Military Families and War in the 21st Century

Comparative perspectives

Edited by
René Moelker, Manon Andres,
Gary Bowen and
Philippe Manigart

Routledge

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This book focuses on the key issues that affect military families when soldiers are deployed overseas, focusing on the support given to military personnel and families before, during, and after missions.

Today's postmodern armies are expected to provide social-psychological support both to their personnel in military operations abroad and to their families at home. Since the end of the Cold War, and even more so after 9/11, separations between military personnel and their families have become more frequent as a result of multitudes of missions carried out by multinational task forces all over the world. The book focuses on three central questions affecting military families. First, how do the changing missions and tasks of the military affect soldiers and families? Second, what is the effect of deployments on those left behind? Third, what is the structure of national family support systems and how have they evolved?

The book employs a multidisciplinary approach, with contributions from psychology, sociology, history, and anthropology, among others. In addition, it covers all of the services – army, navy/marines, air force – spanning a wide range of countries, including the UK, the USA, Belgium, Turkey, Australia, and Japan. At the same time, it takes a multitude of perspectives, including the theoretical, empirical, reflective, life events (narrative) approach, the national, and the global, and uses approaches from different disciplines and perspectives, combining them to produce a volume that enhances our knowledge and understanding of military families.

This book will be of much interest to students of military studies, sociology, war and conflict studies, and international relations/political science in general.

René Moelker is an Associate Professor at the Netherlands Defense Academy.

Manon Andres is an Assistant Professor at the Netherlands Defense Academy.

Gary Bowen is Kenan Distinguished Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), USA.

Philippe Manigart is Professor of Sociology at the Royal Military Academy, Belgium.

Cass Military Studies

Ancient China on Postmodern War
Enduring ideas from the Chinese strategic tradition
Thomas Kane

Special Forces, Terrorism and Strategy
Warfare by other means
Alasdair Finlan

Imperial Defence, 1856–1956
The old world order
Greg Kennedy

Civil–Military Cooperation in Post-Conflict Operations
Emerging theory and practice
Christopher Ankersen

Military Advising and Assistance
From mercenaries to privatization, 1815–2007
Donald Stoker

Private Military and Security Companies
Ethics, policies and civil–military relations
Andrew Alexandra, Deane-Peter Baker and Marina Caparini (eds)

Military Cooperation in Multinational Peace Operations
Managing cultural diversity and crisis response
Joseph Soeters and Philippe Manigart (eds)

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A concordance theory of civil–military relations
Rebecca L. Schiff

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A revolution in military affairs?
Donald Stoker, Frederick C. Schneid and Harold D. Blanton (eds)

Modernity, the Media and the Military
The creation of national mythologies on the Western Front 1914–1918
John F. Williams

American Soldiers in Iraq
McSoldiers or innovative professionals?
Morten Ender

Complex Peace Operations and Civil–Military Relations
Winning the peace
Robert Egnell

Strategy and the American War of Independence
A global approach
Donald Stoker, Kenneth J. Hagan and Michael T. McMaster (eds)

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To military families worldwide

Contents

Figures

Tables

Contributors

Manon Andres, Ph.D., is an assistant professor and researcher with the Netherlands Defense Academy. She holds a doctorate from Tilburg University. Among other things, her research focuses on understanding military families, and is directed at work–family conflict, well-being, social support, quality of relationships, children's reactions to separation, and the experiences of parents of service members in the course of military deployments.

Jocelyn Bartone holds a master's degree in sociology from the University of Maryland, United States. She undertook extensive research on U.S. military families stationed both in the United States and in Germany.

Catherine Birtles is a research associate with the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR), at King's College London.

Gary Bowen, Ph.D., is Kenan Distinguished Professor with the School of Social Work at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). He serves as chief scientist with the Jordan Institute for Military Members, Veterans, and their Families. He also co-directs the School Success Profile (SSP) project with Dr. Natasha Bowen and Dr. Jack Richman. Dr. Bowen received his Master of Social Work (MSW) degree in 1976 from UNC-CH and his doctorate in family studies in 1981 from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Professor Bowen is a former president of the National Council on Family Relations.

Helena Carreiras, Ph.D, is a professor of Sociology, Public Policy and Research Methodology at ISCTE-Lisbon University Institute, and a senior researcher at the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (CIES-IUL). She holds a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute (2004). She was deputy-director of the Portuguese National Defense Institute (2010–2012) and presently directs the Public Policy doctoral program at ISCTE-IUL.

Julie Coulthard, Ph.D., completed her doctorate in sociology at McGill University, Montreal, and has been a defense scientist with Defense

Research and Development Canada (DRDC) since 2007. Her main areas of research include the impacts of military life on families, and the study of ill and injured service members, with a particular focus on their reintegration back into their pre-accident/illness military duties or their transition from military to civilian life.

Christopher Dandeker, Ph.D., is professor of military sociology with the Department of War Studies, at King's College London, and co-director of the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR).

Karin De Angelis is an assistant professor with the Behavioral Sciences and Leadership Department, at the United States Air Force Academy. She holds a doctorate in sociology from the University of Maryland. Dr. De Angelis' main research interests include diversity in the military, military families (and the role of diversity), and the intersection of gender with work and family.

