworkings (Adkins and Skeggs 2004). A full Bourdieusian analysis of rank and the exchange of multiple capitals, along with ideas about military habitus (see MacDonald 2004 and King 2009), would be a fascinating and useful undertaking, but is beyond the scope of this chapter and indeed, this thesis.

The power of rank is what Foucault calls the “art of distributions” (Foucault 1975, p.141), which inheres in its capacity to classify bodies and construct identities according to their place “in a network of relations” (Foucault 1975, p.146). This is useful for thinking through the experiences of women married to servicemen such as Cheryl, who while they are not bound by the confines of the barracks, are both geographically and socially *positioned* by rank. In such a way, rank makes thinking stasis, as much as mobility, crucial. This underlines the asymmetric power relations and lack of equivalence between military and civilian modes of exchange, where military structures dominate to such a degree that civilian – including classed, maternal and feminised – modes of social personhood are limited to their use-value within particular bounded frameworks of belonging and control. This helps to acknowledge, with Skeggs (2004, p.48), the limits of women’s mobilities, and to distinguish within and between military wives, “who can move and who cannot, and what the mobile/fixed bodies require as resources to gain access to different spaces”.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have paid attention to the multiple pathways through which women negotiate their sense of belonging and social personhood on and around the Army camp overseas. Paying attention to ‘civilian’ subjects, spaces and identities, I have explored the productive power of rank as a foil for my analysis. Scholars contend that the professionalization of the armed forces, which includes the transformation of the “bachelor Army” (Moelker and van der Kloet 2003, p.204) into an Army of family men (French 2005, p.309), is commensurate with the decline of a “system of surveillance that oversaw every detail of the waking and sleeping lives of its members” (French 2005 p.332). This assumption, however, takes for granted a division between the military and civilian spheres and notions of public and private within it, which also maps onto the family as a container for civilian and private life. I have shown that in many ways, rank as a system of regulation is both concrete and comprehensive in its presence, threaded as it is through space and social relations. But to the degree that this constitutes a “technology” (Foucault 1975, p.215) of control, its power inheres in a classificatory system that gains traction through multiple axes of difference and distinction that trouble the division between the military and civilian spheres. Thus while emphasising wives’ civilian status, the Army promotes a set of demands around women’s labour, identity and feelings that are couched expressly in military terms and produces a form of “discipline-as-collapse” (Belkin 2012, p.40). And yet, the multiple

and variable positions that women actively take up and appropriate within rank allows room to question its disciplinary force.

What facilitates this flexibility troubles the very coherence and exceptionality of rank in the first place. Throughout my analysis, rank is brought in and out of focus in people's narratives. It is foregrounded then elided, appropriated and disavowed, then frequently upheld at a further point. In such a way, rank becomes difficult to frame as an absolute thing in itself. I have shown that class and gender are often the salient citations through which the classifications of rank are performed. This suggests that rank operates through multiple "formations" (Skeggs 1997) of power that are far from static or fixed. Moreover, paying attention to the mutual imbrication of rank, gender and class illustrates the many ways in which their meanings and uses are renegotiated between women themselves. While these negotiations may not drastically alter the scripts and structures of ranked belonging at a broader level, their use-value inheres in the mobilities they facilitate on an everyday scale. In drawing attention to a series of stereotypes and spaces inhabited by wives in this chapter, I have not sought to measure their "truth value" (Fechter 2010 p.1282) or map "'real' belonging" (Skeggs 2004, p.19). That would be to reproduce methodologically the circumstances where as Skeggs argues, "essentialising and spatializing work together" (2004, p.19). Instead, looking at the social production of space underlines the degree to which "[l]ocating, positioning, individuating, identifying and bounding are operations that play a key role in personal and political subjectivities" (Harvey 2001, p.221). What my analysis serves to underline therefore, is the function of what Avtar Brah (1996, p.115) in *Cartographies of Diaspora* terms "difference as experience". Namely: "the need to re-emphasise a notion of experience not as an unmediated guide to 'truth' but as a practice of making sense, both symbolically and narratively; as a struggle over material conditions and meaning" (Brah 1996, p.116).

The Present Tense of Afghanistan

[I]f you're a soldier from the UK you'll fly back there and it's not just going to be your wife and kids, it's going to be your whole family that greet you. And that's really overwhelming and that's when you get the whole emotional side of life. Whereas here, you step off that plane, onto that bus, and you've got nothing waiting - you've got [someone] in a welfare office [...] with [monotone voice] 'Here's-a-burger, here's-a-beer, well-done-welcome-back-you-hero'. All well and good, but there's no emotion there, even for the married couples you know. When I come back from tour I would love my father to be there, to say 'Well done, you're a hero in my eyes', to make me feel a little bit.... because my wife and children will always make me feel good when I'm down, or they will always respect anything I do, but I - and I love that - but I want it from somebody else, does that make sense? [When] you go back to UK [later], you can't break down to everybody can you? 'Cause it's gone, that emotional bit has gone, it's like, 'Oh well I'm glad you're back, last week'.

This chapter is about the different registers of place and time that constitute an operational tour for military families, and the emotions that circulate through them. As such, it is about the contrasting ways in which absence and presence are felt. As articulated by Steven, a senior soldier who had seen numerous tours to Iraq and Afghanistan, many of these feelings crystallise around the event of return. The regiment's troops began to return gradually towards the end of my fieldwork. Their return was staggered, each squadron arriving separately via a lengthy journey from forward operating bases to larger installations within Afghanistan, then to Cyprus for a period of 'normalisation' and from there on to Germany. Homecomings, when the soldiers finally arrived at the camp, were a curious mix of public spectacle and private emotion, of absence turning into presence, of relief shadowed by grief.

I attended several homecomings during my time in Germany and each one seemed to be an oddly condensed, complex mixture of contradictory forces and feelings. Death and survival were both curiously present for example, it was difficult not to think of the two servicemen who had been killed. My field diary records my impressions of the scene:

A false start when the baggage lorry arrives and unpacks the camouflage rucksacks, helmets and flak jackets without the soldiers. A vague image of absence or death sneaks into my perception. Or something uncomfortable – the kit without the soldier inside it. Hannah is showing me how her camera works as she asked me if I would mind taking some photos. I feel slightly odd about this as it filters my spectatorship of these intimate events through a looking machine that makes the voyeuristic feeling worse. I think that's how I

feel – like I’m hanging round on the edge of other people’s emotions, turning up to get a rush of sentimentality. It is very much spectating – the vast parade ground, standing at the edge on the grass, keeping a distance except today, when taking photos. [...] Every time I watch a homecoming it leaves me with some home-sickness and an excess of direction-less emotion, a relief with no object I suppose.

In such a way, an imaginary of grief haunts homecomings, the constitutive other to the palpable sense of relief that was also present, a mixture confirmed by the sentiments of some of the women I spoke to during the anxious wait for the coach to arrive, again from my field diary:

Tricia commented that the last tour when she welcomed her husband back, she couldn’t help thinking of another woman from the regiment who had lost her husband.

Eventually, tired men and women in desert camouflage greeted their loved ones (or not – many of the young soldiers and officers did not have family members present), who were waiting in new clothes holding up banners and home-made flags. Some women acknowledged that the public performance of homecomings was mainly for the benefit of the children, whose excitement did seem to provide a less anxious energy as they chased the coach and were lifted onto fathers’ shoulders. Most families left as soon as they could, after kit had been registered and returned, with wives insisting that the real homecoming was arriving at their house, where many had also hung banners or prepared food and gifts. As Steven’s perspective makes clear, homecomings represent the accumulation of so much desire – not only the desire of husbands and wives to be together again but also a range of desires and ideals that rely explicitly on the recognition of a soldier’s labour in very particular terms (war, heroism, the nation, fathers and sons). And homecomings are also viewed as a site for emotion itself, for the expectation that emotions be forthcoming, expressed, unambiguous, fulfilled. Homecomings were so longed-for, a time and a place that was the focus of months of anticipation, weeks of counting down, that the public experience and moment of physical arrival almost collapsed under the weight of expectation: the banners illegible, the weather grey, everything suddenly parochial, couples bashful. It is these complex dynamics, which reach their apotheosis in homecomings, that I want to pursue in this chapter.

In this thesis so far I have considered the socio-spatial dynamics of women’s location in Germany in a number of ways. Another space that emerges from their experiences however, has to do with the particular *time* when my fieldwork was conducted: the six-month

operational tour when most women's husbands were away on active combat duty in Afghanistan. In this chapter, I use the spatio-temporalities of an operational tour to connect women's movements in local and national space to 'a-place-called-Afghanistan' and the fluctuations of global politics that are mediated through it. In such a way, I seek to build a picture of the *presence* of Afghanistan in Germany. Furthermore, I argue that women's spatio-temporalities are key to revealing the ways in which Afghanistan *makes its presence felt*. This in turn brings into view women's "affective labour" (Hardt 1999, p.89) in the form of women's heuristic responses to instability, separation, absence and vulnerability, but also as it produces "collective subjectivities" (*ibid*). Looking beyond the effects of political violence as they are most viscerally attached to the bodies and minds of service personnel (Goodell and Hearn 2011, Wool 2013) or the hypervisualised bodies of enemy 'others' (Amar 2011 and Wilcox 2013), I describe a temporal continuum through which the 'theatre of war' becomes unsited and manifest in the everyday spaces of women's lives. I look closely at the textures and fluctuations of an operational tour from the perspective of women married to servicemen, looking at spaces and times of presence and absence, grief and relief, public and private, to explore the ways in which military power is sensed, including the everyday practices through which this more ethereal kind of presence is materialised, embodied and made liveable.

Mapping a-place-called-Afghanistan

The social construction of a-place-called-Afghanistan in Germany troubles the distance between the combat zone and the home to posit military wives as agents who work to smooth and absorb, if not resolve, the rupture and contradictions between them. One of the ways in which Afghanistan gains shape and form during a deployment is through world maps blu-tacked onto children's bedroom walls or display boards at school and nursery, a device that helped to 'locate' absent parents. In this way, soldiers' presence is pinned into position alongside last year's holiday destination or granny and grandpa's house in the UK. On such maps, a-place-called-Afghanistan is marked by its borders, terrain and capital city, even if this defies the limits of a small child's comprehension. Speaking of her toddler's nursery school, a servicewoman whose own deployment preceded her husband's with only a few weeks together as a family in between, notes: "And they had a map of the world, and she knew mummy was there. And then a picture of mummy on Afghanistan". In such narratives, the map is a device that functions at the meta-level of conversations between adults, where pathos is created between the innocence of a child and the knowing significance of

Afghanistan for the adults, a gulf mirrored in the difference between the map's abstract topography – the shape and contours of a landlocked country in Central Asia – and the political geography that sustains a British military presence and the absence of the child's parent. Indeed, if the trick of the map functions as a reassuringly abstract visualisation to a child, it functions as a knowing materialisation of the national significance attached to Afghanistan for adults. The power and pathos of the map as an expression of the presence of Afghanistan lies in its will to innocence, and inheres not so much in what it shows, but what it hides.

