"The Strength behind the Uniform":
Enlisting Gender and the Family in the Canadian Armed Forces

by

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Abstract

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) views military families as "the strength behind the uniform" because their contributions and sacrifices are considered essential to operational effectiveness, including retention, morale, and deployability. Today's Canadian military families receive more institutional support for their wellbeing than ever before. At the same time, the CAF is introducing new gender equality schemes, including integrating gender perspectives in operations, conducting gender-based analyses of CAF policies, and increasing diversity of its personnel through military recruitment and retention strategies. These new institutional commitments to family wellbeing and gender equality suggest that the quality and culture of military life may be changing.

The military family has received little feminist inquiry since the early 1990s, despite institutional efforts to reform family and gender equality policies and practices in Western militaries. Recent research in the feminist international relations (IR) field tends to focus on gender *in* militaries, which builds on a substantial, well-established body of feminist IR research that indicates that militaries are deeply gendered institutions that sustain unequal relationships of power by privileging masculinity and exploiting women and feminized practices of labour. Contemporary efforts by the CAF to enhance military family life and gender equality suggest that the gendering of military families, which characterized previous decades, might be eroding. Therefore, this research asks to what extent does the contemporary CAF rely on gendered relations of power and divisions of labour within military families to support operational effectiveness? In particular, how are recent CAF family wellbeing initiatives impacting gender relations within, and expectations of, military families and spouses?

I argue that recent strategies designed to target military family wellbeing in the CAF—specifically, those implemented since the early 2000s—are grounded in neoliberal logics that reinforce unequal gender relations and an unequal division of labour in the military and military families. Neoliberalism's emphasis on individual responsibility and resilience, under the guise of empowerment, obscures how military spouses are encouraged to survive and thrive in military life in ways that do not challenge oppressive gendered scripts. Neoliberal principles deepen the militarization of military families and spouses; that is, they become more controlled by the needs of the military on the basis of

gender norms. The CAF's support for military families and spouses, which militarizes them together with neoliberal influences, imposes particular costs on military families, especially women. Thus, this work enriches the theorizing of militarization, a central focus of the feminist IR field.

This research is based on twenty-eight in-depth interviews with Canadian military family members, and critical feminist policy analyses of major policy documents and family support services and programs. Particular sites of analysis include the governance structures of Military Family Services and Military Family Resource Centres, and their provision of childcare services; military spousal employment initiatives that emphasize mobile and flexible paid work options, especially entrepreneurialism; and the institutionalization of resilience as a skill and philosophy. This study departs from early research on gender and Canadian military families by considering the gendered relations of power that inform specific policies and programs, in addition to their implications for military culture and the experiences of military wives. This dissertation demonstrates how war making in Canada continues to rely on gendered ideas and practices, despite appeals to family wellbeing and progressive gender equality initiatives.

Preface

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Abbreviations

CAF   Canadian Armed Forces
CFMWS   Canadian Force Morale and Welfare Services
DAOD   Defence Administrative Orders and Directives
DIT   Destination Inspection Trip
DND   Department of National Defence
FCP   Family Care Plan
FOCUS   Families OverComing Under Stress
HERCS   Helping Entrepreneurs Reach Complete Success
HHT   House Hunting Trip
IR   International Relations
MFRC   Military Family Resource Centre
MFS   Military Family Services
MWS   Morale and Welfare Services
NCR   National Capital Region
OSI   Operational Stress Injuries
OSSOMM   Organizational Society of Spouses of Military Members
PTSD   Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
R2MR   Road to Mental Readiness
RMC   Royal Military College of Canada
SCONDVA   Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs

Introduction
The Canadian Military Family:
A Site for Feminist International Relations Inquiry

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) calls military families the "strength behind the uniform" (National Defence 2017d, 12). Their contributions and sacrifices are essential to operational effectiveness, including recruitment and retention, as well as to morale and deployability. The demands placed on military families are profound: frequent relocation, recurrent and prolonged separation from the service member, and managing the risks associated with having a loved one in service, including operational stress injuries. The military family's, and in particular the spouse's, satisfaction with military life is positively correlated to organizational effectiveness (Laplante and Goldenberg 2017). As the CAF is guided by the sentiment "we recruit a member, but retain a family" (Dursun 2017, 2), military families receive more institutional support than ever before (Daigle 2013). Indeed, "well-supported, diverse, resilient people and families" is a central theme in Canada's 2017 defence policy *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (National Defence 2017d).

Alongside increased attention to military family wellbeing, the CAF is advancing gender equality with in its organization and operations. As an employer, the CAF is working to eradicate its sexualized culture, which is hostile to women and LGBTQ members, by addressing systemic sexual misconduct (Deschamps 2015, i; see also Cotter 2019) with initiatives such as Operation HONOUR (Government of Canada 2019d). To foster an inclusive and diverse workplace, a gender-based analysis of CAF policies is being implemented and Defence Employment Equity Advisory Groups have been established for four designated target groups: visible minorities, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and women. Efforts to diversify CAF personnel are being leveraged as an organizational opportunity (National Defence 2017d, 23), and the recruitment of women is viewed an operational strength (Government of Canada 2019c). Relatedly, gender advisors have been tasked with integrating gender perspectives into the CAF's military operations, including preparation, execution, and evaluation. These new institutional commitments to family wellbeing and gender equality in the CAF suggest that the quality and culture of military life may be changing.

The gendered practices and power relations in military families have received little feminist inquiry since the 1990s (Enloe [1983] 1988, 2000; Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 1997; Mederer and Weinstein 1992; Segal 1986; Weinstein and White 1997), despite institutional efforts to reform family and gender equality policies and practices in Western militaries. Recent research in the feminist international relations (IR) field tends to focus on gender *in* militaries (Baaz, Gray, and Stern 2018; Belkin 2012; Bulmer and Eichler 2017; de Silva 2014; Duncanson 2009; Henry 2012; Higate 2012; MacKenzie 2015; McSally 2011; Ombati 2015; Parpart and Partridge 2014; Sasson-Levy 2016), which builds on a longer and well-established body of feminist IR research that indicates that militaries are deeply gendered institutions that sustain unequal relationships of power by privileging masculinity and exploiting women and feminized practices of labour (Cohn 1987; Elshtain 1995; Enloe 1988 (1983), 2000, 2014 (1990); Goldstein 2001; Hardstock 1982; Hooper 1998; Sisson Runyan 1990; Tickner 1992; Whitworth 2004; Young 2003). Current efforts by the CAF to enhance military family life and improve gender equality suggest that the gendering of military families of previous decades might be eroding. In light of these changes, this research asks, to what extent does the contemporary CAF rely on gendered relations of power and divisions of labour within military families to support operational effectiveness? In particular, how are recent CAF family wellbeing initiatives impacting gender relations within, and expectations of, military families and spouses?

I argue that recent strategies designed to target military family wellbeing in the CAF—specifically, those implemented since the early 2000s—are grounded in neoliberal logics that reinforce unequal gender relations and an unequal division of labour in the military and military families. Neoliberal policies devolve responsibility from the state to markets, families, and individuals and emphasize personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and resilience under the guise of empowerment. Neoliberal polices, programs, and ethos of the CAF obscure how military families are encouraged to survive and thrive in military life in ways that do not challenge oppressive gendered scripts. Neoliberal forces depoliticize the gendered inequalities that characterize military families. Depoliticization "removes a political phenomenon from comprehension of its historical emergence and from a recognition of the powers that produce and contour it," by calling for

individualized solutions to such inequalities (Brown 2008, 15). For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, the CAF's programs and resources for military spousal employment highlight entrepreneurialism and mobile paid work as a solution to the challenges imposed by military life. Recognizing and supporting military spouses' employment suggests a rewriting of the breadwinner family model, which previously characterized the CAF (Harrison and Laliberté 1997, 1994). The "freedom" afforded by self-employment and mobile work "empowers" military spouses to dismantle their constraints through market solutions and by embracing flexibility and creativity. This personal solution obscures the history of, and power embedded in, military and capital economies, which continue to rely on a gendered division of labour and essentialist ideas of femininity. Here, the entrepreneurial military spouse becomes more available to the home and to provide unpaid labour in service to the military family, juggling (military) home life and work life. Despite efforts to support military families and improve their wellbeing, the neoliberal principles upon which they are founded reproduce a gendered dynamics in military families and place a greater responsibility on military families, especially women.

Over twenty-five years ago Cynthia Enloe asked where are the women in global politics? (Enloe [1990] 2014, 1–36). Following Enloe, this thesis asks: where are the women in the CAF? Women constitute 98 percent of CAF spouses (CFMWS 2019e, 7), suggesting the analytical importance of military families for feminist IR scholarship. However, this research is motivated largely by an interest in gender as analytical category. Following Joan Scott, this dissertation takes gender as "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between sexes, where gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (1986, 1067). This understanding differs from gender as a descriptive category, which often conflates gender with biological sex. Instead, employing gender analytically is concerned with gender norms and their corresponding power dynamics and structural inequalities. I am primarily concerned with how gender norms and power relations in Canadian military families function, regardless of the sex of the individuals that comprise a particular family. For example, does military service in Canada continue to rely on a gendered division of labour in the family, wherein the service member is absolved of unpaid labour in the

home by a feminized spouse? Indeed, persons of any sex can reproduce gendered relationships of power. As will be seen, unequal gender relationship in military families are (re)produced by institutional policies, family supports, and cultural and social norms, which are increasingly informed by neoliberal principles.

Neoliberal principles deepen the militarization of military families and spouses; that is, they become more controlled by the needs of the military on the basis of unequal and exploitative gender norms and power dynamics (Enloe 2000, 3). Militarization privileges the military, military service, and militaristic ideas and relies on the appropriation of women's labour and essentialist ideas about femininity, such as the devoted, self-sacrificing spouse. However, militarization is not naturally occurring. Rather, women's commitment to and labour for militaries are achieved by social, cultural, and political reproductions—reproductions that are most effective when they appear natural and common sense. Offering military spouses free postage to send care packages (National Defence 2018b), for example, invokes a gendered practice of care that will boost soldiers' morale (see Leclair 2018d). According to Enloe (2000), securing the commitment and labour of women in support of militaries requires "maneuvers" that respond to cultural and political influences that threaten to undo previous gender dynamics, such as activism by military wives for rights and resources, or a political interest in pursuing a feminist foreign policy that is wary of militarism. As militaries begin to lose the loyalty and labour of women, militaries search for alternatives that "camouflage women's service to the military as women's liberation" (Enloe 2000, 45). Indeed, the CAF's supports for military families create the conditions that will foster their unpaid work (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 72). Effective militarization looks different in various times and places and requires ongoing feminist curiosity to be understood and resisted. The CAF's recent support initiatives for military family wellbeing acquire the military spouse's labour and reproduce gendered dynamics within military families albeit in new ways—namely, through neoliberalism. Thus, this research enriches the theorizing of militarization, which is a central focus of the feminist IR field.

This research extends insights from feminist sociological research on Canadian military families undertaken in the early 1990s. Deborah Harrison and Lucie Laliberté found that the non-financial, or human, costs of war making in Canada are taken on

primarily by military spouses, through a gendered form of ruling, where wives' "lives are harnessed by the requirements of the military" (1994, 7). Harrison and Laliberté's work provides a rich institutional ethnography and delivers insights into the ways in which the military informs the daily work practices and social relationships of military wives. However, in the twenty-five years since the publication of Harrison and Laliberté's *No Life like It: Military Wives in Canada* (1994), and despite the institutional changes in the military mentioned above, there has been no feminist research undertaken on Canadian military families. My research is motivated by this silence. We know that militarization as a gendered phenomenon manifests differently in various times and places, and thus requires a tireless feminist curiosity (Enloe 2000). The augmentation of family support and commitment to gender equality represent an important shift in the CAF since Harrison and Laliberté's study. Importantly, my research departs from Harrison and Laliberté's study by considering specific policies and programs that affect Canadian military families; I am concerned not only with the effects of military life on military wives but the gendered relations of power that inform identities, experiences, and expectations of military family members through policies and programs.

This study engages a qualitative and multi-methods approach to interrogate the extent to which the CAF's family wellbeing initiatives and supports rely on and reinforce gendered relations of power and divisions of labour in military families. Central to the research are findings from twenty-eight in-depth interviews with military family members from across Canada, undertaken in 2016 and 2017. The interviews focused on the contributions made by military families, the ways the CAF supports them in return, and how these contributions and supports are informed by gendered identities, practices, and the makeup of specific families. Themes generated from the interviews shaped the analysis of major policies, programs, and services that support and govern Canadian military families. Using critical feminist policy analysis of policies, programs and services, I uncovered the gendered assumptions and implications of the CAF's family support initiatives.

Research Contributions

The title of this dissertation, "The Strength behind the Uniform: Enlisting Gender and the Family in the Canadian Armed Forces," signals the CAF's contemporary stance on military families, but, more importantly, it affirms this research's position in feminist IR scholarship and its political commitment to demonstrating how everyday gendered practices, activities, and identities sustain global politics—in this case, Canada's national security landscape. Gender, and expectations of what men and women *ought* to do in relation to war making, are essential to sustaining military and masculine privilege in global and domestic politics. Given the CAF's attention to diversity, inclusion, and equality in its policies, one might assume that gendered practices and power relations are less central to Canada's military and its operations. My research demonstrates the value and urgency of being curious about how gendered power relations are sustained *through* claims of wellbeing and gender equality in militaries families in particular. Unearthing how unequal gender relations persist reveals the pervasiveness of gender in our social order. Revealing the omnipresence of gendered power relations is politically important in undoing militarism and patriarchy, which exploit and render insecure certain bodies and lives.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of contemporary feminist IR literature on war making considers gender and women in militaries. This literature considers important themes such as the culture of masculinities in militaries (Brown 2012; Belkin 2012; Eichler 2012; Parpart and Patridge 2014), women's experiences in the military (Eichler 2013; King 2016; MacKenzie 2015; Taber 2009, 2013), and sexual assault in militaries (Kirby 2013; Mesok 2016). Academic attention to gender in militaries parallels the institutional energy directed towards gender equality within the institution. The informal and often invisible supports put in place on the periphery of war and war making, which are primarily undertaken by women and/or categorized as feminine spheres of activity and based on patriarchal schemas of the family, have received less academic attention by feminist IR scholars. This gap raises important questions about what subjects of inquiry matter to feminist IR scholars and how the boundaries of the discipline are enforced through a gendering of research. Overlooking how gendered practices in the home and among families are essential to militaries and to global security risks reinforcing the

public/private, international/domestic binaries that feminist scholarship attempts to problematize. I consider military family practices and dynamics to be essential to global politics and feminist IR inquiry.

My research builds on the small but growing body of contemporary feminist IR and interdisciplinary research that considers military families. These works explore the everyday experiences of military wives (Enloe 2010; Horn 2010; Hyde 2015) and mothers (Enloe 2010); and narratives and discourses of war that gender mothers and wives (Enloe 2016; Knudson 2009), such as grief (Cree 2019; Shor 2014; Sjolander and Cornut 2016). A handful of recent studies evaluate gender practices and power within military families, including analysis of the military home and women's labour inside the home as an important geopolitical site (Basham and Catignani 2018), how military suicide and caregiving reproduces heteronormative family forms (Wool 2015), and how militaries mediate the private/public divide in ways that inform power relations within military families (Gray 2016).

This project contributes to this growing body of work, and enriches the understanding and theorizing of how gendered labour and power dynamics within military families are structured by the military's embrace of neoliberal policies and ethos. Both militarism (Basham and Catignani 2018; Elias and Roberts 2016) and neoliberalism rely on and reproduce unequal gender relations, especially concerning labour practices within the home (Bakker 2007; Bakker and Silvey 2008; Luxton 2006; Peterson 2008, 2010; Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas 2014), so it is curious that they have scarcely been theorized together. The exception is Amanda Chisholm and Maya Eichler's (2018) research on gendered labour practices in private security families, which are secured through neoliberal rationalities. Their research shows that the flexible and precarious work model, which typifies the private security industry, secures the labour of spouses in private security families through a celebration of market choice. Chisholm and Eichler contrast these logics against those of the traditional military family (meaning families with a member enlisted in the regular force of a national military) where spouses' labour is secured through the demands of the "greedy institution" (Segal 1986) and/or patriotism (Chisholm and Eichler 2018, 7). As my research shows, neoliberalism also secures the labour and commitments of traditional military families, albeit differently.

Through neoliberal logics, "success" is measured against an individual's ability to adapt, survive, and thrive in the face of insecurity and challenges, which is internalized as a moral requirement. Buy-in to neoliberal principles is achieved on the promise of empowerment, which includes gender equality, through self-sufficiency, freedom, and choice. When military family members are encouraged to shape their success and wellbeing by being more amenable the needs of the military, under the allure of choice and empowerment—for example, by resorting to mobile and flexible paid work to reconcile the demands of military life—it secures anew the labour of military spouses (see Chapter 2). Here, the commitments and labour of the spouse in the traditional military family are acquired through a neoliberal morality of individual responsibility and resilience, which is not unrelated to the neoliberal celebration of financial rewards and freedoms that result from the service members' work, as Chisholm and Eichler (2018) describe.

Considering the less formal gender relations that underpin militaries may inform the contemporary questions being asked about gender *in* militaries. Family is where gender is learned most directly, and family is an institution upon which more formal institutions rely. Thus, the gendered dynamics of military families likely impact gender in the military institution itself. As a result, my work contributes to a better understanding of the questions posed by liberal feminists scholars who are concerned with women's integration into existing structures of the military, as well as questions posed by critical feminist scholars who interrogate hegemonic versions of militarized masculinity as a source of constraint for both male and female soldiers. Notably, the CAF's parallel commitments to gender equality and military family wellbeing have not been considered as overlapping and mutually reinforcing dynamics. Although this research is not prescriptive, it suggests that policy makers who are genuinely interested in gender equality and family wellbeing in the CAF ought to consider the family as a gendered institution that, like the military, is informed by essentialist gender relations.

Finally, this project highlights the "strength behind the uniform" by centring the unpaid labour of women in military families, whose service is often marginalized if not invisible. Indeed, military spouses are sometimes referred to as the invisible ranks (see Smith 2019; Thunder Bay MFRC 2015). In the spirit of feminist inquiry, I take women's

lives seriously, and understand their perspectives and experiences of gendered power relations as worthy of investigation.

Is there something particular about the military that should concern feminist scholars? The military and war making are important sites of inquiry for feminist political science scholarship. According to feminist IR researchers, society's prevalent gender relations are most aptly depicted in militarized settings and during times of war (D'Amico and Weinstein 1999, 5). Privileging particular and exaggerated forms of masculinity required of militarism is essential for the maintenance of patriarchy (Enloe 2000, 32–33). Studying gender in military families therefore offers insights at the intersection of two traditionally patriarchal institutions: the military and the family. Such research uncovers how patriarchy is sustained by privileging masculinity in two related and overlapping institutions. Enloe reminds us that a woman married to a soldier is not just a soldier's wife, but a military wife: "she is defined by society not only by her relationship to a particular man, but by her membership in a powerful institution" (Enloe 1988, 46). Militarism and its relationship to masculinity involves deliberate decisions and cultural and social reproductions, but often operate as innocuous in the everyday, which makes them hard to see (Enloe 2000, 33). Thus, dismantling patriarchy involves interrogating the gendered relations sustained by militarism.

The military's unique relationship to the state enhances its influence on the reproduction of unequal gender relations that circulate in society writ large. Militaries are privileged as essential to sovereign states, securing its authority and, in extreme cases, becoming the state's stand-in. Symbolically, military members and their families represent a particular expression of national identity and civic belonging, which reflect the nation's gendered social orders. Moreover, the influence that militaries have on the lives of its personnel, and their families, is unlike any other profession. Indeed, military members and their families are under the control of the state to a greater degree than any other citizens, apart from those in prison (Enloe 1988, 47). Living a military life requires submitting to external management over where one will live and work and the communities one will build, as well as everyday practices and relationships. The profound and direct ways the military informs the intimate lives of its members and their families means that it uniquely (re)produces social values and norms, including ideas

about gender. As a public institution, the military's perpetuation of certain gender orders says much about gender politics that characterize a state more broadly because of its association with national identity and civic belonging.

Methodology

The experiences of military spouses are the foundation from which this research developed. Between November 2016 and April 2017, I undertook twenty-eight in-depth interviews with members of CAF families stationed across the country and abroad. In-depth interviews aim to understand the lived experiences of individuals and to uncover details about a specific issue or topic (Hesse-Biber 2007, 118). The analytical objective of the interviews was to understand the ways military families and spouses contribute to operational effectiveness; how the CAF supports military families in return; and the gendered identities, practices, and relations that inform military families. Military spouses provided a first-hand account of how militarism and gender inform their daily lives, which manifest in the CAF's policies and programs that support military families as well as informal cultures within and between families. Considering how the everyday lives and experiences of people, especially women, contribute to Canada's security environment inverts the epistemological approach to IR, which typically considers macro players, such as states (Tickner 2006). Feminist research, however, recognizes women and non-elites as knowers, and their experiences valuable subjects of inquiry (Ackerly and True 2008; Enloe 2004).

The interview respondents represented diverse identities and family arrangements. Interviewees identified as women, men, civilian, military, Indigenous, disabled, and members of LGBTQ communities. Family arrangements included male and female service members, dual-service couples, dual-income families, single-income families, families with and without dependent children, and single parents. Respondents represented all branches of the Canadian military: army, air force, and navy. The majority of interviews took place in person in people's homes, coffee shops, and libraries in various cities across Canada, including Oromocto, Halifax, Petawawa, Ottawa, Edmonton and Cold Lake. Two interviews took place over video call. Each interview lasted between one and two hours. The interviewees' identities are protected by eliminating recognizable

information, such as names and posting locations. Where direct passages from interview data are included, the interviewee is identified by a number, which was assigned randomly.

Interview respondents were recruited through snowball sampling, or a "chain referral sampling method" (Berg 2007, 44), which consists of using existing contacts to generate further contacts. The initial contacts were military spouses who were active on social media, such as bloggers and administrators of CAF spouse groups. Snowball sampling is especially useful for hard-to-reach or vulnerable populations (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). Because the military can be insular, and many "military spouse" social media pages and groups are closed to individuals unattached to the CAF, having a contact on the "inside" enabled advertising outreach, and reduced hesitancy among military spouses to speak to me, an outsider. The snowball technique was also used in a few instances to purposefully sample (sometimes called a judgmental sample) in order to obtain a more representative group of respondents. Specifically, I sought respondents who belonged to dual-service couples, single service members, and those who identified as male military spouses by asking existing contacts/participants to share my research and contact information with their networks.

The interviews were semi-structured, which involves some predetermined questions on specific topics but leaves room for probing and asking additional questions as the interviews proceed. This approach to the interviews enables conversations to flow naturally and to engage in more detailed conversations based on personal experiences and individual perspectives. I also used a feminist approach to interviewing alongside the semi-structured approach to the conversations. Feminist research suggests that interviews ought to be a collaborative process; while the respondent will do most of the talking, both interviewer and interviewee are responsible for contributing to the exchange (Hesse-Biber 2007). The predetermined interview format was constructed with broad categories and topics that related to the research questions, and were informed by findings from previous feminist studies on military families (Enloe 2000; Harrison and Laliberté 1994). The overarching themes of the interviews included the contributions of military families, the ways the CAF supports military families, including specific programs and resources,

and the dynamics within the military community. For a copy of the interview script, with the predetermined questions, see Appendix A.