Rachel Dekel, Ph.D., is an associate professor with the School of Social Work at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. During the last decade, she has been involved in various research projects that have examined different facets of human coping with traumatic events such as, war, terror, and family violence. Professor Dekel's research focuses on individuals who have experienced secondary exposure to traumatic events. She has conducted studies among spouses of veterans, children of fathers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and therapists who work in areas under terrorism. She is currently the deputy director of the School of Social Work at Bar Ilan University and the head of the program for undergraduate students.

Sanela Dursun, Ph.D., is a research psychologist and director of personnel and family support in the Director General of Military Personnel Research and Analysis at DRDC in Ottawa, Canada. Her major projects have included research on the optimal length and frequency of operational deployment, studies of the quality of life of military members, a study of family violence, and studies of ethical decision making. Her current research interests include assessing the impact of military lifestyle demands and deployments on the mental health and well-being of members and their families. She holds a master's degree in social psychology and a doctorate in health psychology.

Meytal Eran-Jona, Ph.D., is the head of the research project on civil–military relations at the Behavioral Sciences Centre (BSC) of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). She holds a doctorate from Tel Aviv University. Her research interests include civil–military relations, gender relations in the military, women in the military, military families, military personnel issues, future battlefield challenges, and military operations in civilian environments.

Colonel Yavuz Ercil, Ph.D., graduated from the Turkish Military Academy in 1991, earned his Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Istanbul University, and achieved his doctorate on management in 2001. He was appointed to many national and international posts during his period of military service. Dr. Ercil is an associate professor in management and organization, and teaches strategy, communication, cross-cultural management, complexity, and organizations at various military or civilian education institutions, including the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Training Centre, Ankara, the NATO Centre of Excellence Defense against Terrorism, Ankara, and the Turkish Department of Defense.

Claire Eversden was a research associate with the KCMHR, at King's College London.

Sabina Frederic, Ph.D., is professor at the University of Quilmes, Argentina, and an associate researcher with the Argentine National Council of Scientific and Technical Research. She holds a doctorate in social anthropology from the University of Utrecht, Netherlands. Among her main publications are *The Traps of the Past: The Armed Forces and its integration into the Argentine Democratic State* (Fondo de Cultura Económica) and *The Uses of Public Force: Social sciences debates on armed forces and policemen* (UNGS-National Library). She was formerly coordinator of the Gender Policy Council (2007–09) and Undersecretary of Education with the Argentine Ministry of Defense (2009–11).

Atsuko Fukuura, Ph.D. candidate, is an associate professor of anthropology at Shiga University, Japan. She holds a master's degree in education, and a doctoral candidacy from Kyoto University, Japan. Her research interests include the transnationalism of the armed forces, gender ideology, religion and patriarchy, traumatic experiences (war, PTSD, suffering, pain) and organization of memory, and military families. Her 2007 article 'Narratives by the spouses: The imagination and memory about the violence', published in the *Journal of International Security*, is a pioneering study on Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) families, focusing on the wives who share their husbands' suffering experiences.

Jelena Juvan, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the Defense Studies Department and a graduate research assistant with the Defense Research Centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. She holds a degree in political science (2001) and a doctorate in defense science (2008), both from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. She is an assistant lecturer for the courses 'Sociology and Political Science of the Armed Forces', 'Polemology', and 'Foreign and Security Policies of the European Union'. Her research fields include military families, peace operations, and the human factor in the armed forces.

Hitoshi Kawano, Ph.D., worked as professor of sociology in 2011–2013 with Japan's National Defense Academy. He holds a doctorate in sociology from

Northwestern University, United States, and a master's degree in education from Osaka University, Japan. He also works as a special coordinator with Human Resources Development Division, at the Bureau of Personnel and Education, Ministry of Defense, Japan, in charge of overseeing the organizational reforms of the National Defense Academy. His research interests include the comparative-historical sociology of combat/peacekeeping operations, civil–military relations in contemporary Japan, the mental health of soldiers/veterans, veterans associations, and military leadership education.

Valerian Lecoq, M.Sc., is a research associate with the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the Royal Military Academy, Belgium.

Captain Salvatore Lo Bue, M.Sc., is a research associate with the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the Royal Military Academy, Belgium.

Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth, Ph.D., is professor of human development and family studies with the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. She has been director of the Centre for Families from 1996, and director of the Military Family Research Institute from 2000. She is interested in the relationships between work conditions and family life. Over the past twenty years, she has studied differences between small and large workplaces, how adults grow and develop as a result of their work experiences, and how different kinds of organizational policies make it easier or more difficult for workers to be successful at work and at home.

Jay Mancini, Ph.D., is Haltiwanger Distinguished Professor of Human Development and Family Science at the University of Georgia, United States. He also directs the Family and Community Resilience Laboratory. His research and theorizing focuses on families and communities, military members and their families, family systems and adolescent adversity, and the intersections of vulnerability and resilience. Professor Mancini is a Fellow of the National Council on Family Relations.

Philippe Manigart, Ph.D., is professor of sociology and head of the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the Royal Military Academy, Belgium. He is also an assistant professor (part-time) with the Faculty of Economics at the University of Mons. He has a master's degree in sociology from the University of Chicago and a doctorate from the Free University of Brussels. His main research interests and expertise lie in the fields of organizational sociology (with an emphasis on military organizations), survey analysis, and market research. For the Belgian Defense, he has conducted several surveys on job satisfaction among the personnel and on the image of the institution among the public, as well as market researches on the recruitment of personnel. Since 2005, he has been a member of the Council of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. In 1985–86, he was Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence and received a NATO Fellowship.