The map on the child's bedroom wall is perhaps an appropriate manifestation of the complex and many-layered construction of a-place-called-Afghanistan among the regimental community. It betrays something of the process by which Afghanistan, remaining essentially distant and unknowable for women married to servicemen, becomes flattened into a two-dimensional site for narratives of war and its generic threats. "Afghan" as it is more often called, is always-already abbreviated as the object of international intervention and war, abstracted to a degree that renders Afghanistan curiously vague³⁴. Correspondingly, its spaces are limited to a series of familiarised indigenous or military place names such as Helmand Province, Lashkar Gah or 'Bastion', or else are replaced by generic acronyms that are used with varying levels of comprehension, as is evident in Kirsty's misrecognition of an acronym when I use the term in its unabbreviated form:

A: Was he on a Forward Operating Base or...

K: Um, no he was in a FOB or something, he basically lived in a tent.

For women married to servicemen, the borders of Afghanistan are reconstituted according to the radius of a soldier's location (her husband's work in an office on a base or his accommodation in a tent or his movements on patrol). Thus 'Afghanistan' might be described as a physical, embodied location only in so far as it is the destination of women's husbands, a paradoxical kind of disembodiment where the presence of Afghanistan in Germany is marked most sharply by a husband's absence.

³⁴ Beyond the limits of my ethnographic data and this thesis, there are a whole host of historically- and geographically-specific articulations of Afghanistan as a social, political and cultural space that also work to constitute its multiple meanings. It is essential to note that I risk reproducing the borders of Afghanistan-the-place as it is reflected in my empirical examples, as my ethnographic data cannot support any kind of assumption about the material 'reality' of life in Afghanistan for service personnel or, even more remotely, the Afghan population. The kind of multi-sited ethnographic data that would illuminate the flow of space and time across both Afghanistan and Germany is therefore beyond the limits of this project, and the experiences of those men and women on tour in Afghanistan during my time with the regiment are to a degree consigned to the fixity of being far away in another place (and, of course, in the past).

Kirsty's experience indicates that the shape-shifting, ephemeral presence of Afghanistan eludes the Army's attempts at materialising or controlling its effects:

K: They've done a briefing but [...] basically it was just these guys, some high rank, I don't know who they were, talking about um, how deployment's a very unsettling time for everybody and we have to be there for them and they have to be there for us. And I'm thinking 'Well how can they [be there for us] when they're in a different country?' [...] and then they had this flick show basically, and they were showing us pictures of where they get washed every day and I'm like, what has this got to do with anything? I don't want to see their bathrooms and stuff like that, and rooms where they'll be staying and tents what have you, and...

A: Why don't you want to see them?

K: I just thought, what's the point? It's not something we really want to be thinking about when we're over here. We want to know like, how much danger they're going to be in and stuff, how much worry we are actually supposed to be worrying about, not where they get washed every day.

Kirsty's viewpoint illuminates the Army's attempts to demystify deployment by providing information and context regarding the tour, involving the construction – and normalisation – of Afghanistan through everyday spaces such as washrooms and tents. This emphasis on the personal and reproductive spaces of soldiers' everyday lives in Afghanistan is not insignificant, nor perhaps surprising, given the gendered division of private and public space I have explored in this thesis. While these spaces might not replicate home, they provide an alternative backdrop for more reassuring imaginaries of a soldier's location. The photographs of washrooms and living quarters function to let wives in on their husbands' home from home, they use a domestic scene to create a common ground between here and there. More than simply illustrating the conditions of Afghanistan as a location however, the power of these images in fact lies elsewhere. Instead of providing particular details about Afghanistan as a country, they rely upon generalised ideas about domesticity and the assumption that these are the private and personal, rather than public or political scenes to which military wives can relate. Kirsty is not persuaded by this gendered alignment of the reproductive side of soldiering with assumptions about the personal and domestic concerns of wives. The "flick show" is to her an unnecessary distraction, would seem to conceal or elide the information she is really seeking: some quantifiable sense of danger, some indication of the exact nature of her husband's role in combat operations perhaps, and what this involves. Despite the regiment's well-intentioned attempts at familiarisation therefore, Kirsty maintains her own construction of Afghanistan, resisting its pacification. She does this by reasserting the distinction between public and private and reinstating the division

between the combat zone and the home, in pointed contrast to narratives that attempt to reconstitute Afghanistan through the banality of the washroom.

And yet, just a few sentences later when Kirsty gives an example of one of the things she does know about her husband's time in Afghanistan, these everyday and banal forms of exchange *are* her primary way of locating and relating to his experience. Ironically, the washroom ends up being central to the one picture she is able to build of his location and moreover, is also crucial for the practical role that she can play in that very scene through the materials at her disposal.

I said if you do want to talk to [me] about it then you can. And he said 'Oh right well, do you want to know?' And I said 'If you want, if you don't want to speak about it then I'm not going to ask you and force you'. [...] And we've never really discussed it, I mean he has mentioned a few things 'cause um, he wanted a pair of onesies sent out, 'cause I wanted to get him something stupid 'cause he says all his mates are getting all these silly ones. So I got him a devil one, it was the only one I could find that wasn't just plain, yeah, basically, and he kept saying 'Every morning when I go to the washroom and stuff, all the Afghanis they think I'm the devil, the bathroom every morning just empties when I go there they think it's so evil, they're petrified of it...'

In the end, it is an apparently banal detail of her husband's everyday life in Afghanistan that provides Kirsty with her only deployment anecdote, the one scene that has been played out for her, in which she can also locate her own presence. This scene takes place in the very space that minutes ago she was dismissing as irrelevant to her view of Afghanistan - the washroom, inflected with the familiarity of home, of everyday consumer trends, of collective humour and practical jokes, and crucially here constituting the sphere of her influence, when by her choice of a fancy dress outfit for her husband, she gains a role – albeit a remote one – in the performance it facilitates. That is not to say that this scene is completely void of the politics of the conflict in Afghanistan on a micro-scale however. These are implicit in the shared facilities and routines of British Forces and Afghan Security Forces personnel, the joke that turns on the orientalist construction of a cultural other, and the noticeable undertone of antagonism.

In such ways, a-place-called-Afghanistan takes shape in Germany, constructed through social networks, media and institutional channels as well as material culture and discourse. In many ways, Afghanistan and Germany become twinned locations. Joint weather reports, news bulletins and messages to loved ones were broadcast constantly on British Forces Broadcasting Services (BFBS) for example. Desert bulletins and Afghan place names followed

reports of European snow and sleet, a regular and pervasive reminder that is compounded by women's location in Germany and not always appreciated, as Pippa complains:

Yes I've definitely missed him more this time, and you're just constantly, just constant reminders, I mean even just getting into the car and listening to the bloody radio, that's what does my head in – the first two, three months when I was a bit you know, 'oooh', turning it on and they've got all these messages from Afghanistan and all this news from Afghanistan and you just can't escape it, unless you speak German.

Pippa's description also draws attention to Afghanistan as a kind of presence that is constituted through time as well as space, for example a presence that is constant or one that is intermittent, and one that many women wish to forget. While the social construction of Afghanistan can be traced by exploring the ways in which its geographies are visualised then, it is important to consider how the presence of Afghanistan manifests itself at different times during an operational tour, and through different temporal registers. This opens up further terrain for understanding how women married to servicemen might be understood to *inhabit* a-place-called-Afghanistan.

The presence of Afghanistan

With respect to the study of military power, perhaps the most obvious way of accounting for time is that "of which History (capital H) is made" (Massey 1994, p.253). Understandings of military power tend to crystallise around the moments and places where battles are lost and won. The events of 11 September 2001 are the defining example in this context, marking what Tom Lundborg (2012, p.1) describes as "a border in time", an event that determines the present moment (in this case, a continuous chain of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003) and serves to separate it off from what came before (such as operations in Kosovo and Northern Ireland). People's sense of this border in time was acknowledged in their narratives, where combat operations post-9/11 represented a sea change in the experience and perception of war, as Marianne recounts:

M: [In relation to her husband's first tour in Bosnia] I think as well we just thought you know, it's just a NATO thing [...] I think with Iraq and with Afghanistan it's more of a fear of the unknown. And we hadn't lost anybody either until Iraq. The regiment hadn't lost anybody [...] '05 was the worst. '03 was the first one, what I call the war-y bit [laughs], which was horrendous. [...]

A: Iraq was a real shock to the system?

M: Massive shock.

The temporal register of the operational tour that was unfolding during my fieldwork can also be plotted according to the points when 'historical events' occurred³⁵. During my fieldwork, two British soldiers were killed by members of the Afghan Security Force at a military base in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province. This incident, like all other security breaches, prompted the implementation of 'op minimise'. 'Op minimise' is a standard procedure by which all non-official communications between the theatre of war and the outside world are shut down. This means that in the period immediately after an incident until op minimize is lifted, service personnel are unable to make any contact with friends or family.

From time to time in Germany therefore, Afghanistan falls suddenly and unexpectedly silent. While 'op minimize' prompts a series of well-scripted procedures and protocols throughout the military organisational structure, for the community in Germany it manifests itself in a heightened state of awareness that is vague, frenzied and without object. In the silence and speculation that constitutes op minimize at home, the precondition for rationalising one's fear is that the system is designed to prevent leaks to the media before the military have been able to inform the families of the service personnel involved. Hannah, while recounting her experience of the day the British soldiers were killed, concedes:

The brilliant thing about the system they run you know, as tragic as it is and as bad as you feel for those families, you know [that] if you're reading that news, [then] it's not your soldier, and that's the whole reason it exists, that's why they have op minimize out there so that there's no leaks.

The protocol followed by wives during op minimise involves monitoring the MOD website and crosschecking the information released by twenty-four hour news media. In this case, it did appear that details of the event had been leaked to the press before they were released by the MOD. When Hannah saw news of the incident on the television, she checked the MOD website and there was no information available:

And so I was sat here thinking, 'Oh my God, oh my God. Two soldiers have been shot in Lashkar Gah camp, where Edward works'. I was waiting for the car to come down the drive, I was beside myself. And I know – even though I knew in the back of my mind I was being silly and [...] the chances are it

³⁵ I use 'historical event' to describe a security incident such as might be reported by the international or British media for example. That is not to reduce or inflate (depersonalise or overpoliticise) the meaning or significance of any one event. Rather, by 'historical event' I again invoke Lundborg's formulation of the process by which events *become* 'history', which he argues "needs someone who can decide what a historical event actually refers to, where its borders are to be located, how these borders can be linked to the borders of other events, and how all these borders together constitute the basis of a narrative order that can take us from a specific point in the past to a moment that defines our present "being". (Lundborg 2012, 2)

wasn't him statistically speaking [...] – I just knew they hadn't managed to get hold of the next of kin or whatever it was. So I was, oh I was in such a state. I called [the welfare officer] in the end actually. Just because – even though I knew that I sounded utterly stupid and neurotic, I was just going out of my mind, I had to speak to somebody. And I knew that he might know who it was, which he did. And I thought to myself, I don't want to be that person who calls and is like, 'Oh has anything happened to my husband?' [...] But part of me did think, you know I haven't called up the welfare office for anything during this tour at all, I've never you know, phoned up in floods of tears or had a crisis or anything so I thought, 'No this is my crisis moment and I'm going to ring them'.