Data analysis took place after all of the interviews were completed and transcribed. Specifically, I undertook a thematic analysis, which involves paying attention to patterned responses and meanings (Longhofer, Floersch and Hoy 2013, 48). Thematic analysis differs from quantitative word-based techniques, such as word counts, and instead locates implicit and explicit meaning in the data (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 10–11). The meaning observed in the data is called a theme, and the theme is relevant to the analytical objective of the research (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 49). In this case, the analytical objective of the interviews was to examine the ways gender informs the experience and expectations of practices and power relations within military families. As I transcribed and reread the interviews, I became familiar with the data and watched for emerging themes. Once I was familiar with the data, I began identifying themes. A theme was identified by affirming the question, "Are what these people talking about relevant to the research objectives?" (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 71). Thematic cues, such as repetition across interview texts, and linguistic connectors and transitions were also helpful in identifying themes. For example, military spousal employment challenges was identified as a theme, for its consistency across interviews and its relationship to a gender practices in military families. While consistency was an important factor in identifying themes, passages that represented contradictions among consistent themes, such as passages rejecting the military community, were also deemed significant. After identifying themes, I then coded all of the data. Codes apply a textual description to a theme or component of a theme and describe the link between the data and its significance (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 49). Throughout this process, the codes were refined to provide more detail and accuracy. For example, coding for the military spousal employment challenges theme (coded "employment") became split on the basis of similar responses and cause and effect relationships, such as the military requirement to be mobile ("employment–mobility") and the disproportionate responsibility for the home front ("employment–division of labour"). The consistency of the themes across the interviews informed what policies, programs, and services I would examine. For example, consistent reporting of

spousal employment challenges because of moving and the spouse's disproportionate responsibility for the home front prompted me to examine how the CAF addresses spousal employment in policy and programs, and how they respond to mobility requirements of service life and the division of labour in military families.

The policies and programs that feature in this work were purposefully sampled, based on the importance for military families, a process which risks researcher bias. This approach may raise questions about how representative these policies and programs are of the CAF's family approach, and how accurately the findings can be generalized to make conclusions about the CAF's reliance on gender orders in military families. These risks were mitigated by not relying on my own judgements about the most significant sites of analysis, but by identifying them in response to experiences and challenges identified by interviewees. Moreover, the political issues that were central to the CAF throughout the duration of the research also informed the selection of particular policies and programs. For example, military mental health has been politically and culturally significant in the last decade, marking a departure from the issues of the 1990s, when similar questions were last investigated. Consequently, resilience, which has featured prominently in the CAF's response to military mental health and wellbeing generally, was identified as an important site of analysis. In other words, the specific policies and programs analyzed in this research are based on a general consensus of what is currently most significant based on interviews, political and cultural rhetoric, and my knowledge of gender and military research. Purposefully sampling policies, programs, and services allowed for a greater depth of analysis, as opposed to breadth.

Policies, programs, and services inform and are informed by social relations and hierarchies, including gendered hierarchies. They are an important site in the interrogation of gendered ideas, expectations, and outcomes in the CAF. Therefore, I undertook a feminist critical policy analysis (McPhail 2003) of the most important families-related policies and programs, which considers the gendered components of policies and policy outcomes. This approach is critical because it understands that policies structure and reinforce power dynamics by maintaining privilege and silencing the disempowered (Marshall 1997, 2). This approach is feminist because it considers how power and privilege structure and reinforce unequal gender relations (Marshall 1997, 9).

The goals of feminist policy analysis are to make women and gender visible in policy, including the underlying assumptions and stereotypes embedded in policy, and the ways in which women's (and men's) lives and roles are regulated and constrained by policy. Following Beverly McPhail, the questions that guided my analysis of CAF policies and programs included the following: "Are military spouses' unpaid labour and work of caring considered and valued or taken for granted? Does the policy contain elements of social control of military spouses? And, how does the policy mediate gender relationships between the state, market, and family?" (2003, 44). This last question is especially important as it concerns economic and political restructuring of subjects through neoliberalism. Analyzing CAF policies and programs alongside the experiences of military spouses uncovers the ways gender expectations of military families persist, and on what logics.

CAF Demographics, "Families" and "Spouses"

Despite interest in increasing the representation of women in the CAF, with a goal of reaching 25 percent representation by 2026 (Government of Canada 2019c), and capitalizing on diversity (i.e., increasing diversity and representation of their force) as a means to enhance operational effectiveness (National Defence 2019b), the CAF remains a deeply gendered institution. As of 2019, women represent 15.7 percent of the Forces and just less than 5 percent of the combat arms (National Defence 2019b). Subsequently, the military family is a deeply gendered institution. Sixty-two percent of the CAF population is married (Dursun 2017, 1), and 98 percent of military spouses are female (CFMWS 2019e, 7). Military families are comprised of 4 percent dual-service couples,[1] 72 percent have children, 12 percent have special needs dependents, and 13 percent of military families have caregiver responsibilities (CFMWS 2019e, 7). The CAF defines a caregiver as "someone, which is invariably the immediate family living within the household, who provides support to those who are most vulnerable and adversely impacted by particular and extended challenges of military or civilian life" (CFMWS 2019a).

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[1] Dual service refers to families where both members of the conjugal couple serve in the CAF.

"Family," for the purpose of this research, adheres to the definition set out in CAF policy. The CAF recognizes military family members, sometimes called "dependents," through their relation to the service member. A person is recognized as a family member of a service member if they are in a married or common-law relationship, a child of the service member or spouse, or a minor or adult for who the service member or spouse has been authorized by law to act on their behalf (National Defence 2018a, 23–25). To be recognized as a family member, the individual must reside with the service member, unless, for reasons related to military service, such as Imposed Restriction, he or she is prohibited (National Defence 2018a, 23–24; see also CFMWS 2019c).[2] The institutional definition of the family is observed in this research because of its relationship to policies, programs, and services, which inform much of the data of this project. At the same time, my research acknowledges the socially and politically constructed nature of the family. Institutional recognition of the family member, and its relationship to accessing resources and services, demonstrates the power involved in constructing and reinforcing the parameters of who constitutes the family. Indeed, this research seeks, in part, to interrogate how the constitution of the military family is reinforced, or not, by unequal gender relations.

Theoretically, this research understands the social and political construction of the family to be informed by patriarchy, meaning masculine authority, and heteronormativity, where patriarchy is acquired and sustained through marriage to a feminized subject. Dorothy Smith's conceptualization of the Standard North American Family (SNAF) is helpful for this analysis. Smith describes the SNAF as "a legally married couple sharing (a) household; the adult male is in paid employment; his earnings provide the economic basis of the family-household; and while the female may engage in paid work, her primary responsibility is to the care of husband, household and children" (1993, 52). This ideological schema is referred to in this work as the "nuclear family" or "traditional family." While these terms are consistent with the sex makeup of the majority of military families, this research has greater interest in gender in the military family as

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[2] Imposed Restriction is a personnel status granted to service members that approves delay of one year, and up to five years, in moving dependents and household goods and effects to a new posting.

an analytical category, as opposed to a descriptive category (often reduced to sex differences), as discussed above.

The military spouse features heavily in this research. Because a spouse's gendered identity, practices, and power are informed by their position in the heteronormative family, especially in the military context, my research is framed as research on the family. This work employs the term "military spouse" to refer to those married or in a common-law relationship with a service member. Contemporary rhetoric, by both military officials (in policy and discourse) and among military family members (perhaps because of the institutional shift in rhetoric and cultural concern with political correctness), uses the term "military spouse" most consistently. The term "spouse" coincides with a political and cultural celebration of equality, irrespective of identities—gender or otherwise. However, I acknowledge that using the term "military spouse" obscures the gendered expectations and dynamics of the Canadian military spouse, and erases the fact that it is primarily women who are "the strength behind the uniform." Alison Howell argues that gender-neutral terms such as "spouse" or "family" are euphemistic for "wives," and use of these terms is itself a gendered process that conceals the emotional requirements of military wives by militaries (2015, 141). Certainly, neoliberalism's affirmation of "equality" plays out in gender-neutral language by deliberately denying power dynamics and structural inequalities, and holding individuals responsible for their experiences of success and failure. Therefore, this work acknowledges that the term "military spouse" has gendered implications. It is used, however, to be consistent with the language typically used by family members themselves and the military, and to avoid conflating sex with the gender power dynamics that inform military family dynamics.

Theoretical Framework

Gender and Militarization

One of feminist IR's significant theoretical contributions is the observation that the military and war making require the valorization of particular forms of masculinity and that these masculinities are contrasted against inferior femininities in order to appear legitimate. Engaging with this premise is a central concern of my project. This

contribution has been particularly important because it unearths the socially constructed nature of both war making and gender, providing openings to critique the inequalities and forms of violence that result from them. These gendered dynamics are reproduced in various sites, including militaries, governments, state agencies and policies, international organizations, education systems, social norms, family relations, and media and popular culture. As stated above, this work uses Joan Scott's definition of gender: socially constructed differences, assigned on the basis of sex, which shape relationships of power (1986, 106). Ideas about what men and women ought to do in relation to war making are founded on deeply held beliefs about gender differences, and these ideas also inform power relations in the wider society. Gender informs soldiering; the logic of militarized protection; and the ways civilians, especially women in families, are militarized to shore up these gendered logics. In what follows, these dynamics will be dealt with in turn. Unearthing the socially constructed nature of war and gender is important because war rarely improves security and wellbeing for women and other marginalized individuals (Baaz and Stern 2013; Enloe 2010; Hooper 1998; Sjoberg and Peet 2011).

Gender and soldiering

War making has been, and continues to be a predominantly male endeavour, as evident by the sex makeup of most of the world's armed forces and state leaders. While the default soldier in most Western militaries is male, more importantly the quintessential soldier is masculine. It is against masculinity that women (and gendered Others) who seek entry to the military are evaluated (Lane 2017, 471). The concept of "militarized masculinity" is essential here and refers to the idea that "traits stereotypically associated with masculinity can be acquired and proven through military services or action, and in combat in particular" (Eichler 2014, 81). Traditionally, these characteristics include stoicism, valour, courage, and physical strength (Lane 2017, 463). When masculinities become closely aligned with the military, masculinity has been militarized (Eichler 2014, 83). Correspondingly, militarized masculinities are closely associated with the idea of hegemonic masculinity, which refers to an ideal form of masculinity that dominates other gender expressions, particularly over subordinate forms of masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Hegemonic forms of masculinity are informed by particular

institutional cultures, such that the hegemonic masculinity within a state military will be different than the hegemonic masculinity of that state's legislature, for example. Militarization and masculinities are associated systems of privilege, which constitute and reinforce each other.

Militarized masculinities are constructed in contrast to, and valued over, femininities. Scholars have shown how hegemonic masculinities are privileged and reproduced in the recruitment and training of the soldier (Belkin 2012; Enloe 2000; Eichler 2012; Goldstein 2001; Whitworth 2004). For instance, most basic training regimes are built on the idea of breaking down the soldier's civilian identity, with a particular focus on eradicating everything that is feminine, such as emotion and softness; and it is on this basis that gendered as well as racial and sexual slurs discipline new recruits (Whitworth 2008). These works suggest that the relationship between gender and war making is not natural, but rather takes a great deal of effort and violence (Goldstein 2001; Enloe 2000; Tickner 1992; Whitworth 2004). Militarized masculinities are buttressed through gendered logics of protection (as elaborated below), which suppose that innocent families, represented by women and children, ought to be protected. Women in particular are required to fortify this gendered identity by romanticizing a militarized version of masculinity, keeping up the service member's morale, and enabling them to prioritize service above all else. How military spouses reinforce a particular version of militarized masculinity through caregiving and resilience is the focus of Chapter 3.

Notably, militarized masculinities are not static. Rather, they vary according to time, geographical space, settings, and vis-à-vis changing gender norms (Belkin 2012; Parpart and Partridge 2014). For example, Eichler (2014) shows that the constructions of militarized masculinities in post-Soviet Russia, where military service was central to men's socialization, patriotic duty, and citizenship, were also bound up with ideas of patriotic mothers who would sacrifice their sons for the nation. By contrast, Canada's militarized masculinity during the Afghanistan war was characterized by political and policy equality, as it involved women in armed combat, but marked gender difference in subtle ways, such as through media coverage (Eichler 2014). Thus, it is preferable to speak of militarized masculinities in the plural (Belkin 2012; Higate 2003). Militarized

masculinities are also problematized for being contradictory because military service requires obedience, a concern with physical appearance, and cleanliness—characteristics typically associated with femininity (Whitworth 2008; see also Belkin 2012; de Silva 2014; Higate 2012; Morgan 1994). Certainly, shifting norms around masculinities, coupled with women's increasing participation in militaries as combatants, call for the interrogation of militarized masculinities as they continue to evolve (MacKenzie 2015; McSally 2011; Ombati 2015; Sasson-Levy 2016). In the context of this study, and as discussed in Chapter 3, Canada's contemporary militarized masculinity depends upon a mentally and emotionally resilient soldier. We will see that producing and sustaining this version of militarized masculinity involves gendered dynamics and practices within the military family, notably care work from the civilian spouse that fosters resilience in the member, especially when the member has been injured.

Presently, militarized masculinities in the West are also informed by efforts to diversify their personnel and embrace equality as an institutional principle and culture. These efforts include the active recruitment of women, as well as racial and ethnic Others, such as Indigenous Peoples, in the Canadian military. Yet it is important to note that women and racialized Others have long contributed to the Western militaries, including the CAF, with various degrees of recognition and inclusion. Efforts to diversify military personnel are informed, in part, by the need to maintain a robust force in the face of declining recruitment. Appeals to diversity and equality, as components of liberal democracy, legitimize and enable the continuation of war making as a political project, as well as the (re)production of gendered, racialized, and sexualized systems of power (Cockburn 2010; Eisenstein 2007; Mesok 2015; Razak 2004; Shigematsu 2008; Young 2003). Contemporary wars waged in the West, especially the War on Terror, have been legitimized on the basis of promoting liberal social values of equality and democracy, including gender, racial, and sexual justice and diversity (Davis 2008; Mesok 2015; Nguyen 2012; Puar 2008). The inclusion of women and marginalized Others in Western militaries is being pursued as a public relations strategy.[3] Yet "inclusion" of marginalized Others in militaries is partial, evident by low rates of "diversity" and violence within

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[3] See, for example, recent concern at the United Nations, over the low number of female peacekeepers and policy as "crippling to its credibility" (UN News 2018).

militaries, such as sexual assaults, against these marginalized groups. Additionally, the emphasis on "diversity" within militaries "provincialize the relationship of people within the West to the world," and renders invisible differences within categories of race, ethnicity, and gender that characterize Western societies at home (Davis 2008, 24). Drawing on Gayatri Spivak, Elizabeth Mesok argues that "women of colour in the United States' military have suffered, and continue to suffer, various forms of oppression at home and thus bear the legacies of colonialism themselves" (Spivak 1993, 93 in Mesok 2015, 62; see also Nguyen 2012; Puar 2008). Legitimizing wars, in part, on the basis of spreading social democratic values, especially diversity, deliberately obscures the violence that characterizes war making, as well as the inequalities upon which many states in the West are based. Likewise, wars can be made more palatable to an electorate by improving the experiences and wellbeing of military families because it makes the military appear a more just institution. Moreover, military families represent a particular version of the nation and that which must be protected.

The logic of masculine protection

The construction and privileging of masculinities over femininities inform not only soldiering and cultures within militaries but also the very logics upon which militarized protection is based. The notion that men fight wars to protect women has been an important myth in making war possible; and war is narrated as a masculine and male story (Steans 2013, 153). The feminine becomes the antithesis of war and the warrior, and this distinction must constantly be reinforced. Jean Bethke Elshtain, a pioneering feminist IR scholar, argues that just war discourses rely on gendered images of Hegel's non-violent "beautiful soul," which must be protected by the selfless and heroic "just warrior" (1995, 4). While violence and aggression are required, they are motivated by courage and devotion to those they are protecting. The family and the home, which are gendered as feminine and in need of protection, shore up such a narrative. To this day, wars and military engagement continue to be legitimized, in part, on the supposition of the need to protect innocent women and children. This justification most often relies on representations of mothers and women as victims and, as a result, constructs women as

bystanders to conflict, essentializes gender by reducing women's gendered experiences to that of mothers, and muddies the experiences of men as civilians (Carpenter 2005, 303).

The gendered war story rests on a dichotomy of civilians and soldiers, where civilians are usually associated with women and children, and the soldier with young, able-bodied men. So, where militarized masculinities are constructed against femininities, the military as a space and sphere is masculinized. War making and soldiering, which take places in the public sphere, are masculinized to preserve the sacredness of feminine spaces, spheres, and ideas such as the home front and the nation. Iris Marion Young (2003) refers to this as the masculine logic of protection, which positions states and militaries as the masculine protector of the feminized nation. This logic mimics the patriarchal family, where the "good" man (the military) keeps watch over and protects subordinate members of his family (citizens) (Young 2003, 4). The construction of a threat outside the familial home or the state provokes loyalty to the father or the state, and a subsequent acceptance of surveillance and policing (Young 2003, 7). The distinction of gendered spaces is also linked to gendered performances within these spaces:

> The battlefield must be clearly delineated from the "homefront," in that the battlefield must reflect the need to protect a greater good (the imagined state) and the "homefront" must act to serve and reinforce the needs of the fighting force in battle. The national interest is thus served through an elaborate "homefront" support system, which is marked by a "natural" gendered division of labour. (Horn 2010, 62)

Thus, the gendered logic of protection works alongside and buttresses the public/private divide, which feminists have long critiqued (see Pateman 1988), and informs what men and women ought to do in relation to war making and politics more generally (Tickner 1992). This logic plays out quite directly in military families and homes, reinforced by emotional appeals such as telling male children to "be the man of the house" when Dad is deployed.

The gendered logics of protection contribute to the construction of the nation. Constructions of nationalism and nationhood draw on gendered metaphors, such as the motherland, and reinforce the link between nationalism and ethnicity, where women, kinship, and belonging trigger a sense of duty to come to her defence (Kandiyoti 1991, 434; see also McClintock 1997, 105). Here, women become associated with the private sphere of feminized activity of reproducing the nation, while men take up space in

masculine spaces of the state and militaries (Yuval-Davis 1997; see also Enloe [1990] 2014; Nagel 1998). Whereas men "stand alongside each other and the 'nation'—women, by contrast, float above the nation, as metaphors of what the nation is, and not what women are" (Radcliffe 1999, 214). That is to say, "women are mothers of the nation, but not necessarily participants in the nation in their own right" (Gentry 2009, 238). Images of the nation as female are an essential component of the gendered logic of protection.

In Canada, the Memorial Cross, more frequently referred to as the Silver Cross, is awarded to up to three family members of a "Canadian soldiers who died on active duty or whose death was consequently attributed to such duty" (Veterans Affairs 2019b). The cross itself is a gift from Canada: "a memento of personal loss and sacrifice" for the kin of military service personnel (Veterans Affairs 2019b). Prior to 2001, the Memorial Cross was given only to mothers and widows of deceased members; today, up to three family members can be awarded the cross in memory of a deceased CAF member. Despite the fact that the recipient eligibility has been modernized to represent a variety of families, the symbolic association of war-related loss and women persists through the accolade of the Silver Cross Mother, awarded by the Canadian Legion.[4] The Silver Cross Mother "represents the mothers of Canada at the National Remembrance Day Ceremony in Ottawa on November 11 for a tenure of a year, through various official duties" (Veterans Affairs 2019a). Despite the fact that Canadian women have died in service and male parents lose their children, the Silver Cross Mother has always been a woman who has lost a son. The 2018 Silver Cross Mother, Anita Cenerini, lost her son to suicide following service and deployment to Afghanistan. This marked the first time that a military death attributable to suicide was recognized through the Silver Cross Mother designation. Indeed, the CAF has been reluctant to acknowledge military suicides as coinciding with service for a variety of reasons, including public relations, political optics, and feminization of mental health injury. (That is, mental health injury is inconsistent with militarized masculinity.) It took the CAF thirteen years to recognize the death of Anita Cenerini's son, Private Thomas Welsh, as a death in military service (D'Aliesio 2018). While the 2018 Silver Cross Mother suggests progress, insofar as it

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[4] The Legion is a non-profit organization that assists Canada's veterans and their families, and promotes remembrance, most notably through the Remembrance Day poppy campaign.

acknowledges mental illness in relation to military service, it relies on gendered constructions of the nation and gendered ideas of who belongs to the nation on what grounds. The mother's loss and grief is the nation's loss and grief, and military suicide as a "new" and "progressive" concern generates a further commitment to militarization, for this loss must not be in vain. Simultaneously, strategies to combat military suicide require the buy-in and support of military families, especially women, in providing stable home lives and emotional support, and now embracing resilience techniques to better provide caregiving to members with Operational Stress Injuries, including post-traumatic stress disorder and depression as discussed in Chapter 3.

The militarization of women and military wives

Women and femininity legitimize war and ensure that militaries run smoothly. Women have long contributed to militaries and war by performing many roles: "boosting morale, providing comfort during and after wars, reproducing the next generation of soldiers, serving as symbols of a homeland worth risking one's life for, and replacing men when the pool of male recruits is low" (Enloe 2000, 45). Militarized femininities involve the recruitment of and reliance on women to perform femininity in order to extend and succeed in a war effort (Sjoberg 2013, 171). Women's labour in support of militaries is contrasted against the military member's service. Although women have increasingly official roles in militaries, nostalgia for traditional gender roles persists (Brown 2012, 21). For instance, military lifestyle blogs hosted by Canadian and American military spouses, such as *She Is Fierce,* discuss challenges and solutions to managing the home, children, and marriages as military spouses. Authors of these blogs identify as female military spouses and embrace the responsibilities and privileges associated with this identity. They celebrate and romanticize women's primary association to the military through marriage in a heteronormative family, such as highlighting weekly stories of real-life military romances.

The concept of militarization is important here, and central to this work, as it is instrumental in perpetuating women's loyalty to the military and its missions, and compels women to support members and the military. Enloe, who first used the term in the context of feminist IR, explores the global phenomena of militarization in *Does Khaki*

Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives ([1983] 1988) and *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (2000). Militarization refers to "processes by which something becomes controlled by, dependent on, or derives its value from the military as an institution or militaristic criteria" (Enloe 2000, 3). Militarization is working when a fascination and celebration of militaries presents as natural and unproblematic, and when one imagines that promoting military ends serves the general welfare (Enloe 2000, 2). Military wives are militarized insofar as they internalize that they are most helpful and loyal to their husbands if they organize their labour and emotions in a way that enhances the military *as a whole* (Enloe 2000, 2, emphasis added).

The processes through which Canadian military spouses are compelled to arrange their commitments and labour in prioritization of the CAF is a central focus of this work. This phenomenon is important because the family and home's classification as private and outside of the realm of politics (especially international politics) is precisely what enables militarization and gendered regimes to be outside of the realm of political critique. At present, neoliberalism conceals how military spouses' gendered practices and identities are secured by the military through principles of individual responsibility, freedom, choice, and wellbeing. Early scholarship on Canadian military families find that the military institution operates on the assumption that

> domestic work will be taken care of while the soldier is away; that the civilian spouse will not seek or award high priority to their own career, that the military spouse will relinquish their own paid employment every time a spouse is posted to a new location; that they will do a majority of the unpaid work associated with new postings; that the military spouse will fill the vacuum of paid labour with volunteering for the institution; and that military families will spend time with other military families. (Harrison and Laliberté 1997, 37–38)

The military secures the wife's commitment to the soldier by making "the nuclear family the building block of the whole military institution and by emphasizing the 'team' approach to the man's job: his job is also her job" (Weinstein and White 1997, 2). Much of this work is unpaid, and an assumption embedded in military structures, which "relies on and produces *women as women* to function" (Sjoberg 2013, 143). Militarization circulates in everyday spaces and items, such as cans of soup with Star Wars noodles that capture children's war-imagination and rely on women to purchase and serve them (Enloe 2000), and wedding cakes that display the military marriage as a cake-topper

(Dowler 2012). The everyday-ness of militarization makes these processes hard to trace and consequently hard to uproot "because in its everyday forms it scarcely looks life threating" (Enloe 2000, 3; see also Hyde 2016).