James (Jim) Martin, Ph.D., BCD, is professor of social work and social research at Bryn Mawr College, United States. His scholarship, teaching, and public service focus on social and behavioral health issues, while his research and civic engagements address military and veteran populations. A retired army colonel, Jim's twenty-six-year career in the U.S. Army Medical Department included clinical research, as well as senior management (command) and policy assignments. Jim was the senior social work officer in the Persian Gulf theatre of military operations during the first Gulf War and edited *The Gulf War and Mental Health: A comprehensive guide* (Praeger).

Laura Masson, Ph.D., is professor at the National University of San Martín, Argentina, and a member of the Gender Policy Council of the Argentine Ministry of Defense. She holds a doctorate (2007) and master's degree (1999) in social anthropology from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (FURJ), Brazil. She is the author of *Politic in Female: Gender and power in the province of Buenos Aires* (Antroprofagia) and *Feminists Everywhere: An ethnography of spaces and feminist narratives in Argentina* (Prometeo). She was advisor to the Undersecretary for Education, Ministry of Defense, Argentina.

David McCone, Ph.D., is professor with the Behavioral Sciences and Leadership Department at the United States Air Force Academy. He holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Oregon. Professor McCone has studied marriage and divorce issues, women's integration, and deployment experiences for both Active Duty and Army National Guard soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

René Moelker, Ph.D., is an associate professor of sociology at the Netherlands Defense Academy. He holds a doctorate from the Erasmus University, Rotterdam. His work in military sociology concentrates on the sociology of military families, military technology, military profession, the military sociology of Norbert Elias, military education, conflict in Chechnya, and the media. His latest project focuses on veterans and veteran care.

Laura Sanchez is a research associate with the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, Lafayette, IN.

Mady Wechsler Segal, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita of Sociology at the University of Maryland, United States. She earned her doctorate at the University of Chicago. Her research has focused on military personnel issues, with particular attention to military women, military families, and race/ethnicity in the military. Her publications include, among many others, *The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions* (Armed Forces and Society). She is an author of a report for military leaders on the policy implications of research findings on military families (*What We Know about Army Families*, 2007 update,) and co-author of *How to Support Families during Overseas Deployments: A sourcebook for service providers* (Army

Research Institute). She and David R. Segal co-authored a book entitled *Peacekeepers and their Wives* (Greenwood Press).

Philip Siebler, Ph.D., is a mental health social worker, clinical family therapist, and an Adjunct Research Associate with Child Abuse Prevention Research Australia, Monash Injury Research Institute, Monash University. Philip joined the Australian Department of Defense as a social worker in 1997 and is currently coordinator of the Regional Mental Health Team in Joint Health Command, a position that spans Victoria and Tasmania. He earned his doctorate in social work at Monash University, with a thesis entitled: " 'Military People Won't Ask for Help': Experiences of deployment of Australian Defense Force personnel, their families, and implications for social work."

Unsal Sigri, Ph.D., is an associate professor of management, has the rank of colonel, and has been working as a faculty member at the Turkish Military Academy, Ankara, Turkey, since 1998. He got his doctorate from Marmara University, Istanbul, and completed postdoctoral studies in Bittner School of Business, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY. Dr. Sigri teaches management, leadership, group dynamics, cross-cultural management, conflict resolution, negotiation, and mediation in the Turkish Military Academy. In addition, he leads courses, lectures, and seminars in various university, military and civilian academic environments, including other universities in Ankara, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Training Centre, Ankara, the NATO Centre of Excellence Defense against Terrorism, Ankara, and the Turkish Department of Defense, and some other military and civilian institutions.

David Smith, Ph.D., CDR, U.S. Navy, is Permanent Military Professor and chair of the Leadership, Ethics and Law Department at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD. He received his doctorate in sociology from the University of Maryland in 2010. His dissertation, "Developing Pathways to Serving Together: Dual military couples' life course and decision-making," examined the experiences of dual-career military families and their work–life prioritization strategies. His research interests include military families, gender and culture in the military, identity and efficacy development in leaders, experiential leader development, and qualitative methods.

Kerry Sudom is a defense scientist at DRDC, with the Canadian Department of National Defense (DND). She is currently the leader of the psychosocial health dynamics team, part of the Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA). She holds a master's degree and a doctorate in psychology from Carleton University in Ottawa. Since 2005, Kerry has conducted research in areas including military family well-being, health and fitness trends among military personnel, transition from military to civilian life, and psychological resilience.

Danielle Swick, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She received her MSW degree from the University of Michigan and her doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her main research interests include evidence-based practice, school-based interventions, child and adolescent mental health, and community-engaged research.

Maren Tomforde, Ph.D., of the German Armed Forces Staff and Command College, Germany, received her doctorate in anthropology from the University of Hamburg in 2005. For her thesis, she carried out a two-year field research project in Thailand (1999–2000, 2001–02) on the topic of "cultural spatiality." From 2003 to 2007, she was a research associate with the German Armed Forces Institute of Social Research (SOWI) in Strausberg, Germany, where she conducted anthropological research on German peacekeeping missions. Since March 2007, she has been a lecturer in anthropology at the German Armed Forces Staff and Command College in Hamburg. She also lectures with the Institute of European Anthropology at Humboldt University, Berlin.