Through op minimise, an event is supposedly paused or frozen in time, its particulars held back so that its ramifications can be managed effectively and a soldier's next of kin informed. Yet this does not mean that the event does not *happen* in Germany. Rather, the event becomes manifest in the temporal form of waiting and is spatially reinscribed in unexpected places, such as the driveway of a suburban house where Hannah waits for the appearance of the families liaison officer, whom she imagines will tell her the news of her husband's death. Several women recounted this event during interviews, with others retelling those same women's responses second-hand (stories I had also heard through the welfare office). This illustrates the ripples and reverberations of an event three thousand miles away as it circulates through social networks in Germany. What it also reveals, are the informal protocols for the collective regulation of information and emotion among women married to servicemen. Hannah's self-conscious awareness of 'proper' procedures or a 'proportionate' response to such incidents betrays the ideal qualities of stoicism and reserve required of wives during deployment. These ideals find their expression in hierarchies that fuse together women's intimate relationships with one another on the one hand, and their relationship to institutional structures such as the welfare office on the other. Recounting the same event, Heather asserts her responsibility and skill in managing the failure of another woman's emotional resources. She asserts the same rationalisations as Hannah, only her emotions are invested in defusing and converting the kinetic force of the incident as it ripples through the community. And yet, the cumulative effect of op minimise remains:

And Hannah was in tatters. Susan was in tatters. [The welfare officer] dealt with Hannah, I dealt with Susan. And there was no one there for me, but I went to deal with two other wives. And my husband was, you know, as far away as anyone else. And I remember leaving Susan's and going up to [the park] and just started shaking. Just like [exhales]. But you know, I've just been – I'm thrown into making sure the other people are alright because I knew of course if it was [their husbands] you would know by now, you wouldn't hear it in the news. [...] And so they get all their tears and stuff and all their shaking,

and I've taken that from them and stuck to that. And then I've got nowhere to go.

The continuation of an event in this way, its manifestation in a chain of places, times and emotions as passed from woman to woman, constitutes the everyday presence of Afghanistan in Germany. And it is a presence that is intricately shaped by the scripts of gender. Where the shock of death does occur, such as the occasion before my arrival when two servicemen from the regiment were killed while out on patrol, women spoke of a kind of transferral of effects from the theatre of war to the garrison in Germany. Ironically, it is in theatre, where the visceral events of war are experienced and witnessed directly, that the shock is more rapidly absorbed, as one young officer recalls of the death of his colleague:

I think we hadn't really thought about him that much since he got killed. Um. Because we just couldn't, you know. [...] Obviously the day he was killed was absolutely horrible and we – the way it works out there is, it's almost like an MSN sort of chat log and [...] they can track big incidents like that [...] And so his call sign came up as being you know, vehicle hit, has hit an IED [...] We could basically see the incident evolving. But being absolutely helpless. And so that was pretty – you know, that was a very tough day. Then we had the repatriation, um, which again was, was pretty tough. There's a vigil service and then [...] at about four in the morning [...] we basically line up with the aircraft at the end, you know with the big sort of door at the back. And then it was the Squadron Officers sort of carried his coffin on and that was – yeah that was pretty, pretty tough as well. But then after that, that was like, right well we're only a month or so into this, we've just got to... [...] So I think really like, we quickly pushed all thoughts of that out of our mind.

But the continuation of this event can be charted through the unfolding of its effects 'back home', and the emotional labour of women married to servicemen. The officer's narrative is echoed in the recollections of his wife, Sophie, who attended the UK funeral of the deceased on her husband's behalf, taking over the process of ritualisation while those in theatre moved on to continue their deployment. Sophie frames this in terms of a direct transferral of grief and duty not only on behalf of her absent husband, but also in solidarity with other wives and girlfriends:

And I just, I wanted to be there you know also for some of the other girlfriends who knew him a lot better than I did. And they were all there – I mean, we all sort of said we were there you know primarily because our partners couldn't be there.

This proposes an odd kind of reversal, whereby the event and its effects are spatially and temporally inverted: the soldier witnesses the violence of the event and experiences the death of his colleague in real time, albeit remotely through a technological interface. He

experiences the physical proximity of the event, and his colleague's absence, as it unfolds in Afghanistan, yet its effects (at least those that are manifest in more public forms of grief and memorialisation) are suspended and continued instead by his wife on his behalf. For Sophie, the visceral immediacy of events when they happen is displaced by the silence and vagueness of conditions such as op minimise, yet wives play a direct role in the continuation not only of rituals but of feelings that deal with the event's consequences. In such a way, women married to servicemen perform the duties of those 'left behind' in another sense, as mourners.

These dynamics of presence and absence, transferral and continuation from one place to another, throw into relief the struggle to maintain a division between the combat zone and the home, especially as people manage the intrusion of political violence into their everyday lives and relationships. Not surprisingly perhaps, the division between the combat zone and the home aligns with a gendered division of labour that posits soldiers as active, purposive, mobile subjects deployed on combat duties overseas, and their wives as responsive guardians of familiarity, stability and memory 'back home' (Massey 1994, p.10). Despite this apparent divide however, accounting for time and temporality reveals the dynamism and flow between 'here' and 'there' in such a way as to connect the micro-politics of everyday life (in multiple spaces) with the circulation of geopolitical power. This bring home the significance of international political relations for women married to servicemen, as well as revealing the significance of women's labour in regulating its effects. What this also illuminates, is the connection between the linear time of military history-in-the-making (as represented by the intrusion of political violence), and the cyclical, immanent time of subjects' everyday lives. Yet Afghanistan is not only present during the times when something happens. As Woodward (2004, p.4) has argued, war is merely the most obvious manifestation of military force, the apex of a pyramid that at its base includes the "continual preparations which states make in order to be able to wage war". The mandate to pay attention to the times and spaces of war therefore, goes beyond the need to look simply at moments of violence, rupture and discontinuity.

Gendering everyday Army life

Henri Lefebvre ([1961] 2008) posits the study of everyday life as central to a relational understanding of linear and cyclical time, a relationship that he uses the example of the military institution to express:

The Army prepares itself for war; that is its aim and purpose. And yet moments of combat and opportunities to be heroic are thin on the ground. The Army has its everyday life: life in barracks and more precisely life among the troops. [...] This everyday life is not without its importance in relation to dreams of heroism and the fine moral ideal of the professional soldier. It is the springboard for sublime actions. Questions of rank, promotion and military honours are part of it. There is a saying that Army life is made up of a lot of boredom and a couple of dangerous moments (Lefebvre [1961] 2008 p.41-42)

In her essay 'Politics and Space/Time', Doreen Massey (1994) advocates that everyday, routine time must be given greater consideration for a more comprehensive assessment of politics and power. Yet because this kind of time has so easily and frequently been "coded female" (Massey 1994, p.258) she argues, it has been excluded from politics and knowledge thereon. As I have illustrated here, paying attention to the same events as they unfold across time and space and are retold from different perspectives, is a reminder that "History" (Massey 1994, p.253) and everyday time are not separate or sequential but simultaneous and mutually imbricated. The particular quality of routine time that Massey (1994, p.260) is concerned with however, is its cyclicity and immanence: time that is repetitious, the opposite to the kind of time where history and progress are punctuated according to a linear sequence of events. Massey (1994) argues that cyclical, reproductive time – daily, repetitious acts, everyday life - must be brought into focus as a significant temporal (and spatial) field in its own right. In the case of military power, this means bringing cyclical time into view alongside (and in order to disrupt) notions of military operations as temporally coherent or linear, as cause and effect, as well as spatially contained.

That is not to say that everyday life is not already a salient and publically sanctioned part of the military institution, however. Academic accounts of Army life have occasionally included details of the everyday processes through which the Army reproduces itself, those daily routines and 'domestic' activities that function as part of the organisational hierarchy. In *Squaddies*, Hockey (1986, p.50), considers action, domesticity and boredom as a "disjuncture" in recruits' expectations of Army life:

There is, for example, a sudden immersion in activities of a domestic nature, all, as Bugler (1966: 5) has noted, involving a near-pathological concern for cleanliness, neatness and uniformity. These are activities which, set against an 'action-image', are seen as female in character. (Hockey 1986, p.50)

Routine time has also been connected to spatial incarceration and control. In a reworking of Goffman's (1961, p.16) concept of the "total institution", Susie Scott (2011, p.93) considers

“temporal enclosure” and “block living” in relation to prisons and the military camp, where routine runs counter to freedom and self determination, combining spatial confinement with “*the synchronised movements of disciplinary time*” (Wahidin 2006 in Scott 2011, p.93, emphasis in original). However, with the emergence of a reconstructed soldiering subjectivity that includes fatherhood and humanitarianism as well as the growing number of servicewomen, domesticity has also been appropriated by the Army as a token of its liberal modernisation. The phenomenon of the washroom ‘flick show’ is indicative of a contemporary organisation that is invested in humanising its aims and methods, mobilising its everyday life (and the gendered ideas that come with it) to do so. This is echoed in many ‘off duty’ images featured in the British media, portraying the everyday life of soldiers in Afghanistan for example³⁶ in a way with which society can identify and sympathise. But in such images, everyday life is interesting for the contrast it presents, its novelty when set against a desert backdrop for example. One might argue that *real* ‘real life’ is still somewhere else. So what about the times when everyday life is not in any way exceptional or surprising, is not marked by bright colours and contrast, but blends in perfectly with the background, meets our expectations, confirms our assumptions, such as washing hung on a clothes line in a suburban back garden in Germany?

It is precisely these times and spaces that are rarely configured as part of everyday Army life, perhaps because they go beyond what is considered banal (a worthwhile and valuable concept rescued from its implicit irrelevance by scholars such as Lorraine Dowler [2012] and Cindi Katz [2006]) and are buried in the mundane³⁷. This is a kind of implicit, hard-to-detect devaluation that bears the hallmarks of gender, a devaluation that feminist scholars such as Massey (1994, p.256) have argued is facilitated through “the radical distinction between genders in our society, to the characteristics assigned to each of them, and to the power

³⁶ One startling example is a series of photographs by Alison Baskerville, published widely in the British press in 2012, featuring an image of women’s underwear hanging on a washing line. The caption states: “Trooping the colour: Brightly coloured women's underwear stands out against a dull background and more conventional items of military uniform”³⁶. The gendered terms of this engagement are clear (as heralded by the giddy headline: “It’s a girl’s life in the Army! Portraits from the Afghan frontline show how female troops are winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan”³⁶ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2221475/Our-women-war-Portraits-Afghan-frontline-female-troops-winning-hearts-minds-Afghanistan.html> , last accessed 17 March 2015

³⁷ Although both terms are pejorative, the subtle difference I am trying to get at here is worthy of a comparison of definitions from the Oxford English Dictionary (1998). ‘Banal’ is defined as “so lacking in originality as to be obvious and boring”(p.133); ‘mundane’ as “lacking interest or excitement; dull” (p.1217). In this sense, the word ‘mundane’ seems to express a state that precludes even the possibility of becoming a cliché, a depth of dullness that goes unnoticed, compared to the self-evidence of banality, which at least represents a kind of recognition.

relations maintained between them". What is useful about Massey's (1994) work in relation to other classic feminist critiques (for example, Mary Douglas' [1966] *Purity and Danger* [see also Belkin 2012, p.34]), is the connection she makes to conceptualisations of time and space. Even where understandings of the relationship between time and space vary considerably she argues, the negative feminisation of one in relation to the other is strikingly consistent. Thus she argues:

Even where the transcodings between dualisms have an element of inconsistency, this rule still applies. Thus where time is dynamism, dislocation and History, and space is stasis, space is coded female and denigrated. But where space is chaos (which you would think was quite different from stasis; more indeed like dislocation), then time is Order... and space is still coded female, only in this context interpreted as threatening (Massey 1994, p.258)

Massey's focus on the multiple dualisms that "map onto each other and also map on to the constructed dichotomy between female and male" (Massey 1994, p.258) can be usefully connected to Belkin's (2012, p.58) configuration of gender and military discipline as involving the "normative alignment" of "substitutable binarisms". Crucially, his argument focuses on the degree to which, while military discipline (and scholarship thereon) posits these oppositions as distinct and irreconcilable, they are experienced (and their power gains its disciplinary force) through conflation, confusion and "the compelled embrace" (Belkin 2012, p.5) of both³⁸. Massey and Belkin's analyses are useful for highlighting the spuriousness of binary thinking, which Belkin links to the smoothing over of military power and its broader imperial contradictions, as well as to the centrality of heteronormativity in maintaining the "illusions of normalcy" on which the military community relies (Serlin 2006 in Belkin 2012 p.59). Such is the critical rationale for paying attention to women's practices of normalisation and the everyday spaces and times in which they take place, the aim being to counter the kind of binary thinking that designates times and places of war while assuming that others represent states of peace; that privileges action and contrast but ignores what is continuous, repetitive or mundane; that separates productive labour from reproductive labour and foregrounds time as History rather than time as routine. Inspired by the feminist and queer analysis of scholars such as Massey (1994) and Belkin (2012), I want

³⁸ It is useful to expand this definition here: "Parallel to the compelled disavowal of what is constructed as unmasculine, the military has also incited the unmasculine, and forced service members to inhabit it in order to be disciplined and conform to power. At the level of individual and institutional practice, military culture involves not just a flight from the unmasculine, but a simultaneous endurance and even embrace of it as well. Thus the creation of a masculine armed force depends on a surprising degree of engagement with the very sorts of unmasculine foils that masculinity seems by its very definition to be positioned against" (Belkin 2012, p.24-25)

to show the interdependence of these states of being and realms of experience. One way to do this is to look at the interlocking temporal registers through which they are linked.

In her analysis of institutional timeframes, Scott (2011, p.102) considers the interaction between the “public calendars” and the “private calendars” of seafarers. For seafarers, Scott notes, “[c]hildren symbolically represented [...] ‘lost time’ that could never be recouped” (*ibid*). While this implies an erasure or gap in time between the spaces of ‘here’ and ‘there’ as experienced by those, such as soldiers, who are ‘away’, the account of tour-time offered by some of the women I interviewed indicates that military wives work in the very tension between multiple wheels of collective and individual time, inhabiting this temporal gap between the public institution and the nuclear family, regulating the rhythms of being both ‘home’ and ‘away’. Many of the measures that women use to smooth over these fluctuations are temporal themselves, as if using their own time to compliment or sometimes counter military time, especially when the latter is beyond their control or unreliable. Women declare their own preferences and develop tactics for the management of time, as Heather explains: “Leading up to deployment you just want them to go [...] My way of coping is that I almost push him away come the last couple of weeks [...] and then you get [...] sort of on a footing, and then I think it’s okay.” An emphasis on establishing a routine, in order to balance work and childcare for example, also emerges as a valuable resource, to the degree that Angie finds some relief in the extended length of its duration:

I find the deployment well, ‘this is it, get onto it’. And the six-month time period [is a] one off and it's done with. I find it a little bit more frustrating with the training - going for 3 months, coming in, going for a week, coming in...

Military wives work both with and against the dictates of regimental logistics and the demand for synchronisation, converting the time of the tour into alternative forms. Like the map on a child’s bedroom wall, counting down to a parent’s return from Afghanistan was a popular technique. Some mothers translated the weeks into units such as the number of swimming lessons left until a father’s return, or created “a little chalk board of how many days”. Yet there remains a sense in which family time seems always to be working in tension with the unpredictability and possible failure of military time, as Amy, well aware of the myth of military precision, explains:

I don't do the countdown for the kids, I don't believe in that because if you do countdown and it comes to that day and his flight doesn't arrive or is delayed, well they're devastated. Jack knows he's due home in two weeks but they have no concept of time so two weeks could be a month. No but it's

true. And I'll not even tell him the day he comes home, we'll literally just tip up. And I think that's just how I get on with things.

Women's micro-management of routine time smoothes over the unwieldy mass-movements of military logistics and the ripples of anticipation they produce at home, converting those movements into alternative forms or even hiding the passage of time so as to protect children from its disappointments. In such ways, women married to servicemen appropriate the kinetic force that, as much as operational systems or the events that interrupt them, propels the tour forward.

One further form of routine and repeated time that can be found in everyday Army life inheres in the concept and condition of 'readiness'. Combat readiness is what Lutz calls "war's shadow" (Lutz 2001, p.7), which she connects to "battle's other - the 'home front'" (*ibid*). Readiness entails the simulation, rehearsal and repetition of a series of calculated moves and practice mobilisations. The productive power of readiness is something that Lutz (2001, p.87) attributes to its temporal quality of both presence and projection: "because it involves peering into the void of the future and the blurry shapes of the present, it must also be mythic: It has to draw on culturally tutored imagination, fears and wishes". The idea of readiness, its temporal quality and its role in the diffusion of military power, opens up a final aspect of the presence of Afghanistan and its significance for women married to servicemen in this chapter. This goes beyond the social construction of Afghanistan as a place, and the incorporation of events into routine and reproductive time as smoothed over by military wives. Rather, readiness and the simultaneous conditions of present and future it contains, opens up a realm of experience that has less to do with the presence of particular places and events *per se*, than their *anticipation*. This presence of Afghanistan might be described as mythic, but the examples I have explored already in this chapter indicate a kind of presence that is keenly *sensed*. In the final section of this chapter therefore, I want to pay attention to some of the ways in which Afghanistan *makes its presence felt*.

The present tense of Afghanistan

In this chapter so far, I have sought to animate 'Afghanistan' beyond its fixed status as the object of international intervention or the exclusive arena of soldiers' experiences. I have looked at the temporal contingency of an operational tour through the intrusion of violent events, at the same time as I have explored the continuities through which these are

smoothed over in everyday life. The 'present tense' of Afghanistan brings these two analyses together to express the emotional register through which this contingency is felt and expressed, and the everyday processes through which it is managed. The present tense of Afghanistan is less about the times when events happen than their anticipation. It is about the imaginaries that rush in to fill the gaps of silence and unknowability that I have highlighted. However, it is also about the gestures, narratives and practices that women develop to enact these mythologies, to tether them to something here and now, to help materialise those multiple absences. Two very simple examples from men and women's accounts of the communication links between 'theatre' and 'home' provide a starting point for what I mean. In the first, Bernadette and Adam describe their memories of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In the second, Elise explains some of her experiences of the most recent operational tour.

B: I found out 2 months in as he was away that I was pregnant with [our son], and I couldn't tell him, I had to send it through the family officer to tell him you know, in the field.

A: Yeah, troop briefing they were like 'We're going off here, we're going to take this place here, make sure there's no one in there, Adam by the way your Mrs is pregnant'. I was like, 'Can you just say that last one again I'll write that down Sir - what?!' [laughs]

B: I wouldn't have told him that way but I thought well, if something happens...

E: Okay, you're far away from your boyfriend let's say. You can text him, ring him can't you? You have conversations at night-time. But when your husband or boyfriend is in a war zone, and the Army control the phone calls, and you know if you miss... I missed so many phone calls, I was heartbroken. 'Cause that could be the last phone call [...] He could ring at 3 o'clock in the morning. You just never say, 'Oh can you ring back?' You just wake up and you talk to them.

The 'present tense' of Afghanistan may seem the wrong term to express the futurity that is implicit in Bernadette and Elise's experiences above, or the conditional nature of women's anticipation (comprising both their concern but also their pre-emption of possible events). However, what I want to explore here is not so much the actual possibility to which women's pre-emption corresponds (for example, what those events are, the likelihood of them happening or whether or not they did happen). Rather, my focus here is on the way in which the anticipation of those events manifests itself in the present, as women are going about their everyday lives. Thus, like the compulsion to pick up the phone in the middle of the night, the present tense of Afghanistan works in the present because it can appear at any time, it gains shape and form here and now, through the spaces of everyday life. What I want to express using this temporal register, is women's daily inhabitation of a state of

contingency – a kind of ‘readiness’ that involves an awareness of, preparation for, but in most cases the deferral of, the worst case scenario. In other words, I want to question what it means to inhabit a state of ‘just in case’.

I interviewed Kate relatively early in my fieldwork at a point when the regiment’s return from Afghanistan was still a way off. She was married to a middle-ranking soldier who was part of a platoon with a highly active front-line role in Afghanistan. Kate had experienced numerous deployments before and made clear that she was happily settled in the regimental community. Even so, her experience of this tour still took her by surprise sometimes:

Every so many weeks I’ll start feeling like, I’ll get sad and I’ll cry at the most ridiculous things. And I’ll lie in bed at night and I can hear cars pulling up and I just – I don’t know, I just think, ‘Please don’t you know, please don’t ring my doorbell’.

The motif of ‘the knock on the door’, implicit here in Kate’s anticipation of the doorbell ringing, emerged from many of my conversations with spouses and service personnel. The ‘knock on the door’ functions as a ready-made, collective euphemism for a soldier’s death, referring to the visit his next of kin will receive from the family liaison officer whose job it is to break the news. Like Hannah keeping watch at her window during op minimise, for Kate ‘the knock on the door’ is manifest in material form here as the sound of a car (any car) driving up a quiet residential street late at night. The present tense of Afghanistan is not simply about mythic projection therefore, it is not simply the object of women’s imagination³⁹. Rather, the present tense of Afghanistan happens – is felt – in the very real spaces and times of everyday Army life. Furthermore, it takes shape and form – is embodied, enacted and verbalised – through the kind of labour and identities that I have consistently shown are produced in nexus of gender and the military.

Figuratively for example, ‘the knock on the door’ unsites death from the battlefield and places it at women’s doorsteps, at the boundary of the public institution and the domestic sphere. Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Eyal Ben-Ari (2005) have considered military death in terms of the problem it presents for the military institution, which they underline is “*the*

³⁹ Although this spectral quality – sometimes literally taking the form of sounds in the middle of the night - might imply the need for a psychoanalytic approach (see for example Avery Gordon in *Ghostly Matters* [1997]), this is not my aim here. This is a distinction that is crucial to make in light of research that explores the impact of war through pathologies of post-traumatic stress disorder in military contexts (see for example Mulligan et al 2012).

organization most strongly identified with the legitimate use of violence” (Vinitzky-Seroussi and Ben-Ari 2005, p.651, emphasis in the original). The authors explore some of the cultural scripts that govern ideas about “good” and “bad” military deaths, determined by the kinds of operations that are their cause (humanitarian or peacekeeping missions for example), and the kinds of soldiers killed (including their gender, age, marital and family status [Vinitzky-Seroussi and Ben-Ari 2005, 657]). While these public scripts draw useful attention to the sanctioning of violence on behalf of the state, the gendered divisions through which they are maintained goes unexplored. As a cultural script that circulates internally within the military institution and pertains to those gendered subjects “left behind” (Massey 1994, p.10), ‘the knock on the door’ represents the domestication of a death whose cause is state-sanctioned violence, but whose effects are depoliticised as they cross the boundary and pass into the private, personal sphere.