The militarization of women and wives is based not necessarily on tradition and culture but deliberate decisions executed by military and political officials (Enloe 2000 33–34). However, militaries have "waffled" over how to "maneuver" the militarization of women:

> Direct or indirect exertion of control over women? Should women (as morale-boosting wives, mothers, prostitutes, nurses) be made integral cogs in the military machine? Or will the military's masculine image, mobility, and customary ways of operating be better protected if less direct structures of control were devised, keeping women available but at arm's length? (Enloe 2000, 37)

Presently in Canada, military spouses are recognized as essential contributors to operational effectiveness, which results in greater institutional commitment to supporting their wellbeing. This increasing formalization of the relationship with military families—viewing them as partners in the operational readiness of the Forces—is a departure from previous decades when research on Canadian military families was last undertaken. It is through viewing military families as a "partner" in CAF operational readiness and the corresponding commitment to military family wellbeing that the CAF secures the commitments and labour of military spouses.

Effective militarization requires cooperation and buy-in to the schemes that privilege the gendered practices, identities, and power relations that militaries and militaristic ideas are based on. Enloe argues, "a militarizing maneuver can look like a dance, not a struggle, even though the dance may be among unequal partners" (2000, 10). As will be seen in this dissertation, buy-in to these schemes is informed by neoliberalism's appeals to empowerment, choice, and freedom (see especially Chapter 2, on employment), if not survival (see especially Chapter 3, on resilience). Yet Enloe warns against giving too much credence to the autonomy of women in relation to militarization because of the power yielded by militaries:

> Many women who have followed militaries and who have lived off the table scraps of military operations have indeed been resourceful and energetic survivalists. On the other hand, it is a mistake to picture these women as autonomous entrepreneurs…Such focus risks underestimating the explicit need

that military commanders had for these working women. As always, recognizing any woman's agency—her capacity to think and act autonomously—should not lead us to be uncurious about a larger institution's efforts to put that woman's labour and emotions to work for its own patriarchal ends. (2000, 39)

Agency, autonomy, and survival are especially complex under neoliberal regimes, which constrain "choices" to limited options that reproduce the conditions of insecurity. As is seen in Chapter 2 on military spousal employment, military spouses can be empowered by embracing work solutions to military life that make them more amenable to the requirements of military life. Here, exercising autonomy about career choices is constrained by the patriarchal requirements of the CAF. However, resistances to these dynamics are taking place in various ways, and merit feminist insight (Elias and Roberts 2016), such as resistance to identifying as a military spouse and participation in informal communities of care (see Chapter 4). The theorizing of militarization in this study expands on the growing body of research on gender and militarization in military families by understanding these processes alongside the influence of neoliberalism.

Social Reproduction

Soldiering and war are made possible by the gendered logics of protection, militarizing people (especially women) and items within the home (such as cans of soup), as well as the "everyday labours enacted within the home" (Basham and Catignani 2018, 153; see also Chisholm and Eichler 2018; Enloe 2000; Gray 2016; Hyde 2016). A gendered division of labour within military homes takes for granted that women's unpaid labour will be appropriated by the military and that women will sacrifice their own careers in order to support the military through this unpaid labour (Harrison and Laliberté 1994; Chisholm and Eichler 2018; Gray 2016; Hyde 2016; Basham and Catignani 2018). In the context of the British Army, Victoria Basham and Sergio Catignani find that "the home is significant site from where war materialises" (2018, 155).

Yet feminist global political economists note that women's labour in the private sphere is not recognized, counted, and valued by national and global economies (Bakker 2007; Elshtain 1995; Pateman 1988; Picchio 1992; Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas 2014; Waring 1988 Yuval-Davis 1997). However, unpaid labour in the home is essential to the functioning of national and international capitalist economies, insofar as it reproduces

and sustains workers who can then participate in the public realm, in this case military members who can serve their country. A liberal ideology that dichotomizes the political and the public with the apolitical and private sphere of the family and home with which the state must not engage, sustains this dynamic (Gray 2016, 914). It is the construction and maintenance of this dichotomy in which "gender practices in the home are private and apolitical, which has rendered invisible women's labour, and results in male domination of both spheres" (Basham and Catignani 2018, 154). It follows from the gendering of spheres that some labour is deemed relevant to global security practices and others not (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016, 826; see also Elias and Rai 2015). The public/private divide sustains the privilege of men and masculinity in international security through militaries, as well as in the economy and politics more broadly.

In addition to being critical of the public/private divide that constrains and oppresses women, feminists note the ways in which the private sphere and people's intimate lives are mediated by the public sphere for some political end (Allen 1999; Berlant 1998). Undeniably, the public/private divide is fluid and politically constructed. In the military, the public/private divide is shaped by political interests as well as "two interlocking factors: the needs of operational effectiveness and the power disparities between subjects positioned in differential social locations in relation to this operational effectiveness" (Gray 2016, 912). Differently put, the military considers "public," and consequently a matter of military concern, if it serves operational effectiveness. Making "public" the intimate lives of military personnel and their families reinforces unequal power relations. This project pays attention to the ways that the public/private divide is constructed in the CAF and for what political ends. For example, the CAF demonstrates interest in developing resilient military marriages through training and written materials that address solutions to the challenges in military relationships, especially deployment (see Chapter 3). These resources urge military spouses to develop techniques of the self, such as positive self-talk and managing expectations of intimacy after deployment, in order to sustain their marriages. Through resilience training, the military inserts itself into military marriages, blurring the distinction between public and private spheres, because the emotional and physical labour provided by a supportive spouse boosts morale of the service member and therefore contributes to operational effectiveness.

Like capitalist economies, military operations and the (re)production of militarism require an appropriation of the mundane activities in households undertaken by women. The concept of social reproduction is essential here:

> [Social reproduction] refers to the processes involved in maintaining and reproducing people, specifically the labouring population, and their labour power on a daily and generational basis. It involves the provision of food, clothing, shelter, basic safety, and health care, along with the development and transmission of knowledge, social values, and cultural practices and the construction of individual and collective identities. (Luxton 1980, 166–67)

The household is a primary site where social reproduction occurs (Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas 2014, 90). As it concerns military households, spouses, especially women, carry a tremendous amount of responsibility for the reproductive labour associated with military children, the service member, and their communities. The ability to deploy soldiers at the drop of a hat requires that military families, especially "wives," be in a state of constant readiness (Hyde 2016), which means undertaking emotional and logistical work to prepare soldiers and other members of their family for potential troubles associated with deployment (Basham and Catignani 2018, 159–60). Military families are increasingly incorporated into military strategy as partners in the operational readiness of the Troops. This is the rationale behind the CAF's Family Covenant, which was unveiled in 2008 and recognizes the contributions and importance of military families. The covenant's slogan is "the strength behind the uniform," and it acknowledges "the resilience and sacrifices of military families which contributes to the operational readiness and effectiveness of the Canadian Forces" (CFMWS, n.d.(a)). The covenant is a formal incorporation of military families as partners in the operational readiness of the Forces, which normalizes their contributions to social reproduction. As will be seen below, the emphasis on resilience as a requirement of neoliberal citizenship secures this dynamic even further.

Caring or care work is deeply connected to social reproduction. Caring is a relational practice, based on human connection, which has a "strong emotional dimension"; "'caring about' involves paying attention to and meeting the needs of others in some way" (Duffy 2005, 68). In its starkest form, Canadian military families' caring labour is being deployed to prevent and rehabilitate operational stress injuries in service members, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (see Chapter 3). Studies of the impact of

service members' and veterans' post-traumatic stress disorder reveal that their spouses reorder their lives around their husband's illness and needs (Dekel et al. 2005). Military spouses are compelled to undertake this labour because of gendered expectations to care, where care is often perceived as "interpersonal intimacy or love" rather than labour (Erickson 2005, 349). Basham and Catignani argue that emotion work in the military household ought to be "recognized as labour if it is to challenge the gendered scripts that both normalize and conceal women' s emotional work" (2018, 160). As discussed in Chapter 3, the CAF's support for family caregivers of injured and ill members in the form of resilience training, normalizes that this unpaid labour is undertaken on the basis of gendered scripts of care work, such as love, kinship and sharing a home. Discourses contribute to the internalization of gender norms surrounding reproductive labour and care work for militarized ends—for example, enticing military caregivers to acquire resilience because it can improve one's relationship with loved ones, as seen in Chapter 3. Paying attention to the lives of women and their mundane experiences in the everyday "has considerable potential to evaluate the extent to which the goals and practices of the elite have been successful in embedding militarism within the fabric of society" (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009, 157) on the basis of gendered labour practices. Such research involves paying attention to women's everyday care practices in military settings alongside official strategies and policies of militaries, which is a central component of this research.

Neoliberalism

Contemporary markets, state governance, and social interactions are increasingly informed by neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is typified by privatization, commodification, individualization, familialization and the elevation of the markets over the public sector (Brodie 1997, 235-36). Neoliberalism is an exaggerated form of liberalism that extends beyond economic policy and the markets: "a fundamental feature of neoliberal governmentality is not just the eradication of market regulation, but the eradication of the border between the social and the economic: market rationality—cost-benefit calculation—must be extended and disseminated to all institutions and social practices" (Oksala 2013, 34). Progressively, market logics are seeping into state planning, policy

making, and large organizations involved in global politics (Weaver 2010). Simultaneously, the invisible activities of social reproduction that sustain global labour chains (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016, 817–18), such as military/security labour chains, are being reconstituted through a widening and deepening of capitalist market relations into all spheres of social life (Bakker 2007). Gender is central to understanding "how, and on what terms individuals and their households become ever more enmeshed in capitalist social relations" (Elias and Roberts 2016, 788).

Neoliberal policies are characterized by reduced public expenditure and deregulated markets, which require self-sufficiency and the downloading of care work and reproductive labour to the private sphere or the home. Privatizing care work exposes this type of labour to exploitation: inadequate resources provided by the state, low wages, job insecurity, and vulnerability due to its isolated and "invisible" status (Duffy 2005, 66). Much of the downloading of these costs is placed onto families (referred to as familialization), and particularly women, during times of public spending austerity (Elias and Roberts 2016, 791; see also Bezanson and Luxton 2006). For example, a contemporary critique of the state's relationship to the military concerns the lack of adequate support provided to military veterans. In Canada, "the staff of the Department of Veteran Affairs shrank 21 percent between fiscal year 2008–2009 and 2013–2014, while the number of service delivery employees was reduced 28 percent between 2011 and 2014" (Berthiaume 2015). Cuts to programs and services that support veterans are based on the notion that the private sphere will cover care work. This is a gendered assumption based on exploitation of both carers and those in need of care. Militaries are operating as "greedy institutions" (Segal 1986) in new ways: by adopting increasingly neoliberal policies and ethos.

Neoliberalism is a "form of governmentality that produces new kinds of political subjects and a new organization of the social realm" (Oksala 2013, 33). Through neoliberal governmentality, economic rationalities govern all spheres of life, not only the economic sphere but also the social, political, and the private spheres (Lemke 2001, 197). Thus, decisions on "every level and on every issue become subjected to cost–benefit calculations" (Muehlenhoff 2017, 156). Governmentality shapes the subjectivities of individuals who come to identify as economic subjects, or homo-economicus. Jonathan

Joseph argues that "most contemporary social theories contribute to an ontology that renders the world governable in certain ways," and neoliberalism produces responsible, autotomized subjects who are accountable "for governing themselves in appropriate ways" (2013, 40–41). Through appeals to freedom and individuality "neoliberal rationalities make individuals responsible for their own wellbeing" (Muehlenhoff 2017, 158). Notions of freedom, choice, and empowerment are especially powerful appeals to embrace neoliberal logics, and it is through these appeals that military spouses consent to particular gendered orders in military families. Neoliberalism encourages "active citizenship, whereby people, rather than relying on the state, take responsibility for their own social and economic wellbeing" (Joseph 2013, 42). At present, informal networks and relationship are the primary source of adequate and fulfilling support for military families, rather than state-run support. For example, the strategic direction of and culture at Military Family Resource Centres encourages military family members to generate their own sources of support through personal relationships, as we see in Chapter 4.

The economically rational neoliberal subject will overcome the insecurity and instability of capitalism through techniques of self-governance, such as establishing support systems through the market and/or in the private sphere:

> Good subjects will "survive and thrive in any situation," they will "achieve balance" across the several insecure and part-time jobs they have, "overcome life's hurdles" such as facing retirement without a pension to speak of, and just "bounce back" from whatever life throws, whether it be cuts to benefits, wage freezes or global economic meltdown. Neoliberal citizenship is nothing if not a training in resilience as the new technology of the self: a training to withstand whatever crisis capital undergoes and whatever political measures the state carries out to save it. (Neocleous 2013, 5)

Accordingly, the subject that fails to self-govern in such a way as to thrive in capitalism and insecurity is allocated responsibility for their failures. This logic enables familiar discourses of "poverty as a *moral* rather than material form of deprivation, which emerges within particular households in isolation from broader politico-economic structures" (Elias and Roberts 2016, 794, emphasis added). Individual morality obscures political critique of structural insecurity and inequality. Neoliberal morality "individualizes the problems of poverty and [justifies] the need for state intervention into poor and single-parent households" (Elias and Roberts 2016, 794). The limited state will

step in only insofar as it increases the capacity of the governed to be more self-sufficient, which Romain Felli refers to as neoliberalism's paradox of autonomy (2016, 282). The paradox of autonomy typifies the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR), a CAF program that trains military members and their families in resilience so that they can better withstand deployment and separation. The moral evaluation of military personnel and their families takes place informally, through social policing of behaviour, including condemnation of military spouses who leave their husbands while they are deployed, for their insufficient resilience.

Resilience refers to the ability to "bounce back" following adversity, threats, and disasters, and increasingly to thrive in the face of these hardships. Militaries, as well as institutions and organizations, embrace resilience as a policy response and cultural ethos to combat a host of insecurities and challenges. Through resilience, there is a shift away from simply securing a person from risk and uncertainty; instead, people are being conditioned to embrace risks and uncertainty by learning to adapt to it (Reid 2013, 359). By embracing risks as an opportunity for growth and renewal, resilience modifies the subjectivity of actors in global politics (O'Malley 2010, 489). In fact, resilience is now viewed as something that can be "produced, engineered, reinforced and learned" (Felli 2016, 281). Within the framework of neoliberalism, the resilient subject will govern themself so they can withstand military hardships and become improved as a result. Resilience, then, is an essential characteristic of the neoliberal subject. Resilience is also an ethos that compels military families, especially spouses, to continue to support the military, albeit now through internalized pressures to secure their success and freedom through self-improvement. The state, through the military, supports members and families to be self-supporting and resilient to insecurities of military life through programs that train individuals in techniques of the self, such as self-care and positive thinking patterns (Chapter 3), and by relying on their own, private support networks (Chapter 4). The principles of resilience obscure the costs placed on military spouses, including questions of their own unemployment (Chapter 2), caregiving requirements (Chapter 3) and removal from social support networks (Chapter 4). Consequently, military families and spouses are increasingly encouraged to look within themselves and their own nuclear family for their resilience, and it is precisely through logics of

neoliberalism and resilience that these ever-depleting resources continue to be drawn on as legitimate.

Enloe finds that, in an effort to maintain women's support and control over women and their support work, rather than defining women as marginal to the military's core identity, the newest "maneuvre" is "to camouflage women's service to the military as women's liberation" (Enloe 2000, 45). Today, the CAF views the military family as contributors to operational effectiveness and so supports them in their wellbeing. My research reveals that it is through the family wellbeing programs and services that follows from this "partnership" that the reliance on military spouses—their labour and loyalties—are sustained anew. This research engages a feminist curiosity about the link between social reproduction, capitalist and militaristic economies, and their gendered effects (Elias and Roberts 2016, 791).

Dissertation Organization and Outline

This dissertation is organized into four chapters, followed by a concluding chapter. Chapter 1 evaluates the policies, programs, and governance structures related to Military Family Services (MFS). I begin here because MFS provides the bulk of support to military families. MFS was established by the CAF in response to activism by military wives over concern for military family wellbeing and the lack of institutional support provided to them. Since its inception in 1991, MFS has evolved to respond to the needs of modern military families. The institutional supports evaluated in the chapter, beginning with the 2002 Family Care Plan, formalize the downloading of care to individual military families, especially spouses. Simultaneously, military families are allocated responsibility for the success and sustainability of the centres that provide family wellbeing, through expectations of volunteerism and fundraising. Rather than alleviating the burden of care, these initiatives intensify the burden of care placed on military families and spouses.

Chapter 2 examines one of the greatest challenges faced by military families: the employment of the military spouse. This chapter interrogates the CAF's attempts to offset the spousal employment challenges by emphasizing mobile and flexible work options, especially entrepreneurialism. This institutional manoeuvre, which is an example of a

neoliberal market solution, makes the military spouse more available to the home front to contribute unpaid labour to the military, and reproduces a family ordering based on the (male) service member as breadwinner.

Chapter 3 considers the CAF's support for members' and families' mental wellbeing in the form of resilience training. Formalizing resilience, a feature of neoliberal citizenship and military membership, makes individuals responsible for their wellbeing through the acquisition of skills, under the pretext of "support." I argue that the CAF is institutionalizing gendered forms of resilience, where a feminine resilience required of the military family is necessary to sustain the modern version of militarized masculinity, which calls for a different form of resilience. Particular attention is given to the resilience resources provided to military caregivers. Supporting caregivers in acquiring and improving their resilience makes more possible the downloading of care to the private sphere based on a gendered division of labour, and absolves the state of responsibility for the injured member or for providing more robust caregiver support.

Chapter 4 interrogates the ways that military families support one another through informal networks of care in response to the inadequacy of state-provided supports. It considers the labour provided by military spouses to one another, and the ways that neoliberalism informs how these informal systems of support operate. Military spouses develop and sustain micro military communities of care at the intersection of self-care and choice, and through policing the boundaries of who belongs. While shared practices of care among spouses is a way to resist the challenges of military life, by centring female friendship, CAF resources and the community continue to privilege heteronormative formations of the family.

In the Conclusion, I reflect on the themes that run throughout this research, and consider questions for future research at the intersection of gender and military families. The CAF supports families to the extent that they will support themselves, and the corresponding programs and policies are structured on the assumption of a "wife" at home. These dynamics are enabled because of the emphasis on individualism, which thwarts political critique of the continued reliance on military spouses, the gendered divisions of labour, and power structures in military families.

The CAF is at a critical juncture: the institutional commitment to gender equality in the CAF does not translate into initiatives to support military family wellbeing. As will be seen, the CAF continues to rely on the military family as a gendered institution in and through their attempts to offset the burdens of military life, despite an interest in responding to the needs of "modern" military families.

Chapter 1
Formalizing the Gendered Military Family as Partners

> The fact that [the CAF] wants to take care of the family it is very important because if the wife is unhappy the man is going to leave.
> —Spanner, Interview 24

> If they want the member to be fighting-ready all the time, [the CAF] has to make sure that the family is taken care of so that the member isn't worried about them. [That means] access to services or just making sure they're informed and ready. It looks different for everyone.
> —Spanner, Interview 16

> The [CAF] has tried to be more family caring and understanding…[There are] two reasons they do that. One, [the] public eye is on them. Two, they're trying to get the family [to] support [the CAF] a little more…[to reverse] the family's support [for the military, which has been] drifting.
> —Spanner, Interview 19

> [The demand on female spouses] is such a cultural thing right now. My husband is very vocal [against the demands on female military spouses]. [He hears comrades] brag about [how] "my wife does everything *and* she works all day." He'll say, "Well how about you help out more?" It takes so long to change that culture. Most young people are more progressive, [but] there [are] always some who aren't [progressive]. It depends who the louder voices [are]…I've heard [from] more than one person [that] if your commanding officer is a male over 40 [who] doesn't have a family, you're screwed. If [the commanding officer] is not one of those things it's a bit better. It's generational. It's still male dominated.
> —Spanner, Interview 8

To safeguard the loyalty of military recruits, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) pays careful attention to family wellbeing. As outlined in the Canadian Forces Family Covenant, the CAF views the Canadian military family as the "strength behind the uniform," whose service and sacrifices are essential to the operational effectiveness of the Forces, particularly retention, morale, and deployability (CFMWS, n.d.(a); see also National Defence 2017d, 12; Sajjan 2019c). To be effective, the Forces require families to relocate to new postings, endure periods of separation during deployment and training, and manage the risks associated with having a loved one in service. In particular, the military spouse's satisfaction with military life is essential to operational effectiveness

(Dursun, Urban, and Dean 2017). Thus, supporting military spouses is of special institutional concern.

The CAF's consideration of family wellbeing has evolved and intensified through a series of institutional changes, including policies and programs designed to support civilian spouses and families beginning in the 1980s. Indeed, a systemic review of the wellbeing of Canadian military families, undertaken by the CAF's Ombudsperson, found that today's Canadian military families receive unprecedented institutional support (Daigle 2013). In this chapter, I argue that while institutional supports for military families and spouses appear progressive in terms of improving family wellbeing and gender equality, these supports and policies rely on antiquated gendered and, increasingly, neoliberal logics to secure the labour and loyalty of spouses and families to the CAF. The CAF's family-focused initiatives place a particular burden of care on civilian spouses, especially women. This chapter gives specific consideration to the policies, programs, and governance structures related to Military Family Services (MFS) for three main reasons: MFS provides the bulk of support to military families; it was created in response to feminist activism in the CAF by military wives; and it continues to be amended to better serve the changing needs of military families.

This chapter begins with a brief historical overview of the introduction and intensification of family-focused support by the CAF, which has been motivated by an overarching institutional concern with recruitment, retention, and morale. The interest in the wellbeing of military families begins with activism by military wives for improved resources in the 1980s, and results in the institutionalization of MFS. In part through MFS, institutional support for and partnership with military families appear to have intensified as Canada's military commitments and human costs grew, especially through and following the Afghanistan war. Next, the chapter considers the institutional requirement that military members create a Family Care Plan (FCP) in order to access services provided by MFS at Military Family Resources Centres (MFRCs). The FCP, which is characterized by the CAF as support for military families, makes caregiving the responsibility of an individual family member, specifically the civilian spouse, while patriarchal authority over the family resides with the military member. The third section of this chapter evaluates specific childcare programs provided by MFRCs, and finds that

the emphasis on emergency support reproduces, as a cultural norm, the notion that the family will be self-sufficient in the provision of childcare. This burden falls on female civilian spouses, which MFRC programs and culture assume and reproduce. The chapter concludes by considering the governance and funding structures of MFS and MFRCs. With a view to be more responsive to contemporary military families, the governance model of MFS and MFRCs has been revised, the changes of which are being implemented between 2019 and 2021. The updated governance model relies on volunteerism by military spouses to run the centres and to secure non-public funding, on top of federal contributions. Despite an interest in supporting military spouses and families, the present-day institutional initiatives evaluated here leave the care burden in military families unaddressed, while reaffirming gendered dynamics of care and power.