Kadir Varoglu, Ph.D. is a faculty staff member with the Management and Organization Department at Baskent University, Ankara. He worked for thirty years within the Turkish Army and retired at the rank of colonel. He is vice president of Baskent University.

Janja Vuga, Ph.D., is the Assistant Professor at the University of Ljubljana, a research fellow at the Defense Research Centre and a project manager at the Ministry of Defense of Republic of Slovenia; she gives lectures in peace operations, military sociology and informatics and has been researching cross-cultural relations, work/life balance, children in military families and gender issues in the military. A great share of her research was carried out among service-members in the field (e.g. TChad/CAR, UNIFIL, KFOR). For her work she received a European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) scholarship. Currently she is a member of the NATO HFM 258 research group (researching children in military families).

Simon Wessely, Ph.D., is professor of psychological medicine, vice dean, and head of academic psychiatry, with the Department of Psychological Medicine, and director of the King's Centre for Military Health Research Institute of Psychiatry, at King's College London.

Part I

Military organizations and families in transition

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1   Introduction

René Moelker, Manon Andres,
Gary Bowen, and Philippe Manigart

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, and even more so after 9/11, multinational task forces all over the world have carried out a multitude of missions for more or less extended periods. This implies frequent separations between military personnel and their families. Not only the operational tempo, but also the nature of military missions has changed. The character and organization of new missions imply that military forces face increasingly demanding challenges and must be highly trained. Intensive (predeployment) training necessitates military personnel being away from their families (even more) frequently, even when actual deployment has yet to begin. Furthermore, many Western armed forces face downsizing and restructuring, which further increase the deployment load.

New missions

Being a soldier is a stimulating and exciting job. Better put: it is an ever-demanding profession that changes according to the exigencies of the task to be performed and the organizational structure chosen to fit the task. Considering the exigencies, conscription seems obsolete in many countries (Szvircsev Tresch and Haltiner, 2008), with the exception of nations that face threats from antagonistic neighbors or which aspire to realize domestic and/or international political objectives further reaching than self-defense. Greece and Turkey are two of the largest remaining conscript armies. These countries happen to be allies, but they are friends within a complex symbiotic constellation. Some would teasingly name these countries "frenemies." And there are more examples in the world of "classic" conflict situations: some frozen static ones (such as Cyprus, or the two Koreas); others rapidly emerging in places that often rank high on the Failed States Index. Conscription has evolved out of the objective of territorial sovereignty. It peaked in importance during the Cold War. Although no longer the dominant organizational concept, it remains present.

All-volunteer forces have become the major organizational concept, in part because these forces can be used for purposes other than self-defense. All-volunteer forces are flexible and easier to deploy in intra-state conflicts, which means that it is easier to obtain political support for their deployment, whereas the conscript concept seemed more suited to defending a nation's sovereignty. Mary Kaldor (2012) coined the term "new wars" to describe these conflicts, often between paramilitary, irregular troops, insurgents, and war lord factions. The missions changed in various ways, all of them affecting the home front. One of the consequences is that the casualties that nations suffered in these conflicts did not occur in defense of national boundaries; therefore the framing of these losses had to change. The traditional political rhetoric proved inadequate in explaining the loss of a soldier to spouses, children, parents, and loved ones. Defending vital national interests in places far from national borders is a challenge to a mission's legitimacy (Martinsen, 2013). The construct of "national interest" is thereby becoming ever more abstract.

New missions do impact on the military and their families. According to Shaw (2005), in *The New Western Way of War*, risks are transferred to weaker groups in society, meaning that the costs lie with the indigenous populations, the soldiers, and their families rather than with Western powers or politicians. Not only are new wars network-based (and thus "netwars") – meaning that even when militaries are entangled in distant conflicts, families worldwide are affected – but also missions are globalized, entering our living rooms by means of television and new media, and fought by new methods using cyber capabilities and drone techniques. The home front participates in spectator warfare and, even more astonishingly, the "cubicle warrior" destroys enemies that are thousands of miles away, yet returns home to his or her family each evening and engages his or her children in a leisurely Playstation war game. After the war, soldiers return as veterans and find out that the war continues in their heads. Families that rejoiced during marital reunion experience the long-term effects of war and may even end in divorce.[1]

Many authors state that new missions are not strictly military. Peacekeeping, peace-enforcing, and stability operations share a strong constabulary character (Janowitz, 1960). This Janowitzian constabulary force is still about military tasking, but Oakley, Dziedzic, and Goldber (1998) refer to new missions as "policing the new world order." Nonetheless, geopolitical power relations and hardcore power play will not resile from the political arena easily. Peacekeeping and other missions often are prominent in the specter of violence. Considering recent political developments and the rise of new powers, Christopher Coker (2014) rightly asked, when titling his latest book, *Can War Be Eliminated?*

Missions thus are diverse in character and complex, and put serious strain on military families. Missions are difficult to compare, for one cannot say that missions from the past were "easier" to cope with. But present-day

missions do pose problems to the home front that have to be dealt with. The last 15 years of warfare have weighed heavily on families.