Yet the present tense of Afghanistan, although constituted through individual emotions and private spaces, is a citational practice (Butler 1990). The ‘knock on the door’ was most often an imagined event and not a concrete experience for most of the women I encountered, its invocation standing as a placeholder for the potentiality of a soldier’s death. In this sense, its function is also performative. It is in this way that spaces such as the bus stops for example, become sites for doing emotions, where the boundaries of different worlds – the private and public, the personal and political – collide but are also undone, as Kate recalled of the day when two of the regiment’s soldiers were killed:

And I was running late that day so my blinds were closed. So my neighbours walking past my house thought it was me. Because they hear [it happened to our regiment], they don’t know who it is. But they know a couple of their friends are part of the regiment and they panic. So as I walk to the bus stop some of them were crying. Because they’d panicked, they didn’t know if it was going to be [my husband], or going to be, you know, next door. Because it’s always going to be someone you know.

Here, the dual dynamic of recognition and rehearsal with which women’s story telling is infused renders the present tense of Afghanistan cathartic almost. Like the twin dynamics of homecoming, it generates relief whose constitutive other is a proxy kind of grief. There is a sense in which women encroach as close to the experience of grief as they can, with the death at its centre remaining collective, never individually their own. Moreover, this example makes clear that the present tense of Afghanistan and its metaphors are tethered to the political, social, cultural and institutional conditions of possibility through which it is mediated and expressed. As Sara Ahmed (2004, p. 191) has argued: “The ‘doing’ of emotions

[...] is bound up with the sticky relation between signs and bodies: emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialise the surfaces and boundaries that are lived through worlds". In such ways, the present tense of Afghanistan reveals the depth to which many of the socio-cultural, special and temporal dynamics I have explored throughout this thesis penetrate. Kate continues:

You can't sleep, you worry and you think... And d'you know this sounds really silly, I used to clean my house from top to bottom before I went to bed in case I got that knock at the door in the middle of the night. I didn't want the person giving me bad news to see how messy the house was. [...] Because if I'm going to have a stranger in my house telling my bad news I don't want them thinking I've lived in a mess. It was a ritual for me. I was – I would make sure – I would never go to bed without – because obviously if something happened as well I'd be shipped – I'd be flown wherever. And I thought the last thing I want is people, either friends of mine having to come in here and collect things for me, coming in to my messy house. It was just, it was something I felt – I didn't want strangers thinking that I was messy that was all. The possibility of a stranger coming in here was quite, I thought, was going to be quite high. That someone was going to have to come in and collect belongings of mine to take wherever I was going to be.

In many ways, Kate's feelings and their translation into action – into a kind of 'women's work' (Federici 2012) that are rarely configured as part of Army everyday life – represent the materialization of many of the power relations I have explored throughout this thesis. It is in this sense that the present tense of Afghanistan also raises a difficult question at this final point: the question of women's capacity to resist the co-optation of their emotions, the internalisation of gendered identities and the incorporation of their labour in the interests of the normalcy on which the military depends.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have paid attention to the movements produced by the particular spatial and temporal conditions that constitute an operational tour for women married to servicemen. It is clear that the discourses and materialisations through which a-place-called-Afghanistan is experienced and understood by women married to servicemen, are limited to the terms of military intervention, territorial occupation, soldiering as a form of productive labour and the absent presence of women's husbands. In this sense, the militarised forms in which Afghanistan is made available to wives, reproduces the unknowability and exceptionality that surrounds soldiers' deployment. This military mystique would seem to foreclose an understanding of the equivalence of women's own experiences and reproductive labour during an operational tour or indeed, their capacity to transcend the

perceived distance between 'here' and 'there' and a whole host of other gendered dichotomies besides.

Nevertheless, by insisting on the 'presence' of Afghanistan as it is experienced through women's everyday lives and in places other than the theatre of war, I have sought to trouble women's relegation to local rather than global, and domestic rather than political space. In such a way, my analysis is invested in "rescuing space from its position of stasis, passivity and depoliticisation" (Massey 1994, p.6). As Massey argues however, the social meanings and relations articulated through space must also be configured through their particular collision in time:

Seeing space as a moment in the intersection of configured social relations (rather than as an absolute dimension) means that it cannot be seen as static. There is no choice between flow (time) and a flat surface of instantaneous relations (space). Space is not a 'flat' surface in this sense because the social relations which create it are dynamic by their very nature. (Massey 1994, p.265)

In addition to the significance of space in relation to time however, my analysis underlines the need to pay attention to different *kinds* of time and the significance of multiple, concomitant temporalities in women's mediation of the presence of Afghanistan. The kind of time that I have explored in this chapter rarely features in accounts of military history and it goes beyond those times of rupture and discontinuity when events thousands of miles away in Afghanistan directly affect women married to servicemen. Equally as important, I have argued, are the times when nothing much happens, when normalcy is maintained. Paying attention to these quieter times, and the spaces through which they are experienced, reveals that they are far from empty, remote or insignificant however. Indeed, these times and space are inhabited by women married to servicemen, their kinetic energy invested in maintaining the normalcy on which the military institution depends. Furthermore, as women's narratives and labour are invested in managing the spectres of state-sanctioned violence, the effects of military power become deeply sensed. Throughout this chapter I have sought to highlight the multiple times and spaces that constitute military operations. If the spatio-temporalities of women married to servicemen count as part of an operational tour however, then what does this imply for women's complicity in military power and ultimately, war?

Conclusion

Army wives: The “cotton wool effect”?

Early on in my time with the regiment, the welfare officer made a wry suggestion that my PhD should be titled “Army wives: The cotton wool effect”. This humorous aside, the tensions it expresses and its encapsulation of the dynamics of my study at a number of levels (including the parody of academic style) resonated all the way through my fieldwork and beyond. The idea of the “cotton wool effect” expresses military wives’ ‘dependent’ status from the point of view of a welfare office working with limited training and resources, and perhaps something of a clash of management sensibilities⁴⁰, to provide support services to over 250 families during the particularly stressful time of a deployment. In short, it is a view forged in the experience of staff who are on twenty-four hour call to handle issues “ranging from ‘I’ve locked myself out of my house’ to paedophilia, suicide...”. The “cotton wool effect” also evokes something of a self-perpetuating, cyclical interplay of care and dependency that is reminiscent of many of the experiences I have documented here, from the continuation of a ‘British’ way of life in Germany and the overbearing production of the regimental family, to the disciplinary power of rank and the domestication of war. The “cotton wool effect” implies the pacification of women’s needs with a somewhat infantilising comfort blanket of familiarity⁴¹. It also implies that the Army over-compensates and mollifies wives so that they are in fact *disempowered* (or, from the point of view of some perhaps, *over* empowered) and come to depend upon or expect a level of support that is untenable and possibly even undeserved by some.

The welfare officer’s idea for my title expresses the degree of weariness that comes with the job, and consequently perhaps a cynical view of women’s status as the ‘dependents’ of

⁴⁰ According to my interview with a member of welfare personnel, the shift from military discipline to “dealing with civilians” requires a personal transformation on the part of the soldier responsible, as well as a professional transformation for which further training is required: “Dealing with stuff that you just should never ever deal with, which the professionals should be dealing with”.

⁴¹ As Pippa elucidates: “There’s an absolute lethargy out here [...] the lethargy that people just can’t be bothered to embrace what to me is a wonderful opportunity, [...] you know the Army give you everything on a plate they really do, they make it easy as possible for you, I mean you don’t even need to think about phoning up the gas man or electricity and stuff, there’s a step-by-step guide to Life here. [...] so you know people are so used to having everything put on a plate for them that they won’t go out and explore”.

military personnel. In many ways, the welfare office is the primary battlefield for women's material bargain with the military institution, the place where some of the conditions of British citizenship that the military maintains for its personnel overseas are administered, as well as, during deployment, support on a casual, ad-hoc basis. Several times during the tour, I watched as the welfare office become the site of women's exasperated efforts to navigate the complex bureaucracy of arranging a move or claiming benefits, which were thwarted by unreliable communications with a spouse in Afghanistan, wives' inability to access information directly, and the requirement for the husband's signature on one particular form or other. At these times, the welfare office was a site for women's assertion of their sense of entitlement to social services and support, which was frequently articulated as their direct and rightful compensation for the degree to which the military institution determined so many aspects of their circumstances.

As the welfare officer intended it, and as these and other empirical examples show, the "cotton wool effect" expresses a complex relationship of supply and demand (and the struggle to find a balance between them). What the idea of the "cotton wool effect" also underlines however, is that military wives' dependency – as an *effect* of the military institution – is not naturally occurring (say, in any biological or innate sense), but has been politically, socially and culturally manufactured. At the same time, the "cotton wool effect" and its reliance on a common platitude (that of wrapping someone up in cotton wool) reflects the ease with which military wives' dependent status is normalised and simplified in a way that glosses over the complexity of the power relations involved. The challenge therefore, and one that I have undertaken in this thesis, lies in disentangling women's investment of their labour, identities and emotions, from the proxy relationship to the military institution that their 'dependent' status implies. Paying attention to the ways in which women make sense of their relationship to the military institution – to their understandings of what they give and what they receive in return – helps to trouble the assumptions produced by their material dependency. This is significant not only in pushing beyond scholarship in which the motivations and commitment of military wives are aligned with soldiers' organisational commitment or military effectiveness. It also has implications for the status of women married to servicemen as both the victims and the agents of military power, and broader still, how to think about women's agency within the bounds of highly normative social hierarchies.

In this thesis I have sought to unpack the assumption that military wives might be classified as militarised subjects in any unitary, absolute or straightforward way. Part of this task involves documenting the military conditions that clearly shape the labour, identities and feelings of women married to servicemen. Thus each of my empirical chapters took as their starting point an aspect of women's lives that might be argued to be *made* by the military - the mandate for geographical mobility, the call to social cohesion, the social hierarchy of rank and the operational tour. Undoubtedly, the experiences I have documented reveal the myriad ways in which many women's lives are determined to an often extreme and intractable degree, by the military institution. These are the limited conditions within which women married to servicemen operate. Yet as my analysis has also shown, these conditions do not necessarily produce consistent, complete or stable effects. If, like the "cotton wool effect", these effects can be revealed to rely upon demand as well as supply – on agency as well as dependency – then they are far more complex, contradictory and negotiable than they might at first appear. If these effects, as they shape and are shaped by different women in different ways, are multiple and often divergent, then what in turn does this reveal about how military power operates? To begin this final chapter I review some of the effects of the conditions I have explored throughout this thesis. I will then go on to consider a framework for understanding the implications of these effects using ideas about militarisation, before coming back to the question of women's agency.