Partnering with and Supporting Military Families

Institutional support for Canadian military families has increased steadily since the 1980s. Many point to the activism undertaken by military wives at CAF Base Penhold beginning in 1984—specifically their founding of OSSOMM (Organizational Society of Spouses of Military Members) and pronounced "awesome"—as the impetus for formal support for Canadian military families. OSSOMM advocated for their perspectives to be integrated into department policies that affect them and for an improved quality of life for women in the CAF, especially military wives. Specifically, OSSOMM campaigned for resources such as dental care, pensions, and childcare assistance, as well as rights, including the right to organize politically on or off base. Canadian military wives threatened to withdraw their unpaid labour in support of the military if these demands were not met (Harrison and Laliberté 1997, 42). Because it threatened to undo the cohesion and effectiveness of the military, the political organizing and advocacy of military spouse groups in the 1980s, such as OSSOMM, resulted in Senate hearings on the question of family wellbeing. In fact, military wives' dissatisfaction, and the risk of losing their support, became a concern for national security (MFS 2016, 2).

OSSOMM's activism led the CAF to produce a series of studies, working groups, and reports to consider how to improve military family wellbeing while also improving organizational effectiveness. CAF leadership was concerned that spousal advocacy and

organizing, resulting from dissatisfaction with military life, would threaten the military chain of command and discipline within the CAF. By reviewing British and American military family associations, the CAF's Study Report on Family Associations concluded that the military chain of command could be strengthened if a family organization committed to military family and community wellbeing was established in partnership and consultation with CAF leadership (MFS 2016, 3–4). The Study Report on Family Associations recommended a consultative relationship between civilian spouses and the CAF on matters affecting family and community wellbeing and new support centres to support military family wellbeing. It further recommended that these commitments be formalized in military policy, particularly Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAODs) (MFS, 2016, 3–4). Alongside the report on family associations, a Family Support Program Project Report recommended that the CAF be responsible for institutionalizing a service infrastructure where civilian spouses and military members would participate in the creation, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of the centres (see MFS 2016). Together, OSSOMM's activism, the findings of the aforementioned studies, and political will resulted in the formation of Military Family Services (MFS).

MFS was established by the Department of National Defence in 1991 as a branch of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services. Institutional approval for MFS was granted on the basis that the military family's contribution to the CAF "called for a bond of mutual responsibility and commitment between the Canadian Armed Forces and military families" (MFS 2016, 4–5). In other words, the CAF acknowledged that sustaining the support provided by military families requires institutional intervention to keep them committed to military life. Today, MFS "ensures that the Canadian military family community is well supported in order for military families to lead positive nurturing family lives comparable to other Canadian families" (MFS 2018). MFS's programs focus on the health and social wellbeing of military families and communities to enhance their quality of life.

MFS delivers its programs locally through Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs). MFRCs are located on thirty-two military bases across Canada[5] and provide frontline services to military families ranging from childcare, deployment information and training, counselling, and education. MFRCs are considered the "heart of their military community" and are committed to "building strong, resilient individuals, families and communities" (CFMWS, n.d.(g)). MFRCs are "family governed, federally funded, provincially or federally incorporated, not-for-profit organization with charitable status" (MFS 2018). Since their establishment, MFRCs have adjusted their programming to respond to the changing needs of military families, including shifting family demographics and increasing rates and intensity of missions, deployments, and training. The onerous operational tempo of the late 2000s, arising from the war in Afghanistan (2001–2014),[6] which involved forty-thousand CAF members being deployed to the region, prompted the CAF to formalize their partnership with military families. This partnership with, and ensuing increased responsibility for, family wellbeing is articulated in the Family Covenant, issued in 2008. As outlined in the Introduction, the Covenant is an agreement between MFS and military families, "underscores the key contributions that families make in enabling an operationally effective and sustainable military force" and reinforces the CAF's "responsibility to ease the burdens of service life of military families" (CFMWS. n.d.(a)).

However, recognizing the military family as a partner in operational effectiveness began to emerge a decade before the Family Covenant was unveiled, in the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA) Report of 1998, titled *Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Armed Forces* (Parliament of Canada 1998). SCONDVA officially linked the contributions and sacrifices of military families to the operational effectiveness of the CAF, with a particular focus on recruitment and retention. The study itself was motivated by the CAF's concern about the decreasing quality and quantity of recruits, as well

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[5] Families posted to the United States and Europe are provided with outreach services by MFS staff. Additionally, the Family Information Line provides counseling and information to military families over the telephone, toll free, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

[6] Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan lasted until 2014, but combat groups were withdrawn in 2011, and the remaining personnel were engaged in training local forces.

service retention, which characterized the mid-1990s. SCONDVA concluded that the CAF had an obligation to enhance members' wellbeing and quality of life because of its relationship to retention and recruitment. The SCONDVA report prompted the creation of Defence Administrative Order and Directive on Families 5044-1 in 2000, which outlines the CAF's responsibility for military family wellbeing in policy.

DAODs are issued by or under the authority of the Deputy Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence staff, and establish the administrative directions of Department of National Defence (DND) and the CAF. Military families are governed under DAOD 5044-1, Families (National Defence 2000). Directive 5044-1 states, "the organization requires its members to place service to country and needs of the Canadian Armed Forces ahead of personal consideration…remain mobile and deployable; and that this may create profound disruption for the families of the Canadian Armed Forces members" (National Defence 2000). The directive acknowledges the contributions and sacrifices made by Canadian military families, and, as such, commits to reducing the negative impacts of frequent family separations and frequent postings on the family. Reducing the impact of frequent separations and postings on military families is achieved through what the DOAD calls the CAF Family Network. The CAF Family Network includes MFS and MFRCs, in addition to military chaplains and base/unit support. The directive formalizes the CAF's commitment to supporting military families, especially in light of "the ever-changing structure, composition and function of Canadian families" (National Defence 2000).

Despite an evolving commitment to improving the wellbeing of military families, alongside a broader institutional commitment to gender equality within the CAF, the contemporary policies and programs associated with MFS reinforce unequal gender within military families. Using feminist international relations (IR) scholarship, this chapter reveals the ways in which militaries and war making rely on the unpaid labour of military wives and gendered power relations within military families (Basham and Catignani 2018; Brickell 2012; Chisholm and Eichler 2018; Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016; Elias and Roberts 2016; Elias and Rai 2015; Enloe 2000, 1988; Goldstein 2001; Horn 2010; Sjoberg and Gentre 2007; Sjolander and Cornut; Taber 2009; Tickner 1992). Current policies and programs in the CAF secure the unpaid labour of military spouses on

the basis of gendered and neoliberal forces, and in turn place an increased burden on Canadian military spouses, especially women.

"Care" and "Caregiving" in the Family Care Plan

DAOD 5044-1, Families, establishes DND's and the CAF's commitment to military families, and in return obliges military members to complete a Family Care Plan (FCP). The FCP was instituted in 2002 as a support initiative for military families. The CAF states that the FCP assists both individual family members and unit operational readiness (CFMWS, n.d.(e)). Specifically, the FCP ensures that care of dependents is in place when the service member has to be separated from his or her family: "[The FCP] assists members with planning for family care needs in the event of an absence for duty reasons; and apprise Commanding Officers of potential difficulties regarding family care needs that may be encountered by some members in the event of an absence for duty reasons" (National Defence 2000). At its core, the plan ensures that service members remain deployable and operational, irrespective of the care requirements of their dependents. The FCP is not legally binding, but is an obligation of all Regular Force and Primary Reserve members who are responsible for family members. Members who fail to prepare an FCP risk administrative or disciplinary action.

The FCP institutionalizes a patriarchal power dynamic in the family: the military service member has principal authority over the family, but is not the quotidian caregiver of their dependents. The FCP Declaration Form, which accompanies the FCP policy, asks members to identify as "not presently responsible for providing care to a family member; or presently responsible for providing care to a family member" (National Defence 2012). Authority over the care of family members resides with one person. When that authority is with the service member, the CAF requires them to create an FCP. While articulating family authority for care as an individual responsibility as opposed to shared responsibility with a partner may open up space for alternative family compositions, such as single parents, the care form instructs the member to delegate care the following way:

> Section B is used to identify the caregiver. It must contain the names of at least two persons or agencies able to care for the family members in the event of an absence for duty reasons. In most cases the first caregiver would be the member's spouse or common-law partner. (National Defence 2012)

Through the plan, the responsibility to care for the family is transferred from the member to (usually) the civilian spouse on the basis of patriarchal authority. The service member holds principal authority over the family, and this authority permits delegation of caregiving responsibility to their spouse when they are required to be away for duty reasons. Such a plan upholds a traditional male breadwinner model of the family. It follows from the FCP logic that once the service member returns from duty, they will resume responsibility and authority over the family. Reintegration[7] of the member back into the home, following deployment or exercise, demonstrates the challenges of renegotiating authority between spouses in military families. One interview respondent, who is both a spouse and a daughter of a service member, reflects,

> Growing up as a dependent[8] daughter, Dad's never home. It's always Mom, but when Dad gets home, Dad's the heavy, but you can't take him seriously because [he's been away]...When my husband goes away, even just for training purposes, two months go by, he comes home and he's still wearing his stripes. I told him the combats stay at the door. There's no rank in this house, and if there is, I'm wearing it. Because, if not, we become troopers, and we're not his troopers. (Spanner, Interview 21)

The FCP secures the CAF's operational readiness by institutionalizing gendered power dynamics in military families. Said another way, the military service member is the paternal head of household who has the authority to make strategic and managerial decisions about the care of their family and to download the responsibility for caregiving of the family to their spouse.

The service member as head-of-household is made possible by the plan's delegation for the daily management of the family to their spouse on the basis of gendered practices of care. The language of "care" in the FCP policy DAOD 5044-1 contrasts to the corresponding FCP Declaration Form that details the service member's plan. The policy, which refers to the service member, defines "care" as being "responsible for providing financial, health care or other support to a family member" (National Defence 2000). Care in this context is tied to the member's employment status,

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[7] Reintegration refers to the period of transition of the service member back into the family home, following deployment or exercise.

[8] "Dependents" refers to military family members who are entitled to the service member's benefits because of the relationship of "dependence." This usually refers to children, as it does in this case, or spouse.

wherein financial security and social benefits, such as health care, are provided because of the member's military service. Conversely, the FCP form delegates "caregiving" to the spouse (usually): "in most cases the first caregiver would be the member's spouse or common-law partner" (National Defence 2012). Caregiving is a feminized practice associated with social reproduction—that is, the unpaid labour undertaken in the private sphere, which is essential to sustaining workforces and economies. Luxton outlines feminized elements of care to include "preparing food, managing shelter and clothing, providing for ill and injured, and transmitting knowledge, social values, and cultural practices" (1980, 166–67). As previously noted, the CAF uses the term "caregiver" to refer to "someone, which is invariably the immediate family living within the household, who provides support to those who are most vulnerable and adversely impacted by particular and extended challenges of military or civilian life" (CFMWS 2019a). The CAF depends on spouses (or specified others) to take up these feminized practices of care to ensure a robust force, whose members may deploy most effectively because they are absolved of caregiving and daily management of the household. A respondent reflects of this requirement:

> I run the house in every way, right down to budget. [I manage] the schedules for the kids, the routine, maintaining the house…this is my universe. [The respondent's husband yells out from the other room] "I'm just another pawn." [The respondent continues] He goes to work and comes home and I do everything else. He does help out when he's home. (Spanner, Interview 15)

The FCP makes official a division of labour in military families characterized by the passage above. Specifically, the military member "cares" through patriarchal authority and financial security, and, because of this authority, downloads feminized practices of caregiving to their spouse. These gendered dynamics and practices of care within military families have profound impacts on employment of the civilian spouse, as discussed in Chapter 2.

At the same time as the FCP institutionalizes a gendering within military families on the basis of gendered dynamics of authority and practices of labour, it is also informed by neoliberal rationalities—namely, the downloading of responsibility to individuals, families, and communities, and discouraging reliance on the state (in this case, represented by the military). Neoliberal policies are characterized by privatization,

familialization, and commodification of social services. Privatization involves the transfer of social services and goods from the state to private markets, unpaid labour in homes, and to communities through volunteerism. Familialization, an outcome of privatization, increases the individual's reliance on families and households, and has gendered implications, including increasing women's unpaid labour (Brodie 1997, 236). The FCP ensures that the service member and their family will not be a burden on the military (both in relation to maintaining the value of the service member as deployable, and in not relying on supports provided by the military, many of which are emergency based, as discussed below) by confirming that care arrangements with a spouse or in the market are secure.

While the spouse or common-law partner of the member is "usually" the first caregiver to be named in the plan, signalling familialization, the names of "two persons, or agencies" may also be listed (National Defence 2012). The market, not the state, fills the gap that would otherwise be provided by the military spouse or informal relationships. Financial resources may enable the military family to fill the caregiving gap. However, outsourcing care work to the market is subject to the military family's financial privilege, which is experienced differently on the basis of the member's rank, and whether the family includes a spouse who is also engaged in paid employment. It is common for military spouses with young children not to engage in paid employment, in part because of difficulty with finding appropriate and reasonably priced childcare (Spanner, Interview 15). Moreover, military families have difficulty accessing adequate childcare due to the unique schedules associated with the military lifestyle, which is characterized by shifting schedules and an inability to plan long term. In most instances, it is the civilian female spouse who feels the consequences of these compounding challenges most profoundly. She is often financially dependent on her member spouse and has limited paid labour choices (see Chapter 2). While balancing income and childcare at the intersection of gender and the market is a concern that many families deal with, military families have particular and additional challenges due to separation and the mobility requirements of military life.

Neoliberalism idealizes citizens, in this case military members, who take personal responsibility for their wellbeing (of the self and the family) and remain self-sufficient in

this endeavour. Not relying on state resources for caregiving in the face of military service becomes tied to one's performance as a responsible military member/citizen. The context, or rationale, of the FCP reminds the member, "adequate personal preparation is critical to the operational readiness and effectiveness of a CAF member" (National Defence 2000). Personal preparation is essential not only to the member's readiness but also for the "wellbeing of the family during such absences" (National Defence 2000). Here the member is made responsible for their professional performance at the intersection of their family's wellbeing, which is secured by offloading caregiving to the civilian spouse. A respondent who is a military spouse, and the child of a military member, reflects on the military member's career performance and the importance of being absolved of caregiving and responsibility for the home front:

> I'm here all the time [taking care of the home]. When my dad retired [he] gave a big speech and said, "I wouldn't be able to do any of this if it weren't for my wife." When the husbands are away, the wives are the ones, the spouse is the one[9], who is at home literally taking care of everything: [paying the] bills, taking care of the home. If you don't have kids, then taking care of the animals and stuff like that. Otherwise you'd have to pay an arm and a leg to have that stuff taken care of. So, yes, 100 percent the family contributes to the Armed Forces. Because [the military member] wouldn't be able to do what they are doing without [the spouse]. [The CAF] will thank you for the spousal support, and say, "we couldn't do what we do without you." (Spanner, Interview 22)

These gendered practices in military families, which are essential to the member's career success, are formalized through Directive 5044-1 and reinforced by the directive's emphasis on personal responsibility. Idealizing the self-sufficient military family is bolstered in CAF documents that stress the importance of completing the FCP, and position the FCP as a manner in which the CAF supports military families. The FCP is consistent with neoliberalism's paradox of autonomy (Felli 2016, 282): the CAF "supports" military members by providing them with the FCP form, which generates self-sufficient members and families who will not need more robust institutional support. That

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[9] Respondents tended to self-correct when using direct gendered terms, such as "wives," which points to powerful logics of "equality" that shape neoliberal ideas and language. As discussed in the Introduction, this research uses the term spouse because the term is consistent with language within and by the CAF, but acknowledges that "spouse" has gendered implications, such as masking power relations. As this respondent's waffling over the terms demonstrates, military spouse means women.

is, through neoliberalism's paradox of autonomy, the state supports citizens only insofar as they will become less reliant on the state.

The "responsible" military member is one who anticipates and plans for caregiving challenges. The inability to overcome caregiving-related challenges is the result of "inadequate personal preparation," specifically the failure to effectively download caregiving responsibilities to a spouse or market. While the directive acknowledges that some situations are "beyond the control of the member," a warning follows: "a member who does not in good faith fully take into account all known family care circumstances in the preparation of the FCP may be subject to administrative and/or disciplinary action" (National Defence 2000). The individualization of social responsibility is achieved by constructing as deviant those who are unproductive and dependent on the state for support (Bezanson 2006, 44). Punishing members who have failed to effectively download caregiving to the civilian spouse or markets (a failed FCP) marks them as deviant. Here, failure to plan for and download family caregiving to a spouse or the market is a moral and character flaw of the member, rather than an institutional problem, which would require collective and political responses. Importantly, the ability to download caregiving responsibility to a feminized spouse prevents the service member from being marked as deviant. Neoliberalism, then, informs the contemporary iteration of militarized masculinity, that is the ideal way of performing gender in military service. The caregiving provided by the civilian spouse is essential to the construction and maintenance of the "good," neoliberal military member who also adheres to gender expectations of service. In this way, the burden placed on military spouses to undertake the majority of unpaid labour, in service to the military, has even greater stakes.

The assumption that the civilian spouse is responsible for caregiving, and of children in particular, is the logic behind the Family Care Assistance—a benefit that a member can access if the caregiving plan outlined in the FCP cannot be met. Family Care Assistance provides financial reimbursement for single-parent CAF members and dual-service couples[10] under exceptional circumstances, specifically "increases in the normal

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[10] Dual-service couples refer to married or common-law partnerships where both adults serve in the CAF.

costs for child care or attendant care when service requires you to be absent from home for 24 hours or longer" (CFMWS n.d.(d)). This benefit is only available to "members who do not have a spouse or common-law partner, or who have a spouse or common-law partner who is also a CAF member and who is away from their place of duty for services reasons" (CFMWS, n.d.(c); see also MFS, n.d.(c)). On the surface, this benefit appears progressive in that it acknowledges and accommodates non-heteronormative families, and is a provision of social support by the military. However, giving financial compensation for childcare only to families of single service members or dual-service couples reinforces that military families normally include a civilian spouse who is primarily responsible for childcare. When there is a civilian spouse as a part of the family, there is no additional compensation to offset caregiving costs, because the assumption is that this will be taken care of in the private/unpaid sphere. The "exceptional circumstance" is the non-nuclear family. It is only when the caregiving void cannot be performed by the military spouse, because she does not exist, that the state intervenes with substantial support. What's more, Family Care Assistance is an "emergency" form of support. When considered alongside the expectation of the FCP outlined above, the Family Care Assistance program's emergency principle suggests that the member will resume being self-sufficient once the "emergency" has passed. Meaning, the neoliberal military member will devise personal solutions to their non-normative family, and corresponding caregiving void, through personal solutions, likely by paying for childcare. The FCP is a significant site of institutional control over the care and authority in the military family, imposing gendered and neoliberal requirements under the semblance of concern for family wellbeing. Completing an effective FCP is the condition under which military families can access childcare services offered by MFS; it is to these supports that this chapter now turns.

Childcare and Military Family Resources Centres (MFRCs)

Completing the FCP is the condition upon which military members and their families may access other services and support provided by the CAF, especially those through MFS at Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs). The FCP and its relationship to institutional resources and programs is an important site of militarization—that is, the

promotion of family dependence on the military for its wellbeing (Enloe 2000, 3) and adherence to certain norms, especially gender norms. The requirement to complete the FCP is a paternalistic policy. As Merguerite Van Der Berg and Jan Willem Duyvendak explain, paternalistic policy is "social policy aimed at supervising and directing lives in return for supporting them, which not only sets the criteria of entrance into social policy schemes but enforces certain behavioural requirements through close supervision" (2012, 562). To participate in the system of support by the Forces, the "criteria of entrance" is for military families to adhere to gendered power dynamics and practices of care, as well as neoliberal principles. This section considers the ways in which childcare programs by MFRCs are informed by and reproduce gendered and neoliberal dynamics in military families. Consequently, the care burden placed on military families, especially women, is reinforced.

The information outlined in the FCP is provided to MFRCs, so that MFRCs may "best assist military families with childcare in times of emergency" (National Defence 2000). The childcare services provided by MFRCs emphasize their emergency childcare services (National Capital MWS, n.d.(c)). The *Emergency Childcare Services* brochure is the first item under "Childcare" on the MFS webpage (MFS, n.d.(a)). Within this brochure, the first "service" outlined is the FCP: "by identifying primary and secondary caregivers who should be contacted in the event of an emergency military tasking, your FCP supports your family in your absence" (MFS n.d.(a); see also MFS n.d.(b)). As discussed above, the FCP represents neoliberalism's paradox of autonomy and downloads the responsibility for caregiving to individuals and families, which has gendered implications and outcomes. In a similar spirit to the FCP, the second "support" outlined in the brochure is MFRC Emergency Child Plan. The Emergency Child Plan encourages members and their families to develop a strategy for emergency childcare, where reliance on the MFRC should be a last resort only: "Be proactive!…Deal with things before an immediate need arises" (MFS, n.d.(a)). The most substantive service outlined in this brochure is the Military Family Service Program Emergency Child Care, which provides "up to 96 hours of subsidized childcare per emergency, to help you address your short-term emergency child care needs" (MFS n.d.(a)). The emphasis on short-term and emergency childcare support by the CAF reinforces the idea that, during

periods of normalcy, the military family does not rely on the institution for support. Instead, under normal circumstances, military families are "proactive" and arrange personal solutions to childcare challenges, such as relying on informal networks. As will be seen in Chapter 4, there is social pressure to create informal networks of support so as not to rely on the emergency services provided by the MFRC. Importantly, the short-term emergency "supports" that are outlined in the brochure are for the express purpose of facilitating "operational readiness" (MFS n.d.(a)). Despite the military's contemporary concern for the wellbeing of the family, Horn reminds us, "below the surface of the military's family programs is the constant awareness that the military is designed to fight wars, not provide social welfare programs" (2010, 67).

Notwithstanding the emphasis on emergency support, MFRCs provide some form(s) of regular childcare services, such as full-time daycare, before- and after-school care, and, most popular among interview respondents, casual care (see Gagetown MWS, n.d.). Many respondents of this study indicate that MFRCs are a "lifeline" because they provide tangible services (childcare and otherwise) as well as emotional support and sense of community, which are especially valued given the instability of military life (Spanner, Interview 6). Childcare services are highly sought by military families because MFRCs understand and are responsive to the unique schedules and needs of military families. As indicated by a respondent, MFRC childcare goes a long way to support military families, offsetting the challenges associated with separation and reducing the labour burdens that fall on military spouses:

> We've been separated four times: courses, then two tours. During deployments I used the MFRC, and relied quite heavily on deployment childcare. It was definitely my sanity saver. Call ahead, go for coffee, get groceries, be a human adult for a couple hours. Especially during the first tour. There are a lot of deployment activities for the kids. (Spanner, Interview 11)

While childcare at MFRCs is partially subsidized, there are limited spots and long waiting lists, and access is subject to difficult eligibility criteria (Gagetown MWS, n.d.). A military spouse reflects on the shortcomings of MFRC childcare services:

> Tuesday I was having a really bad day, the baby has been teething like crazy, my other child was at school, and I needed to get formula and diapers. Normally, I don't leave it to the last minute; I thought there was another bottle under the counter but there wasn't. But she was so cranky. I was like ok, my husband is away right now, and I get respite care. I called to see if I could get the baby in for

just an hour. They said no because they were full…Because of that, who I am, I will never call them again. (Spanner, Interview 7)

In fact, one respondent received notice of a regular daycare spot two years after an initial inquiry (Spanner, Interview 26). Additionally, respondents criticized the MFRC programs for being directed at very young children, at the expense of school-aged children or teens (Spanner, Interview 11). And as CAF members are deployed less, it means that military families are unable to avail themselves of the services that are specifically designed for deployment, even if they are away for other reasons, such as exercise or on course (Spanner, Interview 16).