The military family

When military personnel are deployed abroad, they leave their families behind. While the institutional armed forces were composed mainly of (drafted) young, unmarried people, most Western military organizations have now been transformed from conscription-based organizations into occupational professional organizations that include a greater proportion of soldiers who are older, married, and have children. Compared to their civilian counterparts, a higher proportion of service members are married and have young children at home; they are also more likely to marry at a younger age (Segal et al., 2011). Moreover, a diversity of family structures coexists alongside the ideal typical nuclear family in the military today. The traditional nuclear family – defined as a married couple with children, running a household together – is no longer the default survival unit in present-day societies. Single-parent households, childless couples, gay couples (with or without children), dual-military couples, and other family structures are common nowadays. Networked informal relationships, fluid patterns of bonding, the role of grandparents during deployments, and so forth pose new challenges to family organizing. Furthermore, the proportion of women in the workforce has increased, implying also a rise in the number of women in the military, and thus of deployed wives and mothers. These families face various challenges and stressors in meeting the dual demands of military and family life.

Work and family interface

A classic theme in the sociology of work and family is the competition between the two spheres that stems from an inherent "greediness" of institutions (Coser, 1974; Segal, 1986). In order to perform well at work or at parenting, devotion is required, and work and family can sometimes compete for the limited time and resources of the individual. The balance between work and family life is particularly difficult to maintain when missions increase in tempo. Stress from either domain can spill over into the other domain or cross over to family members. The nature of this spill-over was a major theme of the book edited by Bowen and Orthner (1989), entitled *The Organization Family: Work and family linkages in the U.S. military.*

The covenant between military and society

New missions also affect the relationship between civil society and the armed forces. Sometimes, society does not understand soldiers or their families, who may feel neglected or isolated as a result. Soldiers' jobs are

dangerous, and although they receive monetary compensation, the risks that soldiers run and the hardships that their families endure are difficult to compensate in only financial ways. The covenant between soldier and society has changed, and soldiers and families feel that the currency missing in this covenant is recognition. Especially when things turn out poorly, families and soldiers (national guards, reservists, active duty, and veterans) need the support of their communities and wider society.

Family support

Compared to the Cold War period and, to a lesser extent, the era of the mass armed forces, a greater need therefore exists for today's postmodern armies to provide social-psychological support to their personnel in military operations abroad and to their families at home. From a purely military management standpoint, the organization of social-psychological support has become a necessity because, in the short term, the absence of such support impacts negatively on the operational readiness of soldiers and, in the longer term, can have negative effects on recruitment and retention (Bowen and Martin, 2011). As a consequence, in all postmodern military organizations, but to varying degrees, services and/or structures have been progressively developed – or adapted – to provide social-psychological support to military personnel and families before, during, and after missions.

Change in this respect derives from two directions: the supply side of formal support, and the demand side. But people also have higher expectations. Twenty years ago, not being able to communicate with the home front was accepted in the Navy, but nowadays this would be considered backward and a reason for quitting service. The military is not simply a job, because it demands sacrifice from soldiers and families. Therefore the military organization is under a moral obligation to provide support that fits the needs of this special profession. Families also realize that what they sacrifice is above the regular contractual obligations of the labor market, and they seek additional social, emotional and material support.

The focus of this book

International comparisons are the principal aim of this book. It focuses on the most important issues that touch upon families when soldiers are deployed. Writing such a book on military families requires adopting approaches from different disciplines and perspectives, and combining them to produce a volume that enhances our knowledge and understanding of military families. The aim is to push the theory in the field a little bit further, to illustrate the topic empirically, and to add depth to our understanding by cross-national comparative analysis. Contributing to the broad scope of the project, this volume includes all services (army,

navy/marines, air force), as well as families from active duty personnel, reserves, and national guard.

The military lifestyle also involves long and unpredictable workdays, and recurrent transfers to new work and living environments, and frequent relocations. In this book, we focus also on work–family conflict and health issues stemming from separation. Three coherent sets of research questions are addressed in the volume, as follows.

How do the changing missions and tasks of the military affect soldiers and their families?

This question relates to the way in which armed forces seek to adapt their structure to the new missions and how military families cope with competing demands from military and private life. Is family–military rivalry, as embodied in the concept of "greedy institutions," still relevant as an analytical concept? What theoretical progress have sociologists made in ameliorating that rivalry? Tensions between the military organization and the family, in terms of work–family conflict, may grow, especially during missions when couples have more difficulty combining work and family obligations. Mass communication (Internet, media, and virtual social networks, including blogs, Facebook, or Twitter) renders operations more transparent to the home front, influencing questions of legitimacy, such as the role of family support in legitimizing military operations.

What is the effect of deployments on those left behind?

Psychologically, deployment weighs heavily on families and deployed soldiers. They face separation, and therefore the stressors and related hardships on the soldier and the military family are relevant research topics. How do soldiers and families deal with these issues? What is the effect on children? Does deployment influence the quality of the marital relationship? Do differences in length of deployment (within and across nations) differently affect the well-being of families? How do community efforts buffer the plight of families? How do families manage marital reconciliation? What is the effect of communication (email, cellphones, virtual support groups) on family outcomes?

What is the structure of national family support systems and what has been their evolution?

Nations have different arrangements in place for taking care of military families. It is not only the structure of these arrangements that differs, but also nations differ regarding family cultures. The role of volunteers and private initiatives in a society is one among the variables. One also needs to know how support fits within the general structure of family life in a

certain country, or what the differences are in terms of the organization of support before, during, and after deployment. Leadership is often also different from nation to nation: sometimes, commanders take more initiative; at other times, the community is the pivotal actor. In some cases, military families cope well enough by themselves and show remarkable resilience without any outside support.