Negotiating military conditions of possibility

Migration

In the first empirical chapter I considered the conditions of geographical mobility mandated by the military institution. The aim was to chart some of the military-institutional forms of mobility that women negotiate on a daily basis, not only in terms of their own international migration, but also in terms of further, overlapping pathways of travel and movement undertaken across the spaces and boundaries of the military camp overseas. By exploring some of the ways in which women make sense of and manage these military mobilities, I sought to complicate the dynamic of 'following' that they imply. Instead, I emphasised the strategies and tactics used by women and men to convert these conditions and appropriate their effects. Many of these strategies are invested in asserting women's choices and furthermore, in wresting these choices away from the military institution and couching them firmly in the context of family ties and the private sphere of the family. In this however, women are deeply reliant upon traditional conceptions of the sexual division of labour

within households and the gender roles inscribed therein. This gendered division of labour also helps to secure women's incorporation into the military institution as a casualised and localised reserve Army of labour, constituting a hidden workforce within the garrison. In such ways and with gender as a key catalyst, women's productive and reproductive labour is instrumental to the processes through which the effects of military mobilities are smoothed over and rationalised. While this positions women at the centre of overlapping circuits of mobility (holding everything together rather than peripheral figures trailing behind), it does little to unsettle the military conditions that are the causes of these effects.

One way in which women married to servicemen work within the constraints of their migrations with the military however, is to convert their geographical mobility into social mobility. Using a selection of ideas from the study of privileged migration, I explored the contemporary, globalised identities and ideologies asserted by women, even as many of the conditions they described were evocative of more limited understandings of migration (such as camp followers, sojourners or expat and colonial communities). Women's assertion of cosmopolitan identities, globalist attitudes and practices of cultural consumption complicate the degree to which the experience of living overseas is controlled and contained by the military's reinforcement of borders and boundaries of nation. However, looking at the gendered, classed and ethnic boundaries that many of these practices uphold, illustrates the persistence of familiar structures of encapsulation, as well as the kind of social and material limitations that contribute to women's contradictory feelings of both 'moving on' and being 'held back'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this chapter illustrated that many of the supposed liberatory effects of transnational migration are foreclosed by the cultural, political and material conditions under which women married to servicemen move overseas. As a model however, the idea of transmigration offers some scope for understanding the adaptive, proactive and hybrid processes through which women refuse to be fixed by the boundaries of militarised belonging.

Regiment

In my second empirical chapter I looked at the politics of belonging produced by the regimental system, which I argued are deeply entwined with the ideals and structures of belonging inscribed through the heterosexual family. Taking some of the sociological literature on military participation as my starting point, the aim was to explore military wives' role in reproducing regimental belonging, and question their relationship to the same.

I paid particular attention to women's participation in a range of activities that constitute the shadow economy of regimental belonging, mirroring the collective activities and identities demanded by the regiment of its personnel. This further underlined the regiment's dependence on women's labour to reproduce a functional community. However, these alternative economies of belonging also revealed some of the ways in which women married to servicemen take up a mobile and contradictory position on both the outside and the inside of regimental belonging, asserting the value of their labour in ways that sometimes exploit, sometimes subvert, the social hierarchies that would otherwise appear to keep them in their place.

Paying attention to regimental belonging also occasions some insight into women's relationship to the state as the author of military power, particularly with respect to national service as a mode through which military participation is understood. I illustrated some of the ways in which women fought to reframe ideas about national identity and citizenship in terms of family history and affective affiliations, which predate the co-optation of that identity to form the figure of the citizen-soldier. I also explored women's translation of the global and national meanings attached to soldiering as a form of exceptional labour connected to war and state-sanctioned violence. Here, women's narrative practices broadened the terms of military masculinities to reframe soldiers' labour as paternal as well as humanitarian. By domesticating soldiering in such ways, women worked to detoxify the meaning of their husbands' service and belonging to the military institution, at the same time replacing the significance of the nation with the significance of family ties and by association, their own status and privileged knowledge thereof. Moreover, translating soldiers' labour into familial terms also enabled women to draw attention to (if not quite politicise *per se*) the value of their own labour in sustaining the nuclear family while the regimental, national or global 'family' benefits from a soldier's labour.

Finally, I explored the knitting together of ideals, narratives and desires of belonging through the compound form of the 'regimental family'. I argue that this metaphorical form of belonging is also mythic, promoting ideals of unity, duty and love at the same time as it manifests itself in a range of disciplinary effects. It is in this sense that the regimental family is also fraught with divisions, unequal power relations and ultimately, failure. By tracing the gendered, classed and ethnic fault lines of these divisions my analysis reveals the degree to which the regimental family is a cultural construction that requires propping up through the

conscious performance of belonging, a performativity of which its subjects are highly aware. This family production, in both its ideals and its failure, reveals the depth and scope of heteronormativity as a social glue that binds the community together with extraordinary force.

Rank

In my third empirical chapter I explored multiple boundaries of difference and distinction that further complicate the production of social cohesion within the regimental community. The aim of this chapter was to unpick some of the homogenising assumptions and stereotypes that attach to the figure of the military wife and explore how women 'do' belonging between themselves. I documented a range of ways in which women articulate their social personhood and interpret, renegotiate and inhabit their place within a socio-spatial order. Rank was the primary structure I explored in this chapter, particularly in respect of its paradoxical function as both a foil and an enabling force for women's social personhood. My analysis showed that women's identities are relational and fluid, and entail processes of disavowal, disassociation and resistance, as well as (often simultaneously) processes of recognition and assimilation in relation to rank.

I began by documenting some of the conditions through which rank might be argued to affect the spouses of service personnel. This includes the incorporation of women's voluntary labour as part of their spouse's job role, differential cycles of internal mobility between officers and soldiers, and the spatial distribution of the community in service family accommodation. Looking beyond these managerial, administrative or spatial conditions to their effects, however, testifies to the productive power of rank and its circulation through other vectors of power, resulting in a range of identities and assumptions that are co-constituted through gender and class. In such a way I showed how rank extends beyond its military-administrative function to regulate power relations between women married to servicemen and female service personnel for example. Here I demonstrated that military wives occupy a highly ambiguous position between military and civilian spheres, subject to a range of power relations mutually constituted through rank, gender and class, at the same time as they are attributed – and assert – their civilian immunity to the formal discipline through which rank is upheld. In such a way, wives (and indeed service personnel) can be understood as working both with and against rank, selectively engaging formal and informal modes of difference and distinction in ways that transcend any neat division between

military and civilian, and between rank and other composite vectors of power such as gender and class. Military wives' complex relationship to rank demonstrates that its effects are far more diffuse, but also far more negotiable than its formal technologies imply. Women are highly aware of rank and the conditions through which it shapes their everyday lives. Finally then, my analysis focused on some of the ways in which women married to servicemen inhabit the places they are allocated in the stratified social order. By appropriating the gendered and classed performances and identities those places prescribe, women knowingly appropriate the effects of rank in a way that is tactical and selective. In this sense, women married to servicemen can be understood not only as subjects but also as agents of rank as a vector of power that they negotiate between and among themselves. Thus rank cannot simply be understood as a linear social hierarchy that operates vertically according to the chain of command. Rather, rank produces disciplinary power in a way that is widely dispersed and highly fluid, to the degree that it is possible to question the exceptionality of rank as any singular mode of power in its own right.

War

The final empirical chapter considered the particularity of women's location in space and time during the period when their husbands were deployed on active combat duty in Afghanistan. I sought to rethink the relationship between the combat zone and the home and counter assumptions that posit soldiers as the agents of military power and their spouses as passive subjects waiting for their return. Instead, I emphasised the everyday practices through which women married to servicemen actively manage the flow of intimate human relations, the presence of absence and the continuation of violent events 'back home'. I began by paying attention to the social construction of Afghanistan as a place that forms a kind of presence in the everyday spaces of women's lives in Germany. By documenting those times when women's daily routines were ruptured by violent events in Afghanistan, I revealed the simultaneity and continuation of the experience of war, as well as women's instrumental role in the domestication and pacification of its effects within the community. I argued that understandings of military power must be expanded to include those effects produced beyond the times and spaces where conventional scholarship has designated history is made and politics happens, or where military force is deployed.

Adapting an analysis based on the interplay between space, time and gender, I argued that the designation of war aligns with a series of gendered binarisms that exclude or invisibilise

the experience and role of women such as those married to servicemen. In response, I furthered my analysis beyond the presence of Afghanistan or the intrusion of violent events to consider the effects of war as mediated through routine, everyday, reproductive time and the feminised zones and labour associated therewith. This shed light on a range of lesser-acknowledged practices through which women married to servicemen take an active role in managing military force and smoothing its effects. Women's management of contingency and collective imaginaries of human vulnerability reveal that military power is not only present but also deeply sensed. While women seek to keep these more spectral effects of military power at bay during a period of deployment, war is productive of a range of practices and scripts that are deeply gendered and which ultimately serve to reinforce and re-incorporate the reproductive role of women in supporting the continuation and perpetuation of military power.

In this thesis I have taken a closer look at the military conditions that shape the experiences of women married to servicemen. As reviewed above, I have drawn on ideas about mobility and transmigration; about the performativity of belonging and multiple borders of inside and outside; about difference, distinction, discipline and control; and about the social production of space and time. By looking at the mobile and flexible ways in which women co-produce the effects of military power, I have illustrated some of the ways in which their own manoeuvres help to reshape, divert, appropriate and resist the influence of the military institution upon their everyday lives. The picture this presents is varied, multiplex and often contradictory, demonstrating that wives' relationship to military power is far from uniform or fixed, despite the seemingly intractable material and structural forms this power takes.

My aim in this thesis was to look beyond the study of military presence and those structures of migration, regiment, rank and war that undoubtedly shape the lives of those I have sought to represent. Woodward (2004, p.154) argues that "what military geography has to do is problematize the issue of presence and ask questions about the consequences of this seemingly obvious and taken-for-granted thing" (Woodward 2004, p.154). I have sought to expand the terrain for questioning military presence in two ways. First, by paying attention to a range of alternative spaces designated as 'civilian' or 'domestic' zones beyond the Army camp; the kind of spaces where military presence is less visible or overt. While they remain in many fundamental ways militarily managed, they constitute the sites where military presence is camouflaged or converted into other forms, the boundaries of which are

frequently blurred. Secondly, I have paid attention to the movements of women married to servicemen as they circulate through these spaces and the social interactions they facilitate and foreclose.

By paying attention to a set of alternative military geographies and furthermore, exploring the ways in which these spaces are inhabited in everyday life, I have sought to demonstrate not only how military geographies order space, but also how that spatial order is socially produced such that its effects are more diverse than might be assumed. I have paid attention to the differential meanings of particular spaces at particular times, which includes paying attention to absence as well as presence, and continuity as well as rupture and contingency. It shows how military geographies span great distances, but also how they are navigated according to the webs and connections of the most intimate human relations. Exploring the fluidity of everyday times and spaces in close detail, tracing the multiple mobilities of women married to servicemen and the alternative, hybrid meanings they articulate, testifies to the degree to which “military geographies are always shifting and changing” (Woodward 2004, p.9). It is this understanding of military geographies as socially produced and in flux, that “brings with it possibilities for negotiation and challenge” (*ibid*). The question of women’s agency thus becomes central to what this thesis seeks to illuminate about the operation of military power. Next therefore, I want to outline some terms for the more fluid conceptualisation this requires.