While the programs and services provided by MFRCs are a great source of support for many military families, they struggle with capacity and to adequately respond to the needs of modern military families (CFMWS 2019e). Scarce resources and reduced public responsibility, characterized by neoliberalism, requires that military families reduce their reliance on MFRCs as the primary source of regular childcare. For example, the Petawawa MFRC (PMFRC) hosted a Childcare Fair in February 2019, a networking event between parents and childcare providers in the Renfrew County area, in response to the number of families having difficulty finding suitable childcare options. Francis Priest, Deployment Support Coordinator of the PMFRC, said of the event,

> We hope that parents are able to meet potential childcare providers, have a discussion about their childcare needs and possibly find or learn of solutions, discuss family care plans for the military families and inform on the variety of services offered in the county of Renfrew, so not just PMFRC. (Rehman 2017a)

The Childcare Fair was framed as institutional support, specifically how to help families implement their FCP: "parents are encouraged to be open to look at various ways childcare challenges can be resolved" (Priest in Rehman 2017a). That is to say, this event devolves responsibility for military childcare away from MFRCs onto individual families, who are called upon to be more flexible and creative in the face of military challenges, childcare challenges, and the private sector. Events like these permit MFRCs to scale back their subsidized childcare services. For example, the National Capital Region MFRC, cancelled their $5/hour babysitting service in the spring of 2019, which generated outcry on the Ottawa Military Spouses' Facebook page (see Tsien 2019). Reducing subsidized services at MFRCs signals a shrinking state and places a financial

burden on military families, who struggle with family income (Vanier Institute 2018, 6). This reduction of subsidized services also informs decisions about spousal employment, as will be discussed in Chapter 2. Events such as the Childcare Fair, which are framed as an institutional support for military families, produces more self-sufficient families by encouraging market-based solutions to challenges that are result of military requirements such as relocation and separation. At the same time, these neoliberal schemes require a militarization of privatized childcare, where the market is responding to and capitalizing on the vacuum of CAF subsidized childcare in service to the military. The consequence of these neoliberal turns is the insecurity of and inequality between military families at the intersection of childcare.

Alongside neoliberal influences on MFRC programing and culture, many of the programs and services provided by MFRCs are produced by and reproduce the association of the female civilian spouse with primary caregiving of children. While gender-neutral language is used in many programs, such as "Parent and Tot," some respondents of this study were critical of the child programs that cater specifically to fathers because they tend to be scheduled during weekends, outside of traditional paid working hours (Spanner, Interview 2, 8, 27). For example, a "Me and My Dad" special event was offered by the Gagetown MFRC on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in April 2017. The description of the event read, "Dads enjoy an outing with the kids (mom gets a break!)" (MFRC Gagetown 2017). Programs for fathers, which are scheduled on the weekends, reinforce the gendered labour dynamics that "dad" engages primarily in paid work and parents as a special occasion. Indeed, "giving mom a break" entrenches the assumptions further.

Gendered performances and expectations of caregiving, especially parenting, in the CAF are evident in its policies and programs as well as in its social fabric and culture. There is a social and cultural expectation that there is a mom at home (Spanner, Interview 26). A popular toy aimed at children whose parent(s) are away for duty is particularly illustrative of gendered expectations in the CAF. Daddy Dolls are promoted on social media, blogs (*While You Were Away* 2014), and the *Canadian Military Family Magazine* (LeClair 2018a) and advertised through MFRCs. The stuffed dolls are dressed in military CADPAT (CAF camouflage pattern) and can be personalized by inserting an audio

message and a picture over the doll's face (LeClair 2018a; see also Huggs to Go 2019). They were once available for purchase through MFRCs, but were so popular that the MFRCs ran out, and can now be purchased through the Daddy Dolls website (Toronto MWS, n.d.). These dolls are simultaneously examples of militarized toys and embedded expressions of gendered meanings of military service and parenting. While the alliterative product name has a ring to it, and the doll can technically replicate any caregiver, including a mom, the name of the doll responds to and reproduces the association between military service as a man's role and sporadic parenting by men. The dolls replace fathers with an inanimate object, while emphasizing their identities as military servicemen. "Daddies," then, are soldiers, airmen, and sailors first, which normalizes their intermittent caregiving in the home.

These dolls are also incorporated into the militarization of the civilian spouse's parenting, as indicated by a Canadian military spouse blogger:

> I realized that they are older now and that might not be considered "cool" but I still loved the idea of having something with his face on it to take on trips, to eat with us, to put into pictures and have fun with so…I ordered a Daddy Doll to have some fun with! This doll is going to be on a lot of adventures with us while their Dad is away and we are going to keep track of them all through photos. (While You Were Away 2014)

Military spouses take on additional labour to fill the void of Dad, and this was a theme amongst the interview data of this research:

> Our child knows daddy's away doing training, but she doesn't know that three months is how ever many days. Three months to her is five years. I have to step up my game and give her more time and give her more of me to try to offset [the separation]. Now at bedtime I read two stories, because she has to read one for daddy too. (Spanner, Interview 7)

Women's emotional and physical labour, which ensures that military fathers are a part of their family's day-to-day activities, is an example of the manner in which gendered labour and roles within families contribute to operational effectiveness.

The male military parent is viewed as exceptional in military culture, which informs men's experiences with MFRCs. Respondents report that it is uncommon to see male parents at MFRCs, if not a cause for concern:

> At MFRCs I don't see a lot of spouses for female members, who are male civilians. I'm sure it happens, I meet very few of them and most of them are former military. Male spouses are almost exclusively members. It was a big shift

> in support when we began offering services when mom was gone, and not dad…The joke was we offer respite childcare in extenuated circumstances…(Although we pushed people to create their own networks and not to rely on it [respite care] by extenuating circumstances)…The joke was if the mom was gone, that was the extenuating circumstance, because male members were completely out of their element. They had no idea what was going on. (Spanner, Interview 10)

Respondents note that, consequently, male parents feel unwelcome at MFRCs:

> I've met one civilian male spouse…We shared a driveway with them. He was a stay-at-home dad because of the cost of childcare. They have three kids. He felt unwelcome, out of place at the MFRC, 'cause it's all women. So we hung out. (Spanner, Interview 1)

A single male parent who was interviewed for this project also had a negative experience an MFRC: he was asked why he was not seeking private care and services for his child because "he could probably afford it" (Spanner, Interview 26). Ideas about gender, parenting, and employment inform the culture of MFRCs, and consequently their service delivery. Certainly, the service delivery at MFRCs is directed at the largest demographic, which is civilian women. However, upholding and reinforcing gendered ideas about division of labour within families is an implicit critique of families that do not fit this mould, such as the single male parent. This raises questions about gender equality within the Forces. Ideas about men's and women's place in the military machinery, demonstrated in part through the MFRC, likely informs ideas about women as service members also. As MFRCs emphasize support to women who are the primary caregivers of young children, the military logic of protection, which contends that men, through their military service, protect the home front where women and children are located, is upheld and reinforced.

Despite its challenges, MFRCs provide the crux of institutional support for military families. Responding to the changing needs of military families is an institutional priority of the CAF. A review of MFS's and MFRC's governance structures and funding schemes has recently been undertaken, with a view to be more responsive to the needs to modern military families. The recommendations of the review are being implemented between 2019 and 2021. The governance modernization of MFS and MFRCs is the focus of the final section of this chapter.

"By Families, for Families": Governance, Volunteerism, and Fundraising

Since their inception in 1991, Military Family Services (MFS) and Military Family Resource Centres (MFRC) have been guided by the philosophy "by families, for families." This philosophy has resulted in a community-based model of governance, where volunteer boards of directors, comprised of majority military spouses, established the strategic direction of each MFRC, and a dual funding structure enabled centres to be eligible for local funding, in addition to federal government support. The governance structure of MFRCs underwent a review between 2016 and 2018, and the restructuring process began in 2019, to be fully completed by 2021 (see MFS 2019). This final section of the chapter examines the implications of the modernized governance and funding structures of MFRCs, which is called the "formalized model of governance." Despite attempts to be more responsive to the needs of modern military families, the updated model of governance and funding structures are informed by principles of neoliberalism, and place increased responsibility on civilian spouses, especially women. Specifically, the implementation of this model of governance renews the reliance of volunteerism by military spouses and calls on them to secure funding to support MFRCs in an ever-insecure economic climate.

The "by families, for families" approach provides important avenues for military spouses and family members to exercise agency and ownership over their support programs and the wellbeing of their communities. In practice, this means a volunteer board of directors, composed of 51 percent civilian family members of full-time serving Canadian Armed Forces members, govern each MFRC (MFS 2017, 9). MFRCs were established as having an arm's-length relationship to the Department of National Defence (DND), as set out in Treasury Board document (#831360). MFRCs are "autonomous employers and managers, which facilitates the protection of personal information and enables MFRCs to be eligible for funding from non-Departmental sources" (CFMWS 2019d, 1). A Memorandum of Understanding between DND and individual MFRCs details their respective roles and responsibilities, and ensures the proper use of public funds and the efficient delivery of the MFS programs by MFRCs (CFMWS 2019d, 1). Just under half of all MFRCs' operating budgets are acquired from non-public sources, such as user fees, fundraising, and grants. Private donations and corporate sponsorship

contribute resources to support local MFRCs. For instance, the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation and EPCOR (Edmonton MWS n.d.(c)) support the Edmonton Garrison's MFRC. In 2016, the total revenue generated by MFRCs was $54 million; $28 million came from public funds, and $26 million was acquired through fundraising and donations (CFMWS 2019e, 25). The former governance and funding structure was lauded by the CAF and MFS because it provided "an effective balance between a community-based program run by volunteer military family members and the demand for accountability in the use of tax payers' dollars" (MFS, n.d.(b), 1).

In 2016 Chief Military Personnel Command established an MFRC Governance Review Working Group, at the request of the Chief of the Defence Staff, to reassess the foundation of the MFS and MFRC governance model. The aim of the review was to determine whether the governance model was "still appropriate in the current Canadian not-for-profit environment; sufficiently and efficiently resourced; and structured to address CAF and family requirements" (CFMWS 2019e, 1; see also CFMWS n.d.(b)). The community and stakeholder consultations component of the review revealed that family voice, flexibility, charitable status, local flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness were strengths of the MFRC governance model; while competitiveness, inconsistency, failure to address the needs of all families, and the reliance on fundraising for sustainability were areas of weakness (CFMWS 2019e, 11). The opportunities for improvement, identified by stakeholder consultations, included partnerships and collaborations, fundraising, family engagement, responsiveness, and adaptability; while threats included inconsistent board composition and capacity, the reliance on volunteers and fundraising, local national competition, and the disconnection between guidance and local authority (CFMWS 2019e, 12). These critiques and strengths highlight the tensions of the neoliberal influences on non-profit organizations, principally the insecurity of funding and reliance on volunteerism.

The new governance structure, the formalized model of governance, maintains the grassroots and community development model of support for families, which characterized the former model. In the spirit of "by families, for families," the updated model preserves military family representation on the Board of Directors of MFRCs at 51 percent; the board will continue to set the strategic direction of the centres; and the

provincially/federally incorporated not-for-profit and charitable status of all MFRCs is upheld. The new governance model departs from the previous one by implementing what it calls "defined stewardship and accountability by MFS and local CAF leadership, in support of MFRC governance and standardization" (CFMWS 2019e, 20). This means that "MFS, as the funder and steward, will establish and monitor standardized Board operational processes including bylaws, recruitment and selection, strategic planning, performance monitoring and outcome measurement; conduct program audits; formalize and adjudicate conflict processes with all stakeholders; establish clear responsibilities matrix and monitor adherence; and will also provide in-depth standardized, ongoing, Board, Exec Director and CO training, orientation and mentorship" (CFMWS 2019e, 20). Importantly, MFS, as the steward, allocates public funds on the basis of the strategic plan and performance assessments of individual MFRCs. In 2018, the federal government committed $6 million over six years to implement the modernization of governance of MFS and MFRCs (see also CFMWS 2019e, 25). The majority of this public funding top-up is allocated to operational restructuring, as opposed to programs for military families, with a particular focus on training (of the board and employees) (CFMWS 2019e, 25).

Despite an interest in "modernizing," the updated governance structure of MFS reaffirms its reliance on the unpaid labour of military spouses in service to the military family community and operational effectiveness. Specifically, military spouses will continue to make up the majority of MFRC Board of Directors. An advertisement for nominations for the Edmonton MFRC Board of Director reads,

> Make a difference in your community. Become a Board Member today! If you are a military family member who is committed to creating resourceful and resilient military families, then a volunteer position as a MFRC Board Member may be right for you. Our MFRC depends on the talents and skills of dedicated volunteers to make guiding decisions. (Edmonton MWS n.d.(a))

MFRC board membership remains a two-year commitment, and tasks include being responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are available to deliver programs and services (fundraising); enhancing the profile of the MFRC within the community through outreach; and setting and monitoring organizational policy and future direction of the MFRC. More broadly, MFRCs "encourage and facilitate the voluntary participation of Canadian Armed Forces families, particularly spouses, in all facets of their operations—

from program planning and delivery to organizational governance and leadership" (MFS 2017, 8). In addition to board membership, volunteer opportunities at MFRCs include, for example, administration, child/youth program support, decorating, deployment support, special events, tutoring, warmline/welcome line, and yellow ribbon merchandise sales (Edmonton MWS, n.d.(f)). The programs provided by MFS at MFRCs are the backbone of institutionalized support for military families, and the voluntary participation of military spouses is reaffirmed as essential to the delivery of these programs.

Relying on the voluntary labour of military spouses to sustain MFRCs is a manifestation of militarization, wherein the labour and commitments of military spouses are shaped by the needs of the military, and this contribution is acquired because spouses' wellbeing depends on it. As Cynthia Enloe argues, the ideal military wife is one who "enjoys unpaid volunteer work; it helps her husband's career and it makes her feel a useful member of the military community" (2000, 164). Indeed, Canadian military spouses who volunteer for MFS at MFRCs are idealized because this contribution serves both family support programs and military readiness: "MFS supports military families so they may lead positive and nurturing family lives comparable to other Canadian families while supporting the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Armed Forces" (MFS 2017, 6; see also Edmonton MWS n.d.(b) and n.d.(f)). The benefits afforded to military families through MFRCs come with the expectation that military spouses contribute to these programs in return. As indicated by a respondent, military spouses internalize the obligation to volunteer at MFRCs and understand it as an inevitability:

> [MFRCs] rely a lot on volunteers. I haven't had a chance to because my life has been pretty hectic with the kids…I would love to volunteer there, especially now that I have an "in." I like what they stand for: that they're there for everyone. (Spanner, Interview 15)

The "by families, for families" philosophy, and its corresponding governance structure, emphasizes that the primary responsibility for contributing to "leading of positive and nurturing family lives" (MFS 2017, 6) is with the civilian spouse, which, in turn, normalizes the idea that their primary responsibility is for the home front and the wellbeing of the family. In essence, maintaining the "by families, for families" structure, and reliance on volunteerism by military spouses, secures the appropriation of women's labour in support of the military.

The dependence on voluntary contributions of military "wives" is not new to Western militaries (see Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 161–65; Enloe 2000, 164). What is new is that securing the voluntary labour of military spouses now involves militarization *and* logics of neoliberalism. The neoliberal principle of individual responsibility entices military spouses to volunteer and secures their ongoing commitment, as the following description of the MFS Program illustrates:

> The community as a whole benefits when members of a community are actively engaged in the life of their community. Since members of a community are often in the best position to know their own needs, true community involvement engages family members in planning, designing, delivering and evaluating services.
>
> The Military Family Services Program supports communities to meet their changing needs and encourages community members to take advantage of opportunities for personal growth and development. (MFS 2017, 12)

The ideal contemporary military spouse is not only one who "enjoys unpaid volunteer work in support of her husband's career, and the community" (Enloe 2000, 164) but who now does so with a view to improve herself, her wellbeing and her quality of life. Individual responsibility empowers military spouses to control their experience of success and wellbeing through volunteerism. The military spouse's obligation to the military community, which was previously motivated by a commitment to her husband and his career, is recast as a personal benefit—namely, the degree of and quality of support the spouse receives in turn. One respondent evokes the cost-benefit analysis of volunteering, consistent with neoliberal logics:

> If you sit on your ass, nothing's going to happen. If I want to be alone, I'm going to be alone; if I don't want to miss people, I will see people. That's how it goes. I'm the type of person who says, "where can I volunteer?" because through volunteering I'm going to meet friends who like the same things [as I do] and will create relationships and support. (Spanner, Interview 24)

Through the neoliberal rationality of a personalized cost-benefit analysis, military spouses calculate their commitments on a return of investment. This dynamic is evident by, and reproduced through, requests for volunteerism, which emphasize personal benefit. For example, the advertisement for volunteers for Military Family Appreciation Day includes a section called "What rewards do I get?":

> Full access to Family Appreciation Days exhibits when off duty.
>
> A free meal.

An opportunity to experience invaluable community service.

A chance to be part of the military community while having fun.

A commemorative Family Appreciation Days volunteer t-shirt. (National Capital MWS, n.d. (a) and (d))

Militarization works alongside neoliberalism, specifically individualism, to secure the support and loyalty of military spouses to the institution, through volunteerism in particular.

The neoliberal principle of individual responsibility, which compels military spouses to volunteer, is reinforced by the neoliberal promise that taking personal responsibility is an *opportunity* for personal improvement:

We are always looking for volunteers to join our team. From the volunteer Board of Directors to the volunteers who deliver our programs and services, each individual empowers the community by taking an active role in ensuring that Canadian Armed Forces family members have the necessary tools to lead fulfilling and productive lives. Volunteering is an excellent way to discover new areas of interest, build self-confidence, develop and improve your marketable skills, and add on-the-job experience to your resume. (National Capital MWS, n.d.(d))

Market logics are meant to entice the military spouses to enhance themselves as an enterprise and market resource through volunteerism. "Personal development opportunities," or some version of this, accompany most content on volunteering for MFS, especially the MFRC board positions (Edmonton MWS n.d.(a); see also MFS 2017, 12). Indeed, many of the volunteer opportunities are framed as an occasion to acquire skills, ones that accompany career growth and enhanced employability. This logic motivates some spouses to volunteer: "I just wanted to do it for [the] experience. I was hoping maybe a job would come a long and they would think of me first" (Spanner, Interview 4). Of course, a feature of neoliberalism is the celebration of workers, especially individual workers (Bezanson 2006, 42) and their productivity and competitiveness. The professionalization and standardization of MFRCs, which accompanies the modernized model of governance, revises volunteer requirements to include "appropriate orientation, opportunities for personal and professional development, and ongoing recognition" (National Capital MWS, n.d.(d)). As professionalization and standardization inform volunteerism at MFRCs, more is being demanded of military spouses as volunteers because they are held to a higher standard.

Notably, the tension of volunteerism as a means to improve employability is that military spouses struggle with paid employment because of the requirements of service life. The CAF operates best when military spouses prioritize the service member's career over their own, to be sure (see Chapter 2).

Employed military spouses threaten the supply of volunteers and the unpaid labour that is essential to keep MFRCs, the military community, and military homes running smoothly. Despite the fact that MFRCs have paid employees to deliver services, there is no policy that commits to hiring military spouses wherever possible within Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS), the branch under which MFS and MFRCs fall. While the CFMWS's 2017–2020 strategic plan pledges to provide, design, and deliver "best-in-class programs and services" to "mitigate underemployment and unemployment due to military relocation," their strategic objective, which address "acquiring, developing and retaining their talent," makes no reference to military spousal employment and/or hiring military spouses (CFMWS, n.d.(j), 10). One's ability to get a job on base, such as with an MFRC, is perceived to be linked to "who you know" and to having the inside scoop about job openings (Spanner, Interview 27). Furthermore, there is a sense among respondents that "outside civilians are hired in favour of military spouses because of the desire to sustain institutional memory" (Spanner, Interview 16) because civilians are less likely to be posted away. The promise of volunteerism as a mechanism to enhance employability is not consistent with CAF policies and its institutional culture, but is invoked to encourage ongoing volunteerism by military spouses.

The maintenance of "by families, for families" in the new formalized mode of governance represents a persistent commitment to neoliberal policies that devolve the responsibility for program and service delivery downward, and absolves the state of responsibility for the provision of social services and welfare (see Bezanson 2006). Volunteerism makes possible the reduced welfare state by relying on civil society to fill this gap, while ideal citizenship becomes tied to the state's unburdening (Rosol 2011, 249). The (re)institutionalization of volunteerism by military family members renews the demands on military families, who are often overstretched by the operational requirements of the CAF, to contribute to their communities. It is worth noting that MFRCs were created to alleviate the burdens imposed on families by military life, and

that military families today seek support from them when they face such burdens. Despite a desire to volunteer, as indicated by an earlier passage (Spanner, Interview 15), volunteering is impossible for some families, given time and resource constraints. Respondents recognize the tension of relying on volunteerism to maintain the systems of supports provided by the CAF:

> I think most spouses are just trying to get through the day, and volunteering is probably more than people can give. Expecting people to volunteer is problematic, particularly if your spouse is away. Sometimes you're struggling just to plough your driveway. (Spanner, Interview 17)

Maintaining the governance principle of "by families, for families," as the new governance model does, enlists the military family member in the provision of her or his own support, thus reducing the need for state support.

The Governance Review Working Group acknowledges that the dynamics of military families have changed since the inception of the previous governance structure, established in the early 1990s. The Working Group's final report recognizes the concerns outlined above and concedes that the "by families, for families" governance principle is difficult to maintain given the contemporary lifestyle challenges of military families:

> Fewer family members have the ability (time and wellbeing) to engage on Boards. The founding principle of Board membership of "by families, for families" is increasingly difficult to maintain as fewer and fewer volunteers are able to fulfill Board roles. Compounding waning volunteer rates is the extent of responsibility required of Board members. Many military families do not want to be "the employer of record" of the MFRC nor do they have the time or professional experience to take on the role. (CFMWS 2019e, 8–9)

These conclusions were substantiated by the consultation phase of the governance review and are evident in interview data of this research, which shows that military spouses struggle to find time to volunteer (Spanner Interviews 5, 15, 17). Despite acknowledging these dynamics, the report states that most military families are "resilient" (see Chapter 3), and, so, the viability of maintaining the "by families, for families" approach is not challenged. Instead, maintaining "by families, for families" is legitimized in the report. The final paragraph of the report reads,

> While the Formalized Model will not address every deficiency of MFRC governance, it will do so in the most cost effective and least bureaucratic fashion, answering many of the concerns raised over the years and throughout the

Working Group's investigation while still preserving the well-founded rationale of MFRC governance—"by families[,] for families." (CFMWS 2019e, 26)

The cost-saving rationale, alongside reduced state responsibility, is consistent with neoliberal policies. Reinforcing the "by families, for families" philosophy renders further invisible the labour required of military spouses in support of the military. However, the contributions made by military spouses are recognized by participants as valuable, and perhaps unaffordable for the CAF:

> It's not like I'm picking up a gun, [but] it's lots of informal work. To represent someone favourably, you'd have to pay someone for that: every time I've been to a spouses' event, go to an organizing committee, or I volunteer, I'm favourably representing my spouse and their involvement in the community. If I weren't there doing it, he'd have to do it himself, or pay someone to do it. There was an article going around a few years ago, [that argued] "I can't afford to have my [military] wife." Because we do all that [we do], he doesn't have to. (Spanner, Interview 16)

The governance review, which cites maintaining the "by families, for families" structure for cost-saving reasons, suggests that the MFS cannot afford the labour provided by military spouses. Although maintaining this philosophy ensures that military families continue to have a voice and a direct impact on issues affecting military families, it also calls on military family members to provide additional labour, on top of what is required in the face of military separation and mobility. In so doing, more responsibility is placed on military spouses, especially in the context of neoliberal markets and culture, which is characterized by increasing work–life balance challenges and personal burnout.