Presenting a framework

The framework is interdisciplinary, and stems from both psychology and sociology (with a touch of anthropology). More specifically, the roots in psychology are stress theory, which is inspired by and related to the question of "how to augment or uphold resilience" (Bowen, Martin, and Mancini, 2013). The sociological roots originate from the question of cohesion: how does one hold together a society that is changing rapidly from a holistic entity to a society of individuals? A third traditional strand of study ties the psychological and sociological perspectives together by examining the way in which support relations come into being (Moelker and van der Kloet, 2003). Support relations not only deal with sociological building blocks, but also are the structures around which psychological mechanisms such as coping, stress buffering, and family cohesion revolve.

Family stress and resilience theory

The word "stress" is rather self-explanatory. The concept implies that when pressure is exerted on something or someone, the object or subject will bend or break, and also that when the pressure is lessened, the object or subject will, to a greater or lesser degree, return to its previous state of being. The extent to which the new state of being corresponds to the old one depends on the resilience factor, and the new state can be worse, better, or the same. "Bending," "breaking," "elasticity," and so forth are terms much used in physical analogy. Even terms specific to stress theory have become commonplace, meaning that "stress buffering," "coping," and "adaptation" have become so widely used that stereotypes thrive and may even hamper those who are stressed. For example, veterans are so often associated with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that future employers might be wary of excessive use of alcohol, violent behaviors, and severe marital problems. Stress – more specifically, family stress – has become commonly known as a concept, but precise definitions are not often given. We will elaborate on family stress mainly, but even within this focus on families, one needs to be aware of the historical and societal context of the concept.

Several authors document the genesis of the concept of "stress." In his study of psychiatric breakdown, Simon Wessely (2006) summarizes all previous studies, while adding his own research. "Shell shock," as a concept, helped people during and after World War I to do away with the value

judgment that stress victims were "nothing but cowards" who were "lacking in moral fiber." Treatment had often been so harsh that soldiers had preferred to return to the war front. Acute combat stress reactions were first remedied by allowing the men some rest; by trial and error, more sophisticated treatment methods were then developed.

As a war of high mobility, World War II led to the concept of "fatigue." Cohesion not only helped soldiers to retain combat motivation ("men fight for their buddies"), but also helped to prevent stress symptoms later in life. By serendipity, it was found that the long journey home by ship contributed to coping, because soldiers were able to share their experiences and talk about them. Symptoms that we now recognize as PTSD were, at the end of World War II, diagnosed as "concentration camp syndrome" and treated by progressive psychiatrists with hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD.

After Vietnam, PTSD became part of the psychiatrists' vocabulary; in 1980, it was included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The fifth revision of the DSM was released in May 2013 (DSM-V). Labeling, diagnosis, and treatment have thus varied over time and across cultures. Different societies deal differently with the phenomenon. Sociologist Withuis (2004), to a degree, fears that PTSD has become a "trendy" disease, with the media, politics, insurance companies, armies, and all other societal institutions not only acknowledging it, but almost propagating identifying as a stress victim.

The ABC-X model of stress among families (Hill, 1949) and its more recent elaboration, the double ABC-X model (McCubbin and Patterson, 1982), are the fruits of military psychological research. Civilian family therapy and ideas on the operation of stress in civilian families are also based on this research. Surveys among the female population in general reveal that a period of separation ranks third on the list of the most stressful events (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). Only the death of a partner and divorce score higher. This means that every military family experiences a fairly high level of stress during the period for which the service member is deployed abroad. That separation is inherently stressful becomes clear in light of the effects of doubling the deployment in length (as was the case in Iraq and Afghanistan for many American soldiers, for example). Spouses of soldiers that were deployed for a year reported that the length of deployment was the premier stressor, while spouses of soldiers participating in shorter deployments were more concerned about the safety of their partners (Bartone and Bartone, 1997).

The ABC-X model for family stress, developed shortly after World War II by Hill (1949), is attractive because of its simplicity. In the model, "A" stands for the stressful event and "B" stands for the resources that people have for solving their problems (financial resources, the help of friends and family, help from the organization, etc.). Because an event may be much more problematical for one person than it is for another, the model also includes subjective perception. The subjective definition of the stressor is indicated

by the letter "C." "X" stands for the crisis – that is, the disorganization and chaos results from the combination of A, B, and C.

The double ABC-X model of McCubbin and Patterson (1982: 46) expands Hill's original model by addressing both the pre- and postcrisis components of the stress process. It takes into account the piling up of problems as a dynamic process: over the course of time, one problem piles up on top of the other. The doubling of stressors is often evidenced in old adages such as "it never rains, but it pours"; pile-up is often attributed to "Murphy's law." A similar doubling may also occur with regard to the availability of resources. Besides the existing resources, new resources can be tapped to remediate the problems ("double Bs"). Doubling also occurs regarding the perception of the problem ("double Cs"). The first problem is perceived to be more stressful because of the second problem.