The militarisation of Army wives?

If militarisation is a way of configuring the productive nature of military power, how can it help us to understand the experiences of women married to servicemen? The relevance of militarisation to my analysis in this thesis lies in its expression of the processes rather than the presence of military power. Enloe (2000, p.3) defines militarisation as “a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military *or* comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideals”. It is this processual, transformative quality that distinguishes militarisation from ‘militarism’, although the two are often paired together in a causal relationship as above. Lutz (2002, p.725) has argued that although the concept of militarism has evolved from the idea of a separate military ideology to describe instead “the embeddedness of a militaristic mentality in civil society”, it remains narrower in scope as a term because it “suggests that warlike values have an independent ability to drive social change”. Thus another salient aspect of militarisation here is its expression of the

military's mutual imbrication with other vectors of power in a way that is multiplex and hybrid. Accordingly, Lutz (2002, p.723) argues that militarisation is "a process of inscription" through which military power can be connected to the "less visible deformation of human potentials into the hierarchies of race, class, gender and sexuality". Lutz's emphasis on "human potentials" (*ibid*) also hints that militarisation might be used to express the less concrete *conditions of possibility* that determine subjects' relationship to military power in particular places at particular times. Scholarship that explicitly uses militarisation as a critical analytic (selected examples include: Bernazzoli and Flint 2009a and 2010, p.158; Demetriou 2012, Dowler 2012, p.491; Enloe 2000; Gonzalez 2010, p.19; Higate and Henry 2011, p.134; Kuus 2009, p.547; Lutz 2002, p.725) highlights the ways in which it "is woven through the social fabric" (Kuus 2009, p.548), thus accounting for the diffusion of military power beyond its more obvious forms.

Bernazzoli and Flint (2010) use the terminology of militarisation⁴² for their study of garrison towns because, they argue, it refers "specifically to interactions between the military and other arenas of U.S. society" (Bernazzoli and Flint 2010, p.158). As the authors argue, more research is required to understand "the ways in which processes of militarisation are advanced or resisted in places without a military presence" (Bernazzoli and Flint 2010, p.165). With a garrison town as its setting and focusing on the experiences of women married to servicemen, this thesis does little, empirically at least, to decentralise the role of the military institution in understandings of militarisation. However, I do seek to contribute to *how* that connection is understood. Rather than exploring the military institution as the apparent 'source' of militarisation in this thesis therefore, my aim was to explore some of the more circuitous, contested and co-operative ways in which militarisation might be argued to function, the question being not where militarisation starts or where it ends, but how it circulates. In other words, I sought to trace the pathways of militarisation and pay greater attention to the processes and transformations that militarisation entails, and which give the term its analytical value. Although the empirical terms of this project do little to problematize the centrality of the military institution to 'what counts' as militarisation then, its analytics seek to illuminate the alternative forces that make of military power a presence that is more diffuse, and far more difficult to disentangle from the social relations in which it is embedded.

⁴² Another term the authors suggest as part of a debate on the language of military power is securitisation (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009b and also debates in Stavrianakis and Selby 2013).

In this thesis I have used the experiences of women married to servicemen to question a range of binarisms that as feminist and queer studies have established (Belkin 2012, Massey 1994), align with a range of gendered categories. This includes the binarism that posits the separation of military and civilian 'spheres'. However, it is this dichotomy that scholars have argued limits the usefulness of militarisation as an analytic, in that it denotes processes that "take the 'civilian' and make it 'militarized'" (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009b, p.449). From the false binary between the military and civilian, they argue, flow a host of other unhelpful dichotomies, such as "inside/outside; foreign/domestic; war/peace; violence/non-violence; state/society" (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009b, p.449). This problem stands if militarisation is used to express military power in a way that is linear and unidirectional, extending outwards from the military institution to calcify everything in its path. My findings in this thesis however, show that military wives traverse and trouble the conventional boundaries between military and civilian 'spheres' in multiple ways, occupying an ambiguous position that calls into question both their incorporation into the military institution and their civilian 'immunity' to its control. Writing of the blurred boundaries surrounding a US military base, Lutz (2001) calls for more attention to the mutual imbrication of military and civilian, and outlines a provocative and complex matrix for understanding how the experiences of subjects such as women married to servicemen are invisibilised by binary thinking:

[C]ivilian has been a category rarely discussed explicitly in America [...] Throughout American history, black has been marked as race, white remaining invisible. Female has been a gender, male a kind of prototype human being, without gender. The identity of civilian is clearly the unmarked of the soldier-civilian pair. Despite the power of the military physically and economically, civilian is the majority, dominant category, and so is less recognisable as such. (Lutz 2001, p.235)

Lutz's point illustrates the epistemological structures that have served to relegate the experiences of subjects such as military wives to the margins within critical research. But the connection with gender as posited by Lutz (*ibid*) is more than allegorical. The kinds of experiences I document in this thesis have been largely ignored within scholarship that has made the study of gender and militarisation synonymous with the study of men and masculinities. A gendered analysis that is connected to women through marriage and the family, the domestic sphere and the sexual division of labour however, reveals the feminised sexual relations on which those masculinities depend, and which research thereon takes for granted, leaves out, and thus helps to reproduce. In multiple ways, the experiences I have explored in this thesis represent the constitutive outside to military masculinities, a territory

that lies beyond even the scope of research on the multiplicity, conflation or confusion of those masculinities. In this sense perhaps, gender as an analytic does not help⁴³, even where it is used as a way to expand the definition of military masculinity and transcend the divisions of sex, such that women can be argued to perform it too (Belkin 2012, p.3). There is no doubt that research on military masculinities has produced valid and productive analyses and I rely on them heavily in this thesis. The problem I believe, is the epistemological effect of this scholarship and the dominance of masculinity as *the* normative framework for defining and understanding the relationship between gender and the military institution. Paradoxically, a focus on the discursive production of gender, through which masculinities have multiplied and spread, has reinforced this division. As a property of bodies that is socially produced, military masculinity has been related to the “unmasculine” (Belkin 2012, p.24), and is open to feminisation as well as ‘civilian’ constructions of masculinity (Higate 2003). But research has done less to explore the mutual imbrication of dichotomies of sex and gender with military and civilian categories through the military-sexual division of labour for example, or the mutual imbrication of the military with the institutions of marriage and the family.

This only makes it more necessary to ask, where *are* the women? (Enloe 1989, p.7). Only to find that the experiences of women such as those married to servicemen have been relegated to a vague, unpopulated no-man’s-land that has remained comparatively underexplored. It is beyond the scope of this thesis (and in many ways, runs contrary to the epistemological bias I am trying to address) to engage in a full review and critique of the scholarship on military masculinities in order to locate military-civilian femininities, or women’s experiences, within them. What is needed to build upon and continue the research of scholars such as Enloe (1989, 2000, 2010), Moon (1997), Lutz (2001) and Sjoberg (2007), is further and more nuanced research on the lived experiences of women in relation to the military institution, as well as the multiple femininities, and indeed masculinities, they encounter, perform and negotiate.

One further epistemological qualification is necessary when considering the productive power of militarisation. Stating that “[m]ilitarization does not always take on the guise of war” (Enloe 2000, p.2), Enloe argues for a focus on what she calls its “humdrum forms” (Enloe 2000, p.3). It is in this sense that understandings of militarisation have facilitated

⁴³ For a discussion of the sex/gender binary and “familiar feminist fables of militarization”, see Stern and Zalewski (2009).

what might be described as a ‘cultural turn’ in the study of military power. Enloe’s insistence that cultural forms of militarisation be taken seriously turns on the reformulation of ‘culture’ as expressly political, not only in the sense that it is embedded in power relations, but also – and crucially – political in the sense of being strategically deployed⁴⁴. There is much in this thesis to testify to the processes through which military culture is made and reproduced, as well as resisted or reformulated. However, there is nevertheless a risk that the precision of militarisation as an analytical tool is lost in analyses that become bound up in what is doubtless a profusion of military productions, without paying attention to their effects or the ways in which those effects are achieved. Throughout this thesis, I have shown the effects of military productions to be deeply ambiguous, contradictory, fluid and indeed fallible as they are mediated by the many different women whose experiences are homogenised under the category of ‘military wives’. Enloe (2000, p.3) is clear that a focus on culture does not mean that the influence of military power is either ubiquitous or inevitable, nor that militaristic values are natural or given in any particular (or all) societies. For as she argues, militarisation “doesn’t shape everything all the time. If it did, it would be impossible to distinguish” (*ibid*). It is in this sense that my attention to the temporal variability of military presence, as well as its operation through the social production of space, is important in qualifying those times when the productive power of militarisation is diverted or kept at bay by women married to servicemen.

Scholars have shown how militarisation can be a valuable analytic for demonstrating precisely “how the everyday matters” (Enloe 2004; Thrift 2000 in Bernazzoli and Flint 2010, p.160) in national and international politics, if it is explored in a way that is “more contextual; society-specific, place-specific, and time-specific” (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009b, p.450). As I have shown in my exploration of military presence and importantly, women’s *inhabitation* of that presence, a more nuanced analysis of military power involves looking to the places and processes through which militarisation is resisted (Bernazzoli and Flint 2010, p.160). Throughout this thesis I have tried to find ways and sites for keeping the agency of

⁴⁴ For a direct example: In *Militarizing Culture*, Roberto J. Gonzalez (2010) highlights the co-optation of anthropology as part of the US occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, citing US Army field manuals that echo the works of T.E. Lawrence (p.81) and the experimental ‘human terrain system’ (HTS) (p.122), which was not only developed using anthropological research but also deployed teams of social scientists with troop patrols in Afghanistan. Militarisation here combines with Orientalism, evident in the abuse at Abu Ghraib (p.102), the revival of ‘the tribe’ as the unit of analysis for Afghan culture (p.153) and a regressive approach to anthropological knowledge that formulates “cultures as internally coherent, easily bounded and one-dimensional” (Gonzalez 2010, p79).

women married to servicemen in view, a challenge that Belkin (2012) formulates in *Bring Me Men*:

I am mindful that any effort to identify a patterned social mechanism risks restricting or foreclosing the possibility of agency, a risk that is particularly acute given my emphasis on the troops' conformity. My task, as I see it, is to map the contours of a mechanism [...] so that future research might assess whether these observations come together in different ways at different sites. In this way, perhaps I can identify an important pattern while leaving room for agency and contingency in this as well as future narratives (Belkin 2012, p.42).

My analysis in this thesis indicates that the agency of women married to servicemen is relational and exists in mutual imbrication with, rather than opposition to, constituent elements of coercion (Madhok et al. 2013, p.3). In order to formulate what this implies for women's relationship to military power, I want to explore a classic paradigm from within feminist research.