The shared funding structure, characterized by public funds dedicated to MFRCs and local resource provision by MFS, paralleled with non-public sources of funding such as grants, user fees, and fundraising, is maintained under the new governance model (CFMWS 2019e, 21). In the context of neoliberalism, governments increasingly rely on private financial contributions to fill gaps in the provision of social services (see Jung and Harrow 2015). MFRCs have charitable status, which means that they do not have to pay taxes on their income and can issue tax receipts to donors (Government of Canada 2016). Thus, MFRCs are better able to acquire the funds that are required to support military families, on top of what is provided publicly, through MFS. The neoliberal logic behind relying on non-public funds in the provision of social programming is that the devolution of these interventions and responsibilities from the state will lead to more effective

outcomes and be more responsive to local needs. Whereas the charitable sector worked alongside the state in the welfare/Keynesian era, with an emphasis on supplementing social services provided by the state and building state capacity (see Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005), the neoliberal era calls for more charitable intervention to offset the social deficit that is the result of the shrinking state. A respondent reflects on the lack of support from the military, "We're left with companies raising money for veterans and family support groups, and I'm thinking, well why do they need to do that? Why isn't the military?" (Spanner, Interview 23). However, the state is not completely done away with under neoliberalism. Rather, the state "steers, with a focus on policy setting and coordination, while the…delivery of services is devolved to other parties," such as non-profits (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005, 77–78). This is especially true of non-profits that rely on public funds in some capacity, such as MFRCs. As the state "shares" in the responsibility for governance of organizations, they steer its strategic direction and restructuring (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005, 78). The modernized governance model of MFS, which calls for increased oversight of and standardization by MFS over MFRCs (see CFMWS 2019e, 20) upon which the allocation of public funds is based, is evidence of greater institutionalization of neoliberalism than under the previous governance scheme.

Under the modernized governance model of MFRCs, new accountability structures and standards ensure the responsible use of public funds. MFS is now responsible for providing strategic planning direction and templates, and approving funding allocations to individual MFRCs based on strategic plans and performance outcomes (CFMWS 2019e, 21). As non-profit organizations face financial precariousness and increased competition for scarce resources, they ought to rely on business-based models that focus on performance outcomes and measurements. The outcomes-oriented logic, which characterizes neoliberal governance (Walsh 1995), increases competition among non-profit organizations, which are subject to time-limited contracts, increased regulation and accountability, and pressures to meet business metrics (Saifer 2019, 102). The competition among organizations is exacerbated by the reliance on non-public funds, which are subject to market-based fluctuations. Tilcsik and Marquis (2013) describe the "punctuated generosity" of corporate sponsorship in particular, which affects the

reliability and consistency of non-public donations to charitable organizations. Competition for funding among organizations and a "punctuated generosity" of donors results in short-term, precarious programming (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005). A respondent reflects on the relationship between sponsorship and market fluctuations:

> [During] the economic boom…there was a community run [fundraiser]…the first year we were sponsored, so we had flashy shirts, three different water bottles, race chips, we were set. [And there was a] huge BBQ lunch afterwards. Slowly, [and] every year [since] it's getting harder and harder to get sponsors…Times are tough, I guess. (Spanner, Interview 2)

The consequence for MFRCs is that there may be inconsistency within, and between, the services provided at individual centres. In the contemporary economic climate, maintaining a dual-funding structure is also likely to decrease the quality of services and support provided by MFRCs. A respondent perceives that the onus on MFRCs to secure funds takes away from the quality of services it provides:

> I think the MFRC…has a lot of areas to grow...In my opinion, they focus too much on making money and the MFRC is a non-profit organization. They shouldn't be focused on [making money]…If they would stop thinking about it as a profit making business they would have had room for my child on that day when I was having a hard time. (Spanner, Interview 7)

The tension outlined above is that non-profit organizations are required to seek profits in order to deliver services, and this requirement diverts attention and energy away from the organisation's main purpose, which is to serve military families. During the consultation phase of the governance review, the competitiveness between MFRCs for public funds, reliance on fundraising for sustainability, and inconsistency of services were identified as risks and weaknesses of the former governance model (CFMWS 2019e, 11). The revised governance model is unlikely to address the concerns raised in the consultation phase, and will more likely reinforce them. Indeed, an outcome of neoliberal policies is decentralization, which shifts responsibility downward to local authorities. This shift results in increased inequalities between MFRCs because of the variable ability to acquire resources in each community.

Under the new governance schema, individual MFRCs remain responsible for topping up their revenue streams. While the total revenues of MFRCs suggests that public funding accounts for just over half of revenue, some MFRC centres rely more heavily than others on non-public funds:

> Through funding and donations, the [Edmonton] MFRC provides and facilitates support that is essential for families to remain strong members of their communities: A portion of the MFRC's annual funding comes from the Directorate of Military Family Services. The majority, however, comes from fees and fundraising. (Edmonton MWS, n.d.(c))

That is to say, some MFRCs are under greater pressure than others to secure resources. This pressure is placed on the volunteer Board of Directors, with military spouses at the helm. Securing non-public funds in support of MFRC programs and services requires the board members be a representative of, and highlight, the MFRC within the local community. Thus, the governance structure of MFRCs places the additional responsibility on military spouses to ensure that there is adequate funding for their support services. In sum, military spouses are enlisted to provide support services to military families both through unpaid labour via volunteerism and through securing resources through fundraising and grant writing. All the while, the shared funding structure, wherein approximately half of the resources are public, promotes a discourse that the military family is valued and supported by the institution.

It is an express responsibility of MFRC board members to be present in public to "enhance the profile of MFRCs in the community" (Edmonton MWS n.d.(a)). Public outreach is often a characteristic of fundraising initiatives, such as military appreciation at professional sporting events, like the CFL (*Edmonton Sun* 2019), military road races such as Loops for Troops (*Global News* 2019), and charity golf tournaments (MFRC NCR 2019; Villeneuve 2019). Corporate sponsorships often accompany MFRCs' fundraising events, or events put on by MFRCs, generally. For example, the 9th Annual Defence Community Family Appreciation Day, organized by the National Capital Region MFRC, was "host sponsored" by the Bank of Montreal, and received financial support from other notable funders such as Via Rail and WestJet (National Capital MWS, n.d.(a)). In an economic climate characterized by competitiveness and insecurity, securing funds for MFRCs is taking place alongside the militarization of charitable giving. Philanthropy and charitable giving to MFRCs promote and legitimize the military in Canadian society, and this giving is filling the gaps of social service that would otherwise be the responsibility of the state. The volunteer board members are thus engaged in the process of militarizing charitable giving in Canada. Volunteer board

members, especially spouses, are increasingly called on to be entrepreneurial and creative about how to secure funds for their MFRCs and sustain the institutional supports they rely on by being visible as a positive influence in the community. By enhancing the profile of MFRCs in their communities, military spouses are promoting the view that the military is a natural and valuable component of society, and this militarization compels members of the public to provide financial support. Here, neoliberalism is operating through the military spouses' responsibility to secure funds for their local MFRC as essential to the MFRC's survival and the spousal community's wellbeing, at the same time as the public is called upon to offset the social deficit of inadequate state support. All the while, these publicly visible practices of militarization are informed by gender, specifically a spouse who is devoted to the serviceperson's career and the military institution, through practices such as volunteerism. Additionally, putting on public fundraising events require volunteerism by spouses. For example, a volunteer call out for Loops for Troops—an event that raises money for the Edmonton MFRC—asks for volunteers to hand out water; direct runners along the route; direct traffic at intersections where needed; and cook, serve, and clean up food (Edmonton MWS, n.d.(e)).

As members of the public are asked to donate to MFRCs (National Capital MWS, n.c.(b)), as a consequence and requirement of neoliberalism, militarism in Canada is enabled, if not promoted. Charitable fundraising depoliticizes the issues that the sponsorship supports (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005). Many fundraising events take the shape of community events, celebrations, and family-friendly activities, which normalize and obscure the broader ideological interests of the organization. Because charitable giving is often viewed as a practice of benevolence and love for humankind; the love for humanity that accompanies charitable giving acts as a barrier to its critique (Jung and Harrow 2015, 47). It follows that charitable giving that supports military families, such as recreation programs for military children who experience frequent relocation, is about a humanitarian concern for the wellbeing of children, especially those who sacrifice for the nation. This fundraising frame displaces, if not quells, critique of Canada's military missions, defence spending, or gender politics within and around the CAF because the focus is child wellbeing. Therefore, the military as a natural component

of society is upheld—and, in fact, enhanced—through charitable giving, and military spouses are essential in these processes.

Military spouses, through their volunteer contributions, are engaged in these processes of militarizing charitable giving at the same time as they are informing a Canadian national identity. Echoing Chief Economist for Imagine Canada Brian Emmett, Adam Saifer argues that charities and non-profits are essential in the national imagining of Canada: "Charities and non-profits are not case-by-case responses to social, cultural, and environmental problems that come up from time to time. Rather they are a systemic part of the fabric that makes Canada a country in which it is highly desirable to live and to make a contribution" (Emmett 2013, par. 4). In the neoliberal era, citizens are called upon to fill the deficit of state-provided social services, and to uphold Canada's social and cultural "fabric" through charitable giving. Many calls for donations to MFRCs focus on the family sacrifices that are required to enable the serviceperson to defend the country, to uphold "Canada":

> The Invisible Ribbon Campaign raises awareness about the role of the military family, the resilience required in supporting our troops by "wearing the invisible uniform" and pays tribute to the sacrifices military families make in support of Canada." Tickets $150 or $1500 for a VIP table; Scotia Bank is the title sponsor. (Trenton MFRC, n.d.(a); see also Durkin 2019; Trenton MFRC, n.d.(b))

As citizens are called upon to fill the deficit of services for military families, the military's place in Canada's social fabric is naturalized. Military families are an important component of shoring up the military's place in Canada's national imagery, by becoming model Canadians, as expressed by National Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan on International Day of Families:

> Whether at home or abroad, military families not only promote Canadian values but inspire them. Today on International #DayOfFamilies, we celebrate all of those who support the women and men of our @CanadianForces. You truly are the strength behind the uniform. (Sajjan 2019c)

The service of military families "in support of Canada," as the Invisible Ribbon Campaign outlines, may also function to soften the image of the military and further protect it from political critique. As Enloe argues, "women as military wives can help win civilian support and sympathy for the military by making it appear a less brutal or insulated institution" (2000, 157). The rhetoric that encourages people to financially

support military families relies on gendered images of the military family as self-sacrificing and loyal to their serving spouse. Fundraising campaigns, such as the Invisible Ribbon campaign, evokes sympathy for the military spouse, and reifies their marginal, but essential, status in the CAF. The gendered military family becomes a part of Canada's "cultural fabric," which is secured through charitable giving's association with benevolence, and disassociated from politics, power, violence or marginalization.

Conclusion

Providing services and support for military families secures their commitment to the CAF, which the military views as essential to the recruitment and retention of military service members. Despite an acknowledgement that the modern military family looks different than it used to (National Defence 2000), the contemporary policies and programs in support of family wellbeing outlined above reproduce a gendered division of labour and gendered power dynamics in military families that places particular burdens on military spouses, especially women. Through the FCP requirement, an emphasis on emergency childcare support at MFRCs, and the MFRCs' continued reliance on volunteerism by civilian military family members and non-public funds, the CAF reproduces a gender dynamic within military families that reifies neoliberal logics. As the civilian spouse is formally expected to be the caregiver, their ability to participate in the paid labour market is weakened. The next chapter considers the military spouse's difficulties acquiring and maintaining paid work in light of the operational requirements of military life and the gendering of and in military families.

Chapter 2
The "Entrepreneurial" Military Spouse

> We move too much. Military spouses always have trouble with
> employment.
> —Spanner, Interview 1

Military spouses struggle to find and keep adequate, fulfilling employment because of the mobility and separation requirements of military life. Spousal employment is one of the leading causes of attrition of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members (Daigle 2013, 6), and so is of strategic interest to the CAF. The institutional stance, summarized by Minister of Defence Harjit S. Sajjan, is that "by assisting military spouses in securing continuous and meaningful employment, we are helping to make life a little less stressful for military families" (Leclair 2018e). Reducing the impact of military service on the military spouse's paid employment means that service members are more likely to be retained.

Supporting military spousal employment suggests a rewriting of the CAF's ideal military family, previously characterized by a male breadwinner/soldier and female caregiver/military wife arrangement. Research on Canadian military families of the 1990s reveals the prioritization of the member's career required that military wives bear primary responsibility for the home front, a gendered dynamic that was essential to the organizational effectiveness of the CAF (Harrison and Laliberté 1994). Privileging the service member's career, and organizing family labour accordingly, normalizes military service as valuable and necessary, which is an expression and consequence of gendered militarization. By providing employment support to military spouses, the CAF appears to be less reliant on, and expectant of, traditional gender roles within military families. Indeed, attention to military spousal employment expands institutional support beyond childcare, which characterized the bulk of services in the 1990s. This rhetoric, and corresponding institutional support, fit within the gender equality framework that is being pursued by the CAF as an employer.

This chapter examines the interventions the CAF is making to offset military spousal employment challenges and evaluates whether they rewrite the gendered division

of labour required of military families of previous decades. Programs and resources designed to help spouses find jobs include employment databases, such as the Military Spousal Employment Network, career fairs, and skills training such as interview preparation and resumé building. The emphasis throughout these programs and resources is mobile, flexible, and temporary employment options for military spouses, with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurialism. I argue that these "solutions" to the military spousal employment challenge, and corresponding supports, make military spouses— especially wives—more available to continue to "keep the home fires burning,"[11] which (re)produces a gendering of labour within military families. The flexibility afforded by self-employment or mobile work accommodates and makes more possible relocation and separation, which are the conditions of military life that rely on the unpaid labour of military spouses. Securing the military spouse's ongoing loyalty and labour is facilitated by the neoliberal logics that underpin the CAF's spousal employment resources and supports, which privilege market solutions to the political and structural problems associated with military service, such as gendered relations of power. The CAF's resources idealize the military spouse who is independent, flexible, and self-sufficient, making her responsible for overcoming the challenges and insecurities of military life through market solutions. These institutional supports do little to rewrite gender relations in military families and place additional responsibility on spouses who are now compelled to balance military home life with a professional life.

This chapter begins by drawing on interview data to outline the challenges that military spouses experience in acquiring and maintaining fulfilling paid employment. Next, this chapter traces how military spousal employment challenges are informed by and reproduce a gendered dynamic in the military family. The following section builds on the previous one by evaluating the ways in which CAF policies assume a gendered division of labour in military families. Military spousal employment receives little priority in CAF policies, such as relocation and leave policies, which is in tension with the CAF's attempts to alleviate spousal employment challenges through programs and

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[11] This is a turn of phrase in militaries that refers to the ways that women keep the community running while soldiers are deployed. For example, *Home Fires Park* is an art installation at CFB Petawawa, "in honour of those who kept and continue to keep the home fires burning" (Petawawa MWS, n.d.).

resources. The chapter then turns to the CAF's initiatives to offset military spousal employment challenges, which emphasize working for yourself and developing a business that can move with you to new postings. These solutions and institutional supports make civilian spouses more available to prioritize the military members' career and to undertake the unpaid labour that keeps militaries functioning. Despite the allure of empowerment and equality that inform the CAF's initiatives to support military spousal employment, feminists ought to be wary of the power dynamics it conceals and reproduces.

The Challenges of Military Spousal Employment

Canadian military spouses are more likely to be un- or under-employed than other civilians and to make less money than their civilian counterparts (Baldor 2016; Daigle 2013; Dunn, Urban, and Wang 2011; Wang and Pullman 2019). Specifically, 8 percent of military spouses are unemployed (CFMWS 2019e, 7), compared to 5.8 percent of Canadians in the general population (Statistics Canada 2019). The exact rate of underemployment, which is characterized as an "unmet need for paid employment" for reasons ranging from insufficient hours, wages, and over qualification (Canadian Labour Congress, 2014), is unknown. However, survey results indicate that more than half of military spouses have had their careers affected by their partner's military service and have made career sacrifices because of military life (Vanier Institute 2018, 6). And, more than half of Canadian military spouses have taken jobs for which they are overqualified because of military service life (Vanier Institute 2018, 6). In contrast, the majority of two-partner families in Canada consist of both adults pursuing careers for financial and/or personal fulfillment reasons (Daigle 2013; Uppal 2015; OECD 2011; Statistics Canada 2017a). Because of military spousal employment challenges, military families are likely to experience financial vulnerability, while military spouses may lack economic autonomy and/or personal fulfillment.

Military spouses struggle to find and maintain adequate and fulfilling employment because military families move three times more frequently than civilian ones and have little input over where and when they are posted and for how long (Daigle 2013, 2). The transient and unpredictable nature of military life creates obstacles for civilian partners of

military service members vis-à-vis holding down well-paid, meaningful, and fulfilling employment. Military spouses, then, have limited control over the nature and direction of their employment status, which is contingent on the economies of postings locations, including job vacancies, the variety of sectors, and employers' stigmatization of military spouses. Drawing primarily on the perspectives and experiences of military spouses involved in this study, the following section describes their difficulties with paid employment.

Military spouses report being perceived as unreliable employees because of their mobility requirements and primary responsibility for the home front, especially when their family includes dependent children. Respondents experience prejudice from potential employers because of the mobility requirements of military life:

> I was trying to get a job; I just wanted to do something [to] get out of the house. The interview was going fantastic. It was at a golf course, and [the employer] says, "Oh I see you live on base." "Yes, I do." And at this point I know it's coming…"Sorry we don't hire the wives," and ended the interview. Done. Thanks for your time. That's the attitude 'cause of moving. I know legally they can't say that and you can go to the labour board, but do you want to be hired on [at] a place that doesn't want you? (Spanner, Interview 1)

Additionally, employers are hesitant to invest in the professional development of employees who are military spouses: "my executive director thought we would be posted, so she didn't want me to move into a supervisory role" (Spanner, Interview 11).

When military spouses do manage to acquire a job, career progression and professional growth are then challenges. With every new posting, these employees lose seniority and start at the bottom. This is especially the case for military spouses who have professional accreditations that are provincially mandated or regulated, such as teachers, nurses, accountants, and therapists, to name a few. Getting a job in the field for which one is accredited is largely dependent on the location to which one is posted, the specific economy of that base, and the particular time. Consequently, skilled workers who have invested in their training and qualifications may be unable to participate optimally in their chosen field, which results in underemployment and resentment among military spouses:

> In positions like nursing, education, anything of those nature…there are highly trained people…Well, every time you leave, you lose your seniority…[you] start at the bottom every single time…So you've settled in, you get to know everyone, you get into a groove…and then you move again, or you're laid off…We make a

lot of sacrifices to allow my husband, as he jokes around, to "defend democracy."
(Spanner, Interview 23)

To restart a career by pursuing professional requalification in a new province has financial, physical, and emotional costs. These costs are not covered by the CAF's one-time financial reimbursement of relocation benefits, which includes "interview travel" and "costs associated with re-establishing current credentials for the same certification in the new province" (National Defence 2018a, 109). In addition to the relocation benefit, military spouses are directed to an information-sharing website about federal and provincial regulations of professional designations, written by the Labour Mobility Coordinator Group (Labour Mobility n.d. in CFMWS, n.d.(i)).

Military spouses experience employment challenges differently, depending on where their family is posted. Every city and town to which a military member may be posted has a particular regional economy, which impacts spousal employment differently. For instance, there is a sense among respondents that the Maritime provinces' shrinking economies make it extremely difficult for "come from away-ers" to get a foot in the door. This is a roadblock above and beyond a reluctance to hire military spouses because they will leave, or the perception that they are unreliable because of their unpredictable schedules and being the primary caregiver of children. In communities in western Canada, such as Cold Lake,[12] Alberta, the economy is largely dependent on the oil sector. The oil busts and booms have impacted the unemployment rate; at times, there are more individuals competing for fewer jobs. For example, as the price of oil declined between 2011 and 2016, the unemployment rate in Alberta increased from 5.9 percent to 8.5 percent (Statistics Canada 2017b, 13). The possibility of being posted to city or region where they have limited command of the primary language is another concern for military spouses.

The cost of living varies across posting locations, intensifying the significance of military spousal employment challenges. Significantly, 52 percent of military spouses report experiencing a worsening financial situation as a result of relocation (Vanier Institute 2018, 6). When the salary of the service member is the constant, and often

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[12] A handful of respondents of this study were currently, or had previously been posted to Cold Lake.

primary, source of income, a particular family might fare well during one posting but not so well in another:

> When we lived at our previous posting I was a stay-at-home mom. When we moved [to a more expensive place], I was so angry; I felt I had to give up my child's childhood because we were posted here [and] because it's so expensive…I had no choice; I had to go back to work. So I started at [a big box store]…I was really upset. (Spanner, Interview 7)

Moving to bases where the cost of living is high often requires that spouses take paid employment, although that might not be their first choice, just to make ends meet. The cost of housing is particularly important in this regard. Private Military Quarters (PMQs) are indexed to the housing market of the particular city where the military base is located "to ensure fairness and equity for military families, regardless of whether they choose to live in the private sector or in Crown housing" (National Defence 2019a). However, military families are increasingly choosing to live off base, with 71 percent selecting to live in the civilian community (Vanier Institute 2018, 3). Because the local market value of housing varies considerably from city to city, a family's cost of living will change significantly depending on where the service member is posted. The Post Living Differential (PLD) is intended to offset the cost of living for military personnel and their families who are posted to more expensive regions (National Defence 2017a). Participants consistently expressed dissatisfaction with the PLD because it inadequately regulates these variations (Spanner, Interview 2, 7, 15, 21, 25). This might be due to the fact that the PLD is calculated against cost of living in the National Capital Region (NCR), and there are several bases that have lower costs of living than the NCR (National Defence 2019a), which provokes a sense of inequality between military families.

Because military spouses struggle to find and maintain adequate paid employment, coupled with inconsistent costs of living between postings, many military families struggle financially:

> We're pretty lucky, I would say. We're in good shape, but I know lots that do struggle. Absolutely. It's a question of pay, with inflation…If you're brand new to [the] military, you're making peanuts, young families starting out...That girl I wasn't supposed to be friends with [because our husbands have different ranks], I helped her with groceries and stuff because I know they had nothing. Imagine more than half [of] your cheque going to just rent. Here is not too bad, this place is just under $1,000, [it's] reasonable compared to other places we've lived. (Spanner, Interview 1)

When asked what could be done to help military families, another respondent said that more income would help: "He's paid well but it's still tight…Every time I do groceries, I have a list and a budget, and we don't stray from the list…$50,000 for a family of five is hard" (Spanner, Interview 20). Many respondents find it a struggle to live on a single income in today's economy, and most families have to supplement their income somehow.

The isolated nature of most CAF bases complicates military spousal employment and military family financial stability. Many of the bases operate as their own distinct economies and rely almost exclusively on military personnel and families. That means that the bulk of employment opportunities in and around isolated bases are with the military itself, which limit the sectors in which military spouses can seek employment. In this way, the local economy is militarized, wherein military spouses and civilians living around the military base depend on the military for employment opportunities and financial wellbeing. Interview respondents indicate that the "lucky ones" (Spanner, Interview 16) become employees of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, such as Military Family Services, discussed in the previous chapter. Individuals employed on base are considered lucky because they are effectively federal government employees with benefits, relative job stability, decent wages, and transferability between bases. It also benefits the military to hire military spouses in these offices because there is a constant pool of available labour to draw from. More importantly, employing military spouses in roles that support the operation of the military is another way to produce loyalty and commitment to the institution. Consequently, the commitment of the "trailing" spouse (Spanner, Interview 17) is entrenched through paid employment within the institution to which the couple *ought* to be loyal. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, there is no policy requirement to hire military spouses in Military Family Services or related organizations (CFMWS, n.d.(j)), which repudiates the institutional commitment to military spousal employment.