People can learn to cope with stress. Coping behavior can be defined as "the management of a stressful event or situation by the family as a unit, with no detrimental effects on any individual in that family. Coping is the family's ability to manage, not eradicate or eliminate, the stressful event" (Gelles, 1995: 429). The ability or inability to apply coping mechanisms results ultimately in adaptation to the crisis situation. Alongside all of the numerous negative coping strategies that do not solve the problem (drinking, sleeping tablets, denial, or flight) are positive coping strategies, such as keeping family ties intact, developing self-confidence and self-esteem, developing social support, developing a positive attitude, learning about a problem, and reducing tension by involvements and activities (McCubbin, 1979).

Military sociology: From "greedy institutions" to the work–family conflict

Military personnel have become increasingly trapped between two "greedy institutions": the armed forces and the family. The traditional military family fits in with armed forces that have many institutional features. According to Moskos (1977), this means that the spouse and the military family are part of the military community. Private life is not separate from military life. The service member, partner, and children are all involved in military activities. This is the situation that one still typically finds when military units and their families are posted at foreign military bases (Durand et al., 2001; Hawkins, 2001). The isolation, or inability to connect with a foreign culture, drives military families into a community that is closed in character. In such communities, the privacy of family life is constantly under pressure. Social checks are paramount. Gossip is the instrument for exercising social control (Soeters, 1994).

The more the military profession becomes a job like any other, the fewer the partners who will be integrated into the military community. The soldier's job has become more occupational (Moskos, 1977). Service personnel's partners are much more likely to have jobs and circles of friends of

their own. They are no longer morally obliged to participate in the military community.

The evolution of the traditional institution into the modern occupation is important for the claims that are made on service personnel by the military organization and the family. Mady Segal (1986) stated that the military family and the military community are both "greedy institutions." Lewis Coser (1974) defines the "greedy institution" as "a pattern of absolute devotion."

The armed forces and the family both claim the devotion of the individual. In the past (in the institutional model), the armed forces were the most dominant and most greedy institution of the two: duty was meant to override love. Officially, service personnel had to be available 24 hours a day. The shift in the armed forces from the institutional model toward the occupational model is the reason why the armed forces and the family both make strong claims on the devotion of the individual, who is appealed to, on one hand, in his or her role as a member of the armed forces and, on the other hand, in his or her role as partner, parent, or member of the family. The individual is caught between two greedy institutions and has a dual loyalty problem: if one is given priority, the other is given short measure. If the person in question opts for the armed forces, the military family is confronted with a specific problem: the problem of family stress. The armed forces of different countries vary in terms of degree of greediness, and there are, of course, also variations in greediness over time. In times and places where tradition prevails, greediness is higher.

In a historical analysis of class-based role expectations, Harrell (2001) developed the hypothesis that military wives – and especially officers' wives – are engaged in volunteer action to secure the status position of their husbands. This hypothesis holds particularly true among commissioned officers' wives at West Point Military Academy, who try to uphold upper-class status by fulfilling role expectations such as mentoring younger wives, attending ceremonial gatherings, entertaining guests, and participating in family support. Other researchers have noted this aspect of greediness, but from a different perspective. For instance, Weinstein and White (1997) offer a feminist explanation for the same phenomenon, whereas Jessup (1996) points toward the fact that the British Armed Forces benefit the most from expectations towards military wives: military wives who participate in family support and other forms of assistance are providing the armed forces with free services.

Greediness among the institutions could easily lead to conflicts between the family and the military organization. Using items from previous surveys undertaken by Bourg and Segal (1999), Moelker and van der Kloet (2003) found that this family–military conflict was a reality for some families in the Netherlands. Sixteen percent of spouses were not able to attend family activities because of the obligations connected with the soldier's job. An important finding was that supportive policy among the armed forces and support offered by the unit commander lessens family–military conflict.

Conflict between work and family life has been defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985: 77). It is considered a multidimensional construct (Rode et al., 2007), distinguishing work roles interfering with family roles (work–family conflict) from family roles interfering with work roles (family–work conflict). Many researchers have demonstrated positive relationships between job and family stressors and conflict between work and family demands (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Ilies et al., 2007; Vinokur, Pierce, and Buck, 1999). Generally, it is assumed that work–family conflict is produced by features of the work environment – that is, job stressors, such as long working hours – whereas family stressors, such as having children, may underlie family–work conflict. Yet there is some evidence suggesting that both job stress and family stress produces work–family conflict (for example Westman and Etzion, 2005).

Support relations

Seeking social support is one of the ways in which people cope with stressful situations. But societal structures differ from nation to nation (and also within nations), and therefore a typology can be helpful for international comparative studies. The theory on which this typology is based is derived from sociology and anthropology.

Sometimes, people have extensive social networks and do not need support from the organization. Sometimes, the organization can stimulate and facilitate informal family support groups. The effectiveness of social support has been much discussed by many scholars (Bell, Segal, and Rice 1995; Bowen and Martin, 2011; Cohen and Wills, 1985; Rosen and Moghadam, 1990). Desivilya and Gal (1996) were among the first to explore solutions for overcoming the conflict between families and the military organization. They focused mainly on family structures.

We can distinguish four support relationships on the basis of the "dependency" axis and the "individualized–communitarian" continuum. Dependence and independence form the extremes on the dependency axis. This axis refers to the relationship with the providers of support. The second axis refers to two traditions in social exchange theory: one is individualist; the other, communitarian.[2] The first is rooted in the work of George Homans, which represents an almost economic individualist conceptual framework under which each gift or service has to be reciprocated by the recipient in the form of a service in return, a gift, or money. The communitarian tradition builds on the concepts of Durkheim, Mauss, and Lévi-Strauss (Ekeh, 1974). This tradition states, for example, that even in economics there are communitarian issues – such as trust – that are essential to exchange transactions. Exchange cannot solely be analyzed by using the calculative logic of contributions versus retributions.