Bargaining with militarisation

Taking issue with the use of the term 'patriarchy' as an easy signifier for any apparent instance of male oppression, Kandiyoti's (1984) argument in 'Bargaining with Patriarchy' was founded on the critique that the concept was both overused and under-theorised in feminist scholarship (Kandiyoti 1984, p.274). In a similar way, I have argued that without further empirical exploration of how military power is renegotiated, co-opted or resisted by subjects on an everyday level, militarisation and its conceptual salience risks at best simplification, at worst misattribution, or as with patriarchy, being "treated at a level of abstraction that obfuscates rather than reveals" (*ibid*). Through 'Bargaining with Patriarchy', Kandiyoti (1988) also helped to establish the empirical study of women's everyday lives as a core tenet of gender research. Her central conceit of a 'bargain' draws attention to women's assessment of the potential losses and gains involved in their daily transactions within a given social order, emphasising their choices but also acknowledging the particular conditions within which those choices are made. Kandiyoti defines it thus:

Like all terms coined to convey a complex concept, the term patriarchal bargain represents a difficult compromise. It is intended to indicate the existence of set rules and scripts regulating gender relations, to which both genders accommodate and acquiesce, yet which may nonetheless be contested, redefined and renegotiated. Some suggested alternatives were the terms contract, deal, or scenario; however none of these fully captured the fluidity and tension implied by bargain. (Kandiyoti 1988, p.236)

It is in this sense that the idea of a bargain, including the qualifications above, is helpful in my efforts to understand the agency of women married to servicemen in relation to military power. In Kandiyoti's (1988) broad analysis of power relations in a range of different settings, the terms of a bargain can be accepted or radically rejected (p.281), resistance can be passive (p.283) and active (p.284), and women's bargains are spatially and temporally specific (p.285). This is precisely the kind of empirical variation that emerges from what I have shown of women's multiple and contradictory approaches to rationalising, resisting and acquiescing to military-institutional conditions in this thesis.

The idea of a bargain with military power also helps to counter the assumption that women married to servicemen unquestioningly follow, support or invest in the military institution through a kind of false consciousness (Kandiyoti 1988, p.282), an assumption that is countered by the knowledge and humour with which many women narrated their experiences and opinions. Throughout this thesis I have highlighted how women's narratives and strategies are shaped by multiple positionalities but also by multiple layers of constraints. It is in this sense that Kandiyoti (1988, p. 285) argued that paying attention to women's bargaining approaches can help to "dissolve some of the artificial divisions apparent in theoretical discussions of the relationships among class, race and gender". Perhaps most productively, Kandiyoti's framework emphasises the specificity of the mechanisms of social control at stake, the aim being to elucidate "the place of a particular strategy within the internal logic of a given system" (Kandiyoti 1988, p.283). It is the tension between the limits of the given system, combined with women's mobile negotiations within them, that the idea of a bargain expresses: "Even though these individual power tactics do little to alter the structurally unfavourable terms of the overall patriarchal script, women become experts in maximising their own life chances" (Kandiyoti 1988, p.280).

And yet, my analysis has shown that the effects of military power negotiated by women, and the resources they draw upon to do so, are not strictly limited to military structures *per se*. Many of the conditions I have described in this thesis are 'made' by the military, but the *effects* of these conditions are produced through multiple pathways, come in composite and hybrid forms, are shape-shifting and adaptive, just like the bargaining strategies of women married to servicemen. This prompts the question of how exceptional and bounded military control as the "given system" (Kandiyoti 1988, p.283) at stake here really is. Most compellingly, many of the examples I have studied demonstrate the blurring of the divide

between military and civilian 'spheres', where women are subject to and draw upon vectors of power that lie expressly beyond the internal logic of the military institution, indeed often rely explicitly on ideas about an external, civilian threat or immunity to military control. Time and again, the bargains women make depend on their ability to assert a position on the outside of the institution, or to assert an alternative interpretation of the meaning and purpose of their labour, identities and feelings. It is here that the heterosexual family and the gendered division of labour function as both a rationale and resource for women's bargains with the military institution.

In a study of the Israeli Army, Edna Lomsky-Feder et al. (2008) use ideas about transmigration to posit reserve soldiers as hybrid military and civilian actors. To substantiate this conceptualisation, the authors cite conditions such as "continuous mobilization, service, demobilisation, civilian life and mobilization yet again" (p.599); a rejection of static ideas about linear movement or fixed duality (p.598); the potential for "rupture, critique and resistance potentiated by permeable boundaries" (p.595), and finally the role of reserve soldiers, upon each 'return' to service, as conduits for the flow of ideas between military and civilian culture (p. 599). The study assesses reserve soldiers' power and positionality in terms of social status, identity and finally, the operation of an implicit contract or bargain between the reservists and the Army (Lomsky-Feder et al. 2008, p.605). In this thesis I have focused on the multiple mobilities of women married to servicemen, exploring their own hybrid positionalities and transmigration across military and civilian "systems" (Lomsky-Feder et al. 2008, p.593). This has revealed that women married to servicemen *do* help to alter the scripts of military power. Empirically, in their day-to-day bargains with the military institution, women articulate a range of alternative positionalities and interpretations as to how military power works, sometimes 'civilianising' its effects, such that it is hard to tell where 'military' ends and 'civilian' begins. In such a way I have sought to demonstrate the fallibility of the line between the military and civilian, the falseness of a dichotomy that leaves military wives behind, apparently stranded between two opposing forces. What my analysis shows however, is that this 'no-man's-land' is an expressly creative and regenerative space where new forms of power are forged. So are military wives militarised? The answer is in the question. Rather than being in what appears self-evident however, the answer is in the point that the question misses: that military wives' militarisation is not a question of yes or no, militarised or not militarised, military or civilian, home or away, war or peace. Rather, the very *quality* of militarisation that women married to servicemen

represent and somewhat personify, is its shape-shifting, variable and contingent nature as a process that is in flux, transformative, productive and emergent.

However, at this point it is necessary to return to the lessons that can be drawn from feminist paradigms for the study of agency, where for example Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) cautions against “the romance of resistance” and the need to qualify the agency of those whom research such as this attempts, perhaps over-zealously, to ‘liberate’⁴⁵. Instead, she argues that empirical analysis must focus not only on the effects, but also the causes of inequality: “We could continue to look for and consider nontrivial all sorts of resistance, but instead of taking these as signs of human freedom we will use them strategically to tell us more about forms of power and how people are caught up in them” (Abu-Lughod 1990, p.42). The experiences of women married to servicemen are significant for “the widening of our definition of the political” (Abu-Lughod 1990, p.41) in a number of ways. Scholars have defined militarisation as “the contradictory and tense social processes in which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence” (Geyer 1989:79 in Lutz 2002, p.723 and Bernazzoli and Flint 2009b, p.450). Thus the meaning of militarisation also turns on what it proposes about the production of violence in organised forms and the centrality of the state in military force. Paying close attention to wives’ experiences reveals a host of ideas about gender, class, ethnicity and family as they are rarely accounted for in research on the military institution. As I have shown in my analysis however, these everyday micro-politics can and must be carefully connected to the politics of nation, violence, globalisation and war that are also in circulation through military power. This complicates women’s relationship to military power as not simply one of agency, but one of complicity in the inequalities and violence reproduced by military power at its sharpest extreme.

Conclusion, or, ‘you can’t help who you fall in love with’?

By means of conclusion and in order to look beyond what I have been able to explore in this thesis, I want to raise one more possibility regarding the agency of women married to servicemen. Hiding in plain sight within my analysis here, there is a sense of one further analytic for “widening our definition of the political” (Abu-Lughod 1990, p.41) and problematizing what we understand about militarisation. In many ways, it constitutes one of

⁴⁵ By acknowledging this idea, but also recognising its limits, I am evoking feminist methodologies that are aligned with the “conscientization” (Mies 1983, p.126) of “women as target groups” (*ibid*). While I am invested in producing a nuanced account of women’s relationship to the military institution in this research, I did not consider this kind of liberatory approach as part of my methodology.

the defining places to look for the resources available to military wives for keeping the military at bay. Yet it lies even further beyond the scope of research on the military institution and is frequently forgotten as the foundation for marriage. Indeed, it lay beyond the limits of what it was possible to ask in my interviews, and thus it lies beyond what is 'discoverable' here. It is with a brief and deliberately inconclusive exploration of love, therefore, that I draw this thesis to a close.

So I had the knock on the door from the guardroom at 5 o'clock in the morning. And I knew - sounds horrible - I knew he wasn't dead because there was no welfare officer and no duty officer with them, so I just knew something had happened. And they'd only come to tell me that my husband would probably be ringing me, so they could prepare me for him ringing. It was particularly hard because he'd ring, and not speak. But sometimes he'd stay on the phone for five minutes and not speak, at all. [...] And then um, he was supposed to come home for R&R and his R&R was cancelled deliberately. And their reasoning - and I agree with it - is that they're better staying with the men than they are coming home as soon as something like that happened. [...] And I agree with that, because I couldn't have said or known or done anything at that particular time. [...] I think you have to accept that there are certain things that I will never know. And it means that there is a huge part of the person that you love that you'll never understand fully, and I have to accept that, you know? I think that part of loving that person is accepting that you're not ever going to be let into everything. And it's not even that I think they're protecting you, I think they're protecting themselves.

In Marianne's theorization⁴⁶ of her experience, she acknowledges the epistemic gap⁴⁷ that exists between her husband's intimate experience of human vulnerability and her own. Both experiences are mediated by military power in the visceral form of war and numerous other structures and discourse besides. During my time with the regiment I heard repeated many times the adage 'you can't help who you fall in love with', most often as a way to deflect or sometimes shut down my questions, at other times as a statement of platitudinous resignation. In this sense, love is not free-floating or disconnected from the kind of structures and discourses I have explored throughout this thesis, military, marital or otherwise. But if military power produces violence, rupture, distance and unknowability in

⁴⁶ In acknowledging the limits of my empirical and analytical insights at this point and replacing them with Marianne's insights, I am thinking of Adrienne Rich's intervention in 'Notes towards a politics of location' and the need to acknowledge the privileges that shape the power to create knowledge: "[T]hey have tried to tell me that this woman – politicized by intersecting forces – doesn't think and reflect on her life. That her ideas are not real ideas like Karl Marx or Simone de Beauvoir. That her calculations, her spiritual philosophy, her gifts for law and ethics, her daily emergency political decisions are merely instinctual or conditioned reactions; that only certain kinds of people can make theory..." (Rich 2001, p.81).

⁴⁷ Thanks to Marsha Henry for this helpful term.

the way that Marianne describes, then love is the resource on which she draws not so much to resolve but to acquiesce to the irreconcilable tension it represents, and to manage unknowability at multiple levels. Love, in Marianne's conceptualization, is the creative, kinetic force through which she transforms multiple distances into proximity.

The central lens through which I have analysed women's experiences in this thesis is gender. I have sought to reveal the imbrication of military power and gender through many different forms – often alongside other vectors of power such as nation and class – and, importantly, as productive of many different effects. This reveals women's negotiation of a host of material conditions, social structures and discourses, through which they assert their multiple positionalities in relation to the gendered hierarchies of the military institution and in relation to each other. What has eluded the empirical and analytical reach of this thesis however, is a sense of the more intimate human relations that are complicated by military power, and which complicate in turn any attempt to understand the depths to which it penetrates. There is scope here for a great deal more research on military intimacies, on the interplay of gender and affect, sexuality, belonging and desire. In the meantime, Marianne's conceptualisation stands for the elusive presence of love at the edges of this study, and represents an epistemic gap on multiple levels. It is all I can do to acknowledge this presence at this point, and in so doing, return to the women whose experiences I have represented in this thesis, mastery over the meanings they make.

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