Employment in/around isolated bases is typically in the service industry, focusing on basic needs. It follows that spouses who are trained in specialized fields have particular difficulty and are at risk of underemployment, which is characterized by low wages, casual hours, and underused skills. As stated previously, over half of Canadian

military spouses have taken jobs for which they are overqualified, as a result of military life (Vanier Institute 2018, 6). Underemployment among military spouses is related to being posted to bases where there is little need for their professional and educational experience, as well as employers' hesitation to hire transient individuals. Thus, many spouses have to "dumb themselves down," while applying for jobs (Spanner, Interview 15, 23, 26, 27). Many respondents of this study had experienced, or were currently experiencing, difficulties getting *any* job—even those for which they would be underemployed—despite significant paid work experiences and qualifications. Feminist political economists note that, in this economic climate characterized by globalization, neoliberalism, and flexible work, it is women who undertake the majority of low-skilled service employment, which result in disproportionate precarious employment opportunities and conditions (Peterson 2008, 2010; McDowell 2004). Being far away from urban centres complicates work life for military spouses and leads to the unpopularity of particular postings. Importantly, the likelihood of being underemployed with low wages, makes childcare less affordable, and thereby compounds the dilemmas discussed in the previous chapter.

In my interviews, military family members made a distinction between a "job" and a "career"; a "job" is typically understood as a means to supplement income, while a "career" relates to experience and education as well as a greater sense of personal fulfillment. Taking "jobs" in lieu of pursuing a "career," because of the employment difficulties, is a particular source of frustration among many interviewees:

> I met him and put my life on hold and that was the first time I had ever done that for a guy…I waited tables, I bartended, I worked at a travel agency, did all these things working minimum wage. Really hating my job—hated every minute of it. I felt like I'd made all this progress in my career…There is nothing in this area...[It's] hard having a master's and waiting tables for two years so I could be in the same place as my husband. As far as careers for women go, if your spouse is in the military…it's hard. (Spanner, Interview 9)

Accordingly, few military spouses tend to have careers: "I'd like to say I know a lot of couples where the civilian spouse has a career, but I don't really" (Spanner, Interview 21). Military spouses who were gainfully employed, and in their chosen field, repeatedly and consistently said that they were "lucky," "fortunate," "unique," an "anomaly," and "not like other/the typical military spouse" (Spanner, Interviews 1, 4, 5, 8, 9). Whether

out of commitment to their spouse or a lack of options, the typical military spouse prioritizes her husband's career. Prioritizing careers in military families this way normalizes military service, legitimizes it as a component of society, and reinforces gendered family dynamics, such as being reliant on the service member for household income. The next section discusses the gendered dynamics of military spousal employment.

Gendering Un/Paid Labour in Military Families

The difficulties military spouses face in balancing a career with military life often result in, and necessitate, gendered dynamics in the family, wherein the (usually) male service member is the primary breadwinner and career person, and paid employment by the military spouse is secondary and superfluous. This section describes how the militarization of the family's labour practices are gendered in ways that necessitate the prioritization of a service member's career for operational readiness.

Hanna Papanek's concept of the "two-person career," while dated and classist, is a helpful concept to interrogate and understand military spousal employment. According to Papanek, a "two-person career" is characterized as an "institutional social control mechanism which derails the occupational aspirations of educated women into the non-competitive two-person career" (Papanek 1973, 852). In other words, the female spouse is drawn into the career of the male spouse, which requires that she be committed to and prioritize her partner's career above her own. While Papanek's study focused exclusively on educated women, in a more contemporary sense, the two-person career is a traditionally gendered dynamic regardless of the sexes and/or profession of the conjugal couple. In the military, the two-person career persists by constraining the employment choices of the "supporting" or paradigmatic feminized partner (Merder and Weinstein 1992) through militarization that shapes family un/paid work arrangements to privilege the military member's career. Militarizing labour in military families on the basis of gendered practices and power dynamics endures as military families, especially spouses, internalize the idea that the military member's career is necessary to support the family (Chisholm and Eichler 2018, 12). Because work and career choices are organized to prioritize the military member's career, military service is elevated as an honourable

career, intensifying militarization further. These ideas and dynamics persist through institutional policies and support programs discussed later in this chapter.

Privileging the member's career is deemed by some as a prerequisite to surviving the military life, which operates through social pressure:

> It's funny, 'cause you go to some of the mess functions and you hear some of the girlfriends, and you're like "you're not going to make it"…They have careers, they're making good money, and they're strong independent women with a career. You can't have a career and be an army wife. You can't. There's no give...Most wives work for Tim Hortons, do janitorial work, or clerical work…But it's generally not a career…Do we have any big CEOs of corporations married to an army corps? No. Because it doesn't work that way. Nine times out of ten when a woman gets a career, where she's making the money, he leaves the army. (Spanner, Interview 21)

In some instances, the structural inequality required of military families results in the disintegration of the nuclear family:

> Our divorce was a directly a result of military life. I deployed three times in five years. We were supposed to be posted elsewhere…She was an accountant. Like most spouses, unfortunately, she had to take a tier-two job, making minimum wage plus a buck an hour. Her appetite for another twenty years of that quickly dissipated. (Spanner, Interview 26)

Resisting the whole family approach to military service, per the two-person career, results in attrition of the member or dissolution of marriage.

In light of postings and scheduling demands of the military life, the difficulties military spouses face in finding and maintaining gainful employment is compounded when the military family includes dependent children. The feminist political economy critique of the division of labour, wherein care and reproductive labour remains the primary responsibility of women or the feminized spouse, continues to be relevant. Military spouses are especially constrained in this regard because of the unpredictable nature of military schedules. Military members can have irregular hours, and their schedules might not be known in advance. The precariousness of military schedules becomes apparent when speaking with a single-parent service member:

> I was getting ready to quit the military, and trying to get a job 8-to-4 to get a work–life balance going. (My trade [requires me to work] at night and go away on weekends.) So you are constantly trying to find trustworthy people to take care of your kid, so that you can go do your job. [My schedule] was, weather dependent…I could try and plan but I was working on a twenty-four- to thirty-

> eight-hour schedule window. If I knew the following week's schedule, I was on top of the world. (Spanner, Interview 26)

Similarly, in two-parent families the primary responsibility for children typically falls to civilian spouses. As such, their employment choices are further impacted because they must be flexible. Meg Luxton argues that despite the fact that Canadian families are increasingly challenging gender divisions of labour in the home, women continue to carry the majority of this responsibility even when they are employed full-time in the labour market (2011, 13; see also Armstrong and Armstrong 2010). This idea is supported by quantitative data, published by Statistic Canada, which shows that men have not increased their participation in unpaid labour to the same extent that women have increased their participation in paid work or decreased their participation in unpaid work (Moyser and Burlock 2018, 4). Put differently, despite more equitable share of unpaid labour in the home between men and women, women in Canada continue to undertake the bulk of unpaid work.

That the (usually) female civilian spouse is primarily responsible for dependent children is a theme that cut across every conversation in this study. There continues to be an assumption in the military workplace that "there is a wife at home" among military families and military chains of command (Spanner, Interview 8). This assumption also shapes ideas about who will take leave to care for a sick child or parents:

> It's me. That's why I ended up staying at home for now, and making my own business…If he's gone, what are you going to do? It's easier for us. Our life is planned that I do it all and if he's home it's a bonus. (Spanner, Interview 1)

Many respondents identified falling back on a gendered division of labour out of necessity. V. Spike Peterson calls the disproportionate responsibility for the home in war economies the "feminized privatization of survival," wherein women are called upon to do more than their share in the household (2010, 277). While this conceptualization refers to households in ongoing conflict settings, it is nonetheless helpful for thinking through households involved in war making more broadly. "Surviving" conflict, regardless of the proximity to the conflict itself, necessitates the downloading of this "survival" into the private sphere, where it is taken up by feminized labour. The feminized privatization of survival is relevant in the context of financial survival for military families, where

military families organize their un/paid labour around the income and career of the service member.

The expectation that the "wife," who is primarily responsible for unpaid care work, is at home continues to inform the service member career performance:

> I have a girlfriend of mine, her husband is at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) doing training and she's working front line for social services, so has a hard job. She has several kids. And he's getting flak from his professors for missing time. Like who cares if you're not at the third class? [He can] get the notes from someone. She's like, "No. My career is number one, too." They are equal. There is no one and two; it's one. So she's having a hard time…That's the civilian life versus a military life. (Spanner, Interview 2)

Military service members who have a wife at home to undertake unpaid labour are perceived as doing better in their careers than those without a spouse at home. Yet, as passages such as the one above illustrate, this reliance is being destabilized or at least criticized within some families and between some military spouses. Indeed, these work-life challenges also characterize civilian families, but are reinforced through military policies discussed below.

That the military member's professional performance is dependent on having a "wife" was apparent during an interview with a single male service member who is the primary caregiver of children. Following his divorce and becoming the sole caregiver, the member suffered career setbacks, evaluation reprimands, and indirect forms of humiliation. He reflects on his experience pre- and post-nuclear family:

> Oh, it's stark—night and day. We had just done personnel review briefings—part of your evaluation process. I was told I was merited for promotion, that I was this most wonderful guy, and I was short-listed for new jobs later on. Months later, after we split up, I said [to my boss], I can't do this. Back when I was married and had the stereotypical nuclear family, I was this dependable guy who could come to work at all hours because I had a dutiful spouse at home. [My spouse] just had enough; I don't want to make her sound bad. When I went in, needing help [from the CAF], I was no longer that dependable person. The military cut me in a hurry. I went to the bottom of the list. That's why I said I wasn't accommodated; I was tolerated. I was considered disloyal. I had my boss's boss tell me that I wasn't showing enough moral courage. (Spanner, Interview 26)

The expectation of loyalty to the military in the face of family demands means that the male service member must "do what was expected, which was let the boy go live with his mom and I get on with my career" (Spanner, Interview 26). Here, military service

requires that the member be relieved of parenting by a feminised spouse. Tying this ability to the member's moral courage reveals how powerful such a requirement continues to be in the CAF.

Fusing military moral courage with not being a caregiver to children remains a component of militarized masculinity in the CAF, despite attempts to be a more gender-equal organization and its expressed concerns for family wellbeing. This version of militarized masculinity, which refers to the ideal ways to perform gender in military service, requires that military members be pardoned from the primary responsibility for caregiving. Consequently, military members report being encouraged to internalize the attitude that they are "being selfish choosing to be a single parent, rather than a good officer" (Spanner, Interview 26). In the aforementioned example, the single male service member was told by his boss that "things would be better—he just had to remarry and things would be ok" (Spanner, Interview 26), revealing deeply held beliefs about the normative military family, at the intersection of sexuality, caregiving and employment. Militarized masculinity in this instance is incompatible with being the primary caregiver of dependents, especially for the male-identifying member. These cultural expectations raise questions about women's genuine integration into the military as service members because of their relationships to mothering and caring.

The single-parent service member challenges the military's male, heteronormative requirement that service member be absolved of the primary responsibility of dependents. It was this gendered dynamic that forced single mother Sub-Lt. Laura Nash to choose between her son and her job in the military, a scenario that received wide national media attention in 2017 (Brewster 2017). Sub-Lt. Nash's operational requirements were so demanding that support by Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) and extended family members did not sufficiently cover the care deficit for her immediate family. Specifically, Nash was given a deadline to complete a training program, which required her to be separated from her son while there was no one to care for him. The consequence for not completing the training program by the deadline would be loss of her job. The CAF did not grant Nash more flexible work accommodations, such as a training deadline extension or childcare assistance, and she was forced to leave the military. Nash reported knowing three other female service members who gave up custody of their children in

order to continue serving (Brewster 2017; see also Falvey 2017). Cultural expectations of gender powerfully reinforce the notion that the duty to care is essential to femininity and that this responsibility ought to be prioritized by women. When women do not live up to socially prescribed feminine ideals, they are disciplined for being less than feminine through social stigma (see Chapter 4 for more on the latter). Appropriate provision of reproductive labour is essential in the construction of the "good" mother in the contemporary West (Beagan et al. 2008, 662; Boeri 2009; Ristovski-Slijepcevic, Chapman, and Beagan 2010, 480). Discourses of ideal motherhood contribute to women internalizing gender norms connected to reproductive labour and care work. However, gendered norms of motherhood come into conflict with career questions, especially in the military because of its privileging of masculinity. Nash's decision to keep her child "tore her up," driving her into a deep depression and suicidal ideation (Brewster 2017). Nash has launched a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in relation to the discrimination faced by single mothers in the CAF. The CAF is being accused of "dragging its feet" and delaying hearing this case (Brewster 2019). Nash's case is associated with a debate about who is in the best position to care for children and how responsibility in families and by employers contributes to care for children, especially in the CAF.

Many single service members who are primarily responsible for caring for dependents get by with the help of extended family members. Relying on grandparents is an extremely common theme among the interviewees. Otherwise, single military members will leave the military because the competing demands between family and work are incompatible: "You can't raise a child on your own in the army, you can't…You're gone" (Spanner, Interview 21). Thus, when there is no unpaid labour within the military family—immediate or extended—the solution is to rely on broader structures of the nuclear family, such as grandparents. Relying on the nuclear family, per familialization, is a response to the neoliberal restructuring of the economy that has reduced social support systems, including state-funded childcare. Familialization functions by compelling individuals to internalize self-sufficiency and autonomy instead of relying on support from the state (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of institutional

support for childcare). When there is no recourse through private support, the outcome, as it was for Laura Nash, is to leave the military.

The gendered division of labour within military families is complicated when both individuals in a conjugal relationship serve in the CAF as military members, known as dual-service couples. There is consensus that, among dual-service couples, with or without dependents, at some point, one member will put their career on the back burner so that their spouse can climb the ranks (Spanner, Interview 3, 18, 28). Many factors contribute to this phenomenon—namely, job availability in particular trades and the requirement of having spouses under different chains of command. Typically, the higher-ranking individual with the more specialized trade takes precedence because there are fewer places for that person to go (Spanner, Interview 3). There is agreement among respondents that when children are included in a dual-service couple's family, and the couple is heterosexual, the female service member sacrifices her career progression to fulfill domestic responsibilities (Spanner, Interview 17, 19). As a result, it is often the female service member's military career that suffers in a heterosexual dual-service couple:

> We're worried about [having children]. My wife is advancing in her career quickly, and she knows she'll miss time. But she did say, if she had a career course come up while she was on mat leave, I would take over paternal leave if I didn't have anything going on…She definitely has career goals but she knows— she's very feminist—it affects women's careers. People say it doesn't affect it, but it does, it does. Taking a year off. You're behind. I know lots of [dual-service] couples where the husband is higher rank and its definitely 'cause [the wife] took the time off. (Spanner, Interview 18)

The gendered division of labour between dual-service couples influences decisions around parental leave and childcare in general. The struggle between career progression and balancing family life, especially for women, is not unique to the military. Yet one respondent of this study suggests that the career compromise between spouses is more pronounced in dual-service couples than among non-dual service couples because of the mobility requirements for the military career:

> If you are succession planned or moving up a rank, it's very unlikely that your partner is going to be able to do the same thing because you're going to need to focus that energy and moves based on the succession plan so that other partner has to make the decision not to go for that. (Spanner, Interview 3)

Reports of this dynamic among dual-service couples lend support to the idea that having a "trailing" spouse (Spanner, Interview 17) is the preferred family arrangement in the military. Indeed, several CAF policies concerning employment reinforce the expectation of a "trailing civilian spouse," whose primary responsibility is social reproduction, and their employment status will be marginal to the ideal military family. These policies are discussed in the next section.

CAF Policies

Despite rhetoric of gender "progress" in the CAF concerning family wellbeing and gender equality, and exemplified through an interest in resolving challenges related to military spousal employment, the breadwinner model of the military family persists. One respondent notes,

> There's an attitude [by the CAF] that while you're going to be moving around, you won't have a career, you'll do transient work, or you're going to stay at home with the children…Whether you are male or female…you are the following, trailing spouse. (Spanner, Interview 17)

A gendered division of labour in military families is formalized in military policy, specifically through relocation benefits and leave policies. These policies contradict efforts by the CAF to reduce the challenges of military spousal employment, which are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

The CAF's Integrated Relocation Program Directive is the primary policy document governing moves of Canadian Forces members and their families. The document outlines what military members will be compensated for when they move their dependents and household goods and effects. It includes a House Hunting Trip (HHT) and a Destination Inspection Trip (DIT). The HHT is a five-day, five-night entitlement designed "to secure accommodation at the new place of duty with the intent of ensuring a door-to-door move, thereby reducing the interim lodgings, meals, and miscellaneous expenses, and eliminating unnecessary storage in transit costs" (National Defence 2018a, 51). The goal of this benefit is to expedite the move of the service member, such that they can resume their job as soon as possible, and to reduce the military's financial costs of doing so. Despite the fact that the military spouse is entitled to be reimbursed for taking

an HHT, either with the member or alone, there are no entitlements to cover the cost for lost wages of civilian spouses:

> The house-hunting trip was stressful. I was teaching full-time then and I didn't want to leave my class for a whole week. I took three days. Three days with a sub [substitute teacher] is still a lot. I left him here to deal with the inspection and the paper work. It was really stressful to decide in three days. My employer was okay: they accommodated my personal days for leave. I paid for the sub [for my class]. (Spanner, Interview 8)

Omitting reimbursement for lost wages of military spouses means that the military views the military spouse's financial contributions to the military family as incidental, if not irrelevant. Here, the military spouse's employment status and contributions are marginalized by the CAF, both within the family and the institution. The suggestion, and real implication, of the HHT entitlement is that the military spouse will prioritize the service member's career through a willingness to relocate and take care of the home front through this process—that is, choosing and purchasing the home. Moreover, the HHT entitlement implies that any career sacrifice that results from this process is inconsequential. The level of priority the CAF places on spousal employment is stark when considering that the HHT entitlements cover items such as pet care but fails to cover lost wages of the military spouse.

Relocation benefits outlined in the Integrated Relocation Directive also include entitlements for a DIT, which covers "up to three days and three nights at the new location for the Canadian Forces member or spouse," in order to "visit the new place of duty and provide the opportunity to inspect the replacement residence; inspect purchased property; finalize school arrangements; arrange specific medical requirements/specialized care; or make administrative arrangements related to the pending relocation" (National Defence 2018a, 51). However, the DIT's purpose is silent on a crucial consequence of a mandated move: the employment for the member's spouse. The omission of spousal employment in the purpose statement of the entitlement is an especially interesting omission in the context of the core benefit, which entitles the member *or* spouse to a DIT. Taking these two things together, the underlying suggestion is that the military spouse may take on the administrative tasks associated with moving the home front, but will not prioritize seeking employment for themselves. It is gendered in the manner with which it incorporates women's unpaid labour and yet excludes and subordinates them from full

recognition and support from the CAF (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 14). Accordingly, this part of the policy (re)produces an idealized, traditionally gendered form of the family: the masculinized service member is primarily responsible for finances, while the feminized civilian is responsible for the domestic management of the household and family members. The sentiment in this policy revives the postwar welfare state model of social governance, which calls for a male breadwinner and a dependent female caregiver who might participate in the labour market herself but only secondarily or unnecessarily (Brodie 2008, 168).

As a whole, the Integrated Relocation Program Directive is not silent on the topic of spousal employment. Rather, the policy provides reimbursement for several spousal employment services, such as "interview travel up to a maximum of three days/two nights, and costs associated with re-establishing current credentials for the same certification in the new province" (National Defence 2018a, 102). However, spousal employment is not prioritized in the policy document. These entitlements are outlined two-thirds of the way into the directive, and are found on the list of "Sundry Relocation Expenses," which includes other items such "connection and disconnection of electronics and services; changing drivers licenses; and postal expenses, such as mail hold" (National Defence 2018a, 99–102). Spousal employment is listed second last on the list of "Sundry Relocation Expenses." Moreover, the word "sundry" means "of various kinds; several; various items not important enough to be mentioned individually" (Oxford 2017). Otherwise stated, spousal employment does not merit a category of its own and, moreover, is placed in the same category (but further down the list) as tedious tasks such as changing one's address. Additionally, entitlements for services related to spousal employment are not integrated into other parts of the policy. For example, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12, which outline the limitations and enhancements of benefits with respect to "Moves to and from an Isolated Post," and "Moves to and from Outside Canada," respectively, make no additional mention of spousal employment. It stands to reason that spousal employment in isolated and/or international posts may involve different and additional concerns, as discussed in the first section of this chapter. The ancillary manner in which spousal employment is addressed in this policy promotes a culture wherein military spouses prioritize their partner's paid employment over their own.

The CAF's leave policies also reproduce and rely on the expectation of a "wife at home," which informs the military spouse's ability to participate in paid employment. Unlike federal government employees (TBS 2018), there is no leave with pay for military service members for the express purpose of family-related responsibilities. Instead, family-related leave is covered in "special leave (relocation)" and "compassionate leave" (National Defence [2009] 2016), both of which are exceptional leave statuses. Special leave for relocation is intended to "resolve administrative matters arising from the compulsory relocation" (National Defence [2009] 2016, 46). Compassionate leave is more frequently used to address family-related matters. However, its purpose is to address "urgent and exceptional" issues, such as "death or critical illness of a family member" (National Defence 2016, 64). Respondents report that taking compassionate leave can result in career setbacks for the service member (Spanner, Interview 15). Thus, the day-to-day care for dependents is not officially integrated into the leave categories for military service member. A respondent, who is a teacher, reflects on this frustration:

> If I miss work, not only do I not get paid, I have to plan for someone else to do it. The amount of time I've taken a sick kid into work to drop off a lesson plan is ridiculous. I don't work at a job [that if I'm away for the day] someone else will do it. [My husband said] "If you don't like [it] complain to the Ombudsman then." So I did. [My husband was] mortified. [The Ombudsman] said [that] it is a pretty common complaint among working spouses that if [the] kids are sick that they're expected to take the day off and make up for it. [The CAF says] sometimes operational requirements take precedence. That's fine, I understand that. But most of the time [operational requirements] don't [need to take precedence]. [It would be] helpful [to have] family days…even a couple [of] days [to] take away a bit of the stigma. [The CAF] doesn't really have allocated sick days either. [There is a] big assumption in the workplace that there is a wife at home, which isn't always the case. (Spanner, Interview 8)

The omission of a policy that addresses family-related leave, such as caregiving for dependents by service member, institutionalizes a gendered dynamic of care and paid employment in the military family and thus contributes to the military spousal employment challenge.

However, stigmatizing military members who take a greater share of the responsibility for the home front is lessening, perhaps due to the implementation of parental leave for men in the CAF. Parental benefits were:

Introduced in 1990, enabling fathers to take 10 weeks of leave related to the birth/adoption of a child; this was extended to 35 weeks in 2001; and in 2010 the eligibility window to take leave was increased to 104 weeks after the birth or adoption of a child to account for the unique scheduling requirements of military services member [e.g., exercise, training, deployment, emergency return to work]. (Rehman 2015)

There is a sense among respondents that more men are taking parental leave (Spanner, Interview 6, 8, 15, 16, 23). CAF statistics indicate that since the initiation of thirty-five-week parental leave in 2001, the number of male military service members taking parental leave doubled from 1,212 to 2,400 members between 2003 and 2013 (Rehman 2015). This trend is mirrored among civilians (Lero 2015).

Respondents are divided as to whether parental leave for the military member is encouraged or discouraged, and whether there are career ramifications for military members who take parental leave. In some cases, there is the impression that parental leave is "completely normal" and "strongly encouraged" (Spanner, Interview 13). In fact, one interview took place in the home of a civilian female while her husband was on parental leave—taking the maximum entitled leave of nine months. Many respondents point to the financial benefits of having the serving member take parental leave because they are entitled to 93 percent of their salary (National Defence 2017c). There is recognition that it makes sense for the service member to take leave, to help at home, especially if civilian spouses are not themselves entitled to leave benefits, which are exacerbated by the spousal employment challenge. Conversely, several respondents suggest that the stigmatization of men taking paternity leave persists, playing out in the form of jokes, humiliation (Spanner, Interview 2), and informal reprimands, such as being passed up for good opportunities (Spanner, Interview 9), which is substantiated by the experience of the single-male service member previously mentioned (Spanner, Interview 26). Like many things in the military, the attitude about parental leave appears to be largely dependent on the chain of command, the culture of the unit, and the nuances of particular trades. To be sure, organizational culture takes a long time to change. Importantly, there is consensus among the participants that parental leave, particularly paternal leave, and the "recognition of the male parent," is a positive step forward in recognizing more modern family arrangements (Spanner, Interviews 5, 9).

Despite a resistance among respondents to the gendered division of labour and a prioritization of the service member's career, there is also a sense the military could not function any other way, which points to effective processes of militarization wherein the military spouse arranges their labour and lives around the needs of the military. One military spouse notes, "putting the military career first is one of the reasons my husband can be successful" (Spanner, Interview 11). Several military spouses indicate that resisting gendered dynamics of labour is fruitless, causing only trouble for themselves, the service member, and their family (Spanner, Interview 2, 5, 13). In essence, capitulating to these gendered dynamics is done with a view to survival. In the spirit of neoliberalism, which charges individuals with their own successes and failures, many military spouses adapt their participation in paid employment to the needs of the military and their families, per militarization. Entrepreneurship and/or flexible and casual employment is viewed both by individuals and the institution as a solution to the military spouses' employment challenge. It is to this issue that the chapter now turns.

"Solving" Military Spousal Employment: Developing the Entrepreneurial Self

With a view to ease the burdens that service life imposes on military families, the CAF provides programs and resources to offset the challenges of military spousal employment, which focus on mobile and flexible paid work options. The most recent initiative is the Military Spousal Employment Network, launched in November 2018, which includes employment and entrepreneurship programs for military spouses. The network is a "self-directed resource where military spouses can directly access employers and employment opportunities, with tools such as online job boards and virtual career fairs, with participating employers located in multiple locations across Canada" (CFMWS, n.d.(h)). It "aims to offer equal employment opportunities to military spouses/partners, and when possible, explore flexible work options to maintain employment" (CFMWS, n.d.(h)). The employer partners in the network operate nationally and virtually. Part of the appeal of this network is that the resources and programs can be accessed online, which offsets the mobility challenges of military life. At the same time, the network promotes flexible and casual employment opportunities, which are compatible with military life and its scheduling challenges. The military spousal support programs and resources provided by

the CAF are designed to accommodate the unique demands of military life, particularly military mobility and frequent separations. The prioritization of operational requirements is demonstrated most clearly by the CAF's recent emphasis on entrepreneurialism as a solution for military spouses who experience employment challenges.

Entrepreneurialism features prominently in the institutional supports and public relations strategy of the CAF, which aim to recruit and retain the military family alongside the service member. Resources include workshops, financial resources, and mentoring. For example, entrepreneurial programs include a two-day "entrepreneur training camp" offered by the University of Ottawa's Telfer School of Management and held at local MFRCs (CFMWS, n.d.(c)). Additionally, Military Family Services offers a virtual training program called Helping Entrepreneurs Reach Complete Success (HERCS). HERCS "seeks to empower its participants to create businesses of all types, especially 'portable' businesses which can be easily relocated due to postings" (CFMWS, n.d.(f); see also Leclair 2018c). The CAF prioritizes entrepreneurialism as a solution to military spousal employment above others. For example, the employment resources component of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services' website lists "Entrepreneurship" as the first out of four silos of support, before a job database and community partner programs called Job Seekers, and the recently launched Military Spousal Employment Network, described above. And military events, such as mess balls, are frequently used to highlight the goods and services provided by military spouse-run businesses (Spanner, Interview 22).

Although the CAF does not explicitly define entrepreneurialism, most references to it in the related material include phrases such as "self-employment" and "running your own business." Generally, entrepreneurialism concerns the investment of capital and autonomy of employment, both characteristics that are firmly rooted in "neoliberal ideals of self-sufficiency through the market" (Boeri 2018, 158). Importantly, as it concerns this study, there is a distinct fusing of the military's understanding of entrepreneurialism with mobility. To have a business that "moves with you" is particularly valued in the CAF's materials on spousal employment, as evidenced by rhetorical questions such as "Why start over if you have a business that can move when you do?" (CFMSW, n.d.(c)). The Morale and Welfare Services branch of the CAF, which provides the majority of

employment resources, characterizes entrepreneurialism "as a viable option for many military spouses and family members…Many military family members have successfully transported their respective businesses with them as they move from posting to posting" (CFMWS, n.d.(c)). Home-based businesses, then, are idealized because of their portability. For example, stories of successful military spouse entrepreneurs, featured in the *Canadian Military Family Magazine*, highlight the portable business opportunities offered in the virtual world (CFMWS, n.d.(c)). Similarly, a five-week program offered by the Gagetown MFRC in 2018, titled Blog 101, helped military spouses get their websites off the ground. The Facebook event advertisement invites would-be participants to "Be your own boss and have a career that travels with you, anywhere you go!" (New Brunswick MFRC 2019). The sessions at this blogging event were hosted by successful bloggers: home décor and DIY specialist of *PMQ for Two*; and a food and lifestyle blogger for *Fork and Fantasy*. Respondents of this study recognize the emphasis that the CAF is placing on supporting home-based employment among military spouses:

> The MFRCs are really trying, [for example] the METs program[13]. However it's with the attitude that spouses must be, are expected to be, a transient, working from home, doing the home-based work…There's a lot of emphasis on connecting people and promoting the people who run those types of business. (Spanner, Interview 17)

In other words, the CAF is intent on promoting mobile businesses among military spouses, so that military spouses can acquire and maintain paid employment, while remaining amenable to the needs of military relocation and more. While only 8 percent of military spouses are self-employed (CFMWS, n.d.(c)), there are strategic reasons for the CAF to pursue this type of support for and solution to military spousal employment challenges. As the military family becomes more accommodating to the requirements of military life, the employment of military spouses is being militarized, under the semblance of institutional support.

The militarization of spousal employment is obscured because of its intersections with equality, choice, and empowerment, which, in this case, are associated with

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[13] The Military Spousal Employment Initiative (MET) offers casual employment opportunities to military spouses in the federal government and otherwise, in the form of inventories and pools. These inventories and pools are for casual employment, meaning work that does not exceed 90 working days within one department (see Government of Canada 2019a).

employment and entrepreneurialism in particular. Self-employment is idealized for its supposed liberating potential. Entrepreneurialism frees one from the constraints of working for someone else, being held to certain rules and schedules, and contributing to projects, ideas, and priorities that are not "ours." The flexibility of working from home, and for oneself, also offers a "solution" to military spouses who are faced with frequent relocations and who are primarily responsible for the home front because of the military member's prolonged absences. It may empower military spouses to have more control over their lives by reconciling the demands of military life with a career, while also providing an identity outside of "military spouse." Indeed, military spouses are often cooperating with and perpetuating the privileged position of the military in their lives by reordering their choices, such as employment, in service to military requirements. Increasingly, employment choices are also a question of financial survival, as discussed above. Through mobile entrepreneurialism, military spouses can have the "best of both worlds": a stable home life and a fulfilling career.

Modifying the institutional approach towards military spouses, such that their labour and commitment remain intact and in service to the military requires ongoing adaption. As previously mentioned, when militaries begin to lose control over the loyalty, labour, and talents of women who are striving for autonomy, militaries search for alternatives, which "camouflage women's service to the military as women's liberation" (Enloe 2000, 45). Indeed, the supports for military families provide the conditions that foster their unpaid work (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 72). Securing the spouse's commitment to the service member's career, and procuring their unpaid labour, is camouflaged as institutional concern for the spouse's empowerment through paid work. At the same time, entrepreneurship—working for oneself and having a mobile job—is celebrated as empowering, a notion that is ostensibly consistent with a wider institutional commitment to gender equality.

The militarization of military spousal employment is happening alongside the influences of a neoliberal privileging of market-based solutions to the political and social problems that inform military life generally and spousal employment in particular. The CAF promotes entrepreneurialism among military spouses because it accommodates the requirements of service life by making spouses responsible for governing themselves

appropriately—namely, by developing the enterprising self. Here an exaggerated embrace of free market capitalism is presented as the manner through which to overcome the burdens and employment challenges of military life. Entrepreneurship offers a promise of financial and personal success because the market is expected to reward hard work, merit, and competition. This is the logic behind "success stories" of military spousal entrepreneurs published in the *Canadian Military Family Magazine*. These stories highlight military wives who are "successfully running their own businesses while managing military family life" as inspiration (CFMWS, n.d.(c)). Tamara Stephen, for example, "paved her own way" and found a job to fit her "nomadic life as a military spouse" as a contract virtual office administrator (Middleton 2014). Framed by neoliberalism, the experience of military life is an individual project that can be enhanced through appropriate self-governance and improving the self. The CAF's information on "Entrepreneurship" begins by asking, "Thinking of launching a new business? Curious about how you can be self-employed and improve your military family lifestyle experience?" (CFMWS, n.d.(c)). The allure of equality and empowerment is that it individualizes success, but also, dangerously, failure. In that spirit, the entrepreneur "success stories" warn, "while it may not be easy, it can be done" (CFMWS, n.d.(c)). The responsibility to overcome the challenges of employment in service life is placed on the spouse who must dismantle the conditions of their constraints by becoming more adaptable and productive in response to these constraints through market solutions.

The appeals of empowerment and freedom for the military spouse, which underlie the CAF's spousal employment supports, disguise the ways in which employment practices are being manipulated for militarized ends. Military spouses are best able to continue to be the strength behind the uniform and keep the home fires burning if the paid employment they choose is mobile and flexible. While there might be a great deal of agency and empowerment for the self-employed, mobile military spouse, this labour is structured around the prioritization of the military-career person. It is militarization's fusion with neoliberalism that obscures the gendered division of labour because of the emphasis on individual freedom to choose. Per neoliberalism's celebration of freedom and autonomy, those who embrace entrepreneurialism as a solution to constraints have been empowered. The tag line for an event that educates military spouses about the

benefits of self-employment reads, "A dream starts with a choice to make one small step in that direction" (Leclair 2018b). Within the framework of neoliberalism, military spouses "are viewed as freely making a choice about how to manage family and [paid] work, in isolation from the social structures that shape their working lives" (Wilton 2017, 198). The social structures that shape military spousal employment choices are informed by gender and militarization, specifically the needs of the military "man" and operational effectiveness. This dynamic is being reinforced through the modern approach to military spouses' paid work, empowering them to take up paid work, so long as their labour serves the military first. It is more accurate to say that military spouses are choosing entrepreneurialism, especially mobile self-employment, out of a number of limited options—options that are constrained through militarization.

Effective militarization, wherein families prioritize the military's needs and organize their lives accordingly, requires the cooperation of spouses. Although processes of militarization can look like collaboration—a dance, as Cynthia Enloe puts it—the dance is being performed by unequal partners (2000, 10). The irony is that as military spouses embrace entrepreneurialism, in part because of its promise of freedom (of authority, schedules, and tasks), they become more bound by the power and influence of military requirements and ideas. Militarization is operating when military spouses opt for jobs that move with them because these "decisions" have been shaped by and privilege military life. Moreover, these decisions and their outcomes do not challenge military service as the privileged career and centre of the family's financial security. This modern version of militarization, operating through spousal employment support, becomes more profoundly entrenched because of the compounding influence of neoliberalism. Disguised as empowerment, spouses internalize an individual responsibility over their employment success, and relatedly, their happiness in military life, which requires them to be more amenable to military constraints.

Gender and Home-Based Work

The neoliberal basis upon which entrepreneurialism and mobile paid work is pursued as an institutional solution to the military spousal employment challenge obscures, and makes possible, its gendered dynamic. The language used by the CAF to address spousal

employment challenges is gender neutral, despite the fact that the majority of military spouses are women and that the military spousal employment challenge is informed by gendered divisions of labour. Thus, military spouses and the corresponding employment problem as a gender issue is rendered invisible, both at the institutional and individual levels. The erasure of gender from the military spousal employment challenge is buttressed by notions of "equality" that are at the core of entrepreneurial myth, which promise success for those who works "hard enough" via the market. Hila Keren argues that the potential success of women in the markets, via entrepreneurialism, supports and fosters the idea of postfeminism: "that the days of gendered inequality in the commercial sphere are over; and that women (especially of the younger generation) can be liberated and emancipated from the restraints that limited earlier generations, precisely because of their opportunity to succeed through entrepreneurialism" (2016, 84). Through the CAF's spousal employment supports, the market is seen as the cure to both gender inequality (albeit this is not recognized by the CAF in relation to military spousal employment specifically) and the stressors and strains of military life. Now the "problematic state of affairs is reconfigured and turns from an obstacle into a business opportunity" (Keren 2016, 89). The challenges of military life, and a gendered division of labour that contributes to spousal employment difficulties in the first place, are refigured into an opportunity.

Entrepreneurialism offers military spouses, and women in particular, the opportunity to balance their career aspirations with their domestic duties, which are central to keeping the military functioning. By embracing entrepreneurialism as the solution to the mobility and separation requirements of military life, the military spouse reconfigures her working life around her role as military spouse. Here the identity of military spouse—and the needs of the military—takes priority through the accommodation and flexibility afforded by entrepreneurialism. In the CAF's prioritization of entrepreneurialism and home-based work, spouses who are "mobile and malleable, infinitely energetic and ambitious, living in the present and ready to adapt to the immediate demands of changing markets" (Taylor 2015, 184), and especially the immediate demands of the military, are celebrated. The commitment to and identity of

military spouse subsumes other interests, priorities, and identities, including a career identity.

The CAF's spousal employment programs make possible the ongoing gendered division of labour that has long contributed to the organizational effectiveness of the Forces, through modern tactics that appear to distort gendered divisions of labour in families. Self-employment, especially a job that "moves with you," blurs the boundaries between public and private, work life and home life. Traditionally, the home is categorized as private—the site where women undertake unpaid, feminized labour. The home also plays an important function in the gendered discourses of war, wherein the home front, as a feminized space, ought to be protected. Much of the appeal of working for oneself is the flexibility of being able to move freely between "work life" and "home life," and dictating where one begins and one ends. Because entrepreneurialism and home-based employment is a "spatial phenomenon, which involves building businesses around the sociospatial routines of daily care" (Taylor 2015, 177), these work practices become informed by and reinforce a gendered division of labour. Natascia Boeri argues that because of the gendered construction of "work" and "care," engaging in paid work from home intensifies women's social reproductive roles (2018, 160). Certainly, women are more likely to cite "domestic issues" as motivation for starting a business because of the competing demands they face in relation to paid work and family, all of which is informed by gendered expectations of paid and unpaid labour (Duberley and Carrigan 2013, 629; Jean and Forbes 2012; Rouse and Kitching 2006; Walker and Webster 2007, 125).

The gendered dynamics that are reproduced by working from home are likely more profound for military spouses, given the unique requirements of military life and the gendered characteristics of militaries and war making. Thinking through the celebration of flexibility in the CAF's employment solutions lays this bare. The flexibility afforded by entrepreneurialism and home-based employment makes military life more tolerable for military families, and, as a respondent notes, encourages buy-in to these solutions to spousal employment problems:

> Good thing I can work anywhere. I make perogies. I have a cookbook that made it to [book stores]. I sell them out of my home, [and a grocery store] picked them up as a product…I have to be able to work from wherever we are. We move too

much. Other spouses always have trouble with employment…I only want to work casual so I can work around [my husband's] schedule. Last year he was gone 263 days. This year won't be much better. I have to be able to have flexibility with him. (Spanner, Interview 1)

By emphasizing flexible and mobile paid work options, the CAF is responding to the needs of an overwhelmingly female spousal population and their challenges associated with family caretaking and paid employment, alongside the social reproductive labour requirements of the military. Thus, this "solution" both makes possible, and reacts to, an already embedded gendered militarization of labour in military families. As Vicky Schultz writes,

> Indeed, the whole point of flexible work options is to "accommodate" women's greater involvement with childcare and homemaking by providing more flexible arrangements for family caregivers…The arrangements of the new economy are not simply responding to, *but are actively producing*, new family dynamics and patterns, as individual families struggle and even reconfigure to adapt to employers' demands for flexible, on-call labour. (2010, 1215, emphasis added)

The promises of entrepreneurship as a solution to balance domestic responsibility, and military life in particular, with paid employment are likely to increase the labour expectations of military spouses, especially women. Research suggests that entrepreneurs are "more likely to experience long working hours, and conflicts around space and time which result in 'tension and stress' and also reduced returns and survival prospects" (Taylor 2015, 177). This finding is likely exaggerated for military spouses, who experience long separations from their partners, which call for a greater share of domestic labour, and frequent relocations. As CAF employment programs and resources privilege flexible employment opportunities, they make more possible the reliance on informal and unpaid reproductive labour undertaken by military spouses. In fact, they might be placing more burdens on military spouses than previous schemes of militarization because of the celebration of military spouses who now balance both "work life" and "home life."

The tension that underlies the supposed flexibility of balancing home and work life—an already gendered dichotomy—is evident when the requirements of home and work come into conflict with one another. Marylyn Carrigan and Joanne Duberley (2013) use the metaphorical framework of "triaging" to understand how female entrepreneurs and home-based workers negotiate between home-life and work-life conflicts. Typically, "triage" refers to the management and allocation of scarce resources in the context of

health care, disaster, or battlefield (Carrigan and Duberley 2013, 98). They find that civilian female entrepreneurs' triage choices involve an "ethics of care," wherein the needs of the family and the good for the greatest number of people, are prioritized over that of the individual (Carrigan and Duberley 2013, 102). Triaging in the context of scarce resources and competing needs of individuals and institutions involves a sacrifice, usually financial or emotional. This prioritization is a moral exercise that, for women, disproportionately invokes an ethics of care (Carrigan and Duberley 2013). In civilian spaces, the "consequences arising from the decision to leave a work or domestic responsibility unattended to are unlikely to be a life or death moral question" (Carrigan and Duberley 2013, 98). For military spouses, however, this temporal and resource conundrum *is* likely to be a question of life and death, informed by questions of mental health and operational stress injuries, outlined in Chapter 3, or a question of financial survival:

> [At first] I didn't work. I stayed home with the kids for my husband's first tour. I had a nervous breakdown when he was gone [and I] realized that I have these four little humans that I would need to provide for should he not come back. During his tour, I decided I would go back to school, and as soon as he got back from his tour, that's what I did…I had a moment, we lost a soldier and it was a distant friend of ours, and it dawned on me then it was a possibility. (Spanner, Interview 11)

It is the unique needs of the military, informed by questions of life and death, which make the military spouse's triaging a moral question. Of course, as military spouses redirect their resources towards home life, they normalize military service, including its life or death consequences, as a necessary if not a valuable component of society. They simultaneously normalize spousal provision of unpaid labour in the name of operational effectiveness.

The flexibility afforded by entrepreneurialism reproduces the circumstances that make employment challenging for military spouses in the first place. The root cause of the military spousal employment challenge is the unpredictable nature of military life, including erratic schedules and frequent moves. By producing an evermore adaptable and flexible military spouse through entrepreneurial programs and neoliberal ethos, the CAF *enables* the ongoing, unpredictable nature of military life thereby reproducing the conditions that constrain spousal employment. The unpredictable nature of military life is

facilitated by gendered ideas of labour dynamics within military families, which requires that the spouse not prioritize their paid work.

Centring entrepreneurialism and mobile paid work options as a means to overcome military spousal employment challenges renews the male breadwinner model of the family, because through this work military spouses are likely to remain economically dependent on the service member. Research on entrepreneurship, including freelancing or running small businesses, indicates that workers "suffer from uncertain incomes, fragile career trajectories and general precarity" (Taylor 2015, 174). Female entrepreneurs in particular tend to be found in low-skilled, low-paid occupations, and suffer the greatest earning penalties because of the gendered requirement to balance paid work and family (Ahl and Nelson 2015, 275). The majority of self-employed individuals earn less than the regularly employed, and their earnings fall faster during recession (Taylor 2015, 177). Indeed, CAF spouses who are self-employed or flexibly employed make less than those who work part-time in more traditional settings (Wang and Pullman 2019, 59). Furthermore, the self-employed are less likely to contribute to a pension and have fewer secure benefits, such as parental leave.

Home-based businesses are likely to be relatively small scale because of the effects of frequent relocations. Small-scale businesses are characterized most prominently by the popularity of home-based direct sale schemes in the military community:

> I can throw a stone [from my PMQ] and hit twelve *Scentsy*, *It Works*, or *Avon* sales reps. (Spanner, Interview 15)

A direct sales business, such as *Scentsy*, refers to products sold directly to a consumer in a non-retail environment by "independent sales consultants who are affiliated with a direct selling company and receive commission on sales but work for themselves" (D'Antonio 2019, 3). The sales person acquires the goods from the manufacturer and sells the goods to the consumer, often from their home and/or car. This business model is pitched as a means to empower employees, especially women. For instance, *Avon* identifies as a company that has been empowering women through economic independence since its creation in 1886—which they stress is long before women had the right to vote (Avon 2017). Direct sales businesses developed to capitalize on the social relationships between women in their homes and the sale of feminized products, such as

Tupperware, which improves the lives of women as homemakers (D'Antonio 2019). Participation in direct sales businesses provide some military spouses with a great degree of fulfillment:

> When I was due to go back [to work after maternity leave] I was already pregnant [again]. [The pregnancy] was not planned…and we knew [that my husband] was going to Afghanistan. [My former job was] retail, [and] I'm not getting 9-5 [shifts], [and] I can't get a babysitter at eleven or ten o'clock at night. We decided I'd stay home. Now I stay at home and sell [direct sales]. I love it. It's been three-and-a-half years. When I joined I said, "I don't want a team, I just want to sell." Everyone knows I can sell. Now I have 26 on the team. I've been on 3 trips with the company. (Spanner, Interview 6)

While direct sales can be lucrative for some military spouses, these businesses are also saturating the market among military communities:

> [Most military spouses work] part time, casual, or they kind of run their own [business, such as] *Avon*, *Scentsy*, that sort of type…which I'm not going to do because everyone does it [and] I'm not that much of a seller anyway. (Spanner, Interview 13)

Direct sales businesses in isolated communities and saturated markets, such as military bases, pit entrepreneurial military spouses against one another:

> When you're in Petawawa, you can't have everyone having a *Scentsy* business. (Spanner, Interview 17)

Moreover, some respondents report that they do not have the disposable income to purchase the goods from these sellers, because of the challenges at the intersection of employment and household income (Spanner, Interview 15). Research on direct sales businesses reveals a lack of significant and sustainable income and social mobility for sellers, the majority of who are women (Lamoreaux 2013). Most direct sales representatives work part time, amounting to less than ten hours a week (Collamer 2013), and many lose money because of the multilevel structure of the organization, which requires sellers to