Relationship with provider of support

	Dependent	Independent
Individualized	Professionalized	Exchange relations
Communitarian	Institutionalized	Generalized reciprocity

Figure 1.1 Structure variables determining social support network types

The two structure variables, "dependency" and "individualism–communitarian," together form a taxonomy that defines four types of social support network: professionalized social support relations; institutionalized social support networks; exchange relations; and social support networks based on generalized reciprocity (see Figure 1.1).

In *professionalized social support relations* (see Table 1.1), the individual spouse becomes dependent on support offered by professionals such as psychologists, social workers, or members of the medical profession. Services by professional helpers are reciprocated by means of private payment or insurances, or are paid for by the military organization. This dependency arises because spouses are isolated and are not connected with other army wives, family, or friends. When confronted with problems with which they are unable to cope, they resort to professional workers. Hence the size of the support network is small and few others are available to whom the spouse can turn for help. The marital quality and the authority relation between family members may vary from family to family. Commitment is limited to the family only. One of the problems that might weigh heavier on such types of family is the conflict with the military organization. Whilst the family is inner-directed and highly "greedy," the spouse may not accept the justified demands of the military organization regarding the duties of the service member. Deployments especially will lead to a sharp conflict between family and the military organization. Support from professionals is effective, but costly. When high demands or

Table 1.1 Ideal typical approach of social support networks

Variables/social support network	Professionalized	Institutionalized	Exchange relations	Generalized reciprocity
Dependent–independent	Dependent of professional care	Dependent of military community	Independent: bargaining for own position	Independent: strength of weak ties
Individualized–communitarian	Individualized: individual versus bureaucracy	Communitarian: service to community	Individualized: quid pro quo	Communitarian: citizenship behavior
Network structure	Individualized/isolated	Military community serves as extended family	Dyadic structure	Friendship circles
Network size	Small – isolated	Large	Small	Medium to large
Status spouse	Does not apply: family is separated from military community	Depending on rank of serviceman	Depending on the possibilities to reciprocate	Depending on own occupation/personality
Authority relation within the family	Varies for all families	Patriarchal/traditional	Depending on what the other can offer	Egalitarian
Commitment	To family only	To military community	To one's self	To friends and loved ones
Greediness: conflict family–military organization	Family is most greedy: sharp conflict when organization demands deployment	Military organization is most greedy: sharp conflict when spouses do not accept traditionalism	Low conflict if balanced: "give and take" kind of balance	Low conflict if balanced: balanced if there is mutual acceptance – "a two-sided affair"
Effectivity and efficiency of the support network	Professional help is effective if spouse cannot cope; not efficient because of costs and capacity problems	Effective and efficient if "institution" character is accepted	Not effective and efficient: when families are in trouble, they are not attractive exchange partners	Effective and efficient: support is offered on basis of friendship, without expectation of immediate reciprocation

emergency situations arise, professional support will probably encounter capacity problems.

Institutionalized social support networks are common where the traditional "institution" model (Moskos, 1977) has persisted. Communitarianism is strong and the individual is dependent on the military community for social support. Often, the military community is – to a certain degree – isolated from civilian society (that is, it is a closed, inner-directed community). This community is characterized by strong social control, a high commitment to community among its members, and hierarchic relationships. The military community serves as a surrogate extended family. The family itself is also traditional and is characterized by patriarchal authority relations. Civilian spouses of service members usually do not have jobs, but devote their time to housekeeping and raising children. The status of the spouse is derived from the rank of the service member. The network can be very large, which contributes to effectiveness and efficiency of the support rendered, but this support is effective and efficient only when the spouse accepts the traditional "institution" character. When the "institution" character is not accepted, a sharp conflict may exist between the family and the military organization. In contrast to the first type of social support network, the military organization in this type is highly greedy.

In *direct exchange relationships*, individual spouses bargain for their own position in a way that is ruled by the "quid pro quo" principle. Calculations are based on whether or not investments in relationships are profitable, considering the costs. The support network is structured in dyads. There can be several dyads – that is, relationships of support between provider and recipient – but the number of dyads will be limited as a consequence of the investments and costs needed to maintain them. Status and authority relations with others depend on what those others can offer and on the "market value" of the spouse. Commitment is primarily to one's self. The attitude towards the military organization is not conflictuous, provided that there is a balance between "give and take." The dyads are not very effective and efficient support systems. When someone experiences a problematic situation over a considerable period of time, his or her "market value" will diminish and he or she will lose attractiveness as an exchange partner. In fact, the dyadic structure will dissolve and revert to the professionalized support relationship, meaning that the needy will now have to knock on the doors of professional support workers.

Social support networks based on generalized reciprocity (Sahlins, 1972) combine a communitarian character with a great independence among participating individuals. In fact, the strength of the support network is derived from what Granovetter (1973) called the "strength of weak ties": a rather large community of friendship circles with members who support each other, but the ties between whom are not so strong that they would cause the support network to become greedy or to threaten the independence of the individuals in the network. There are many weak ties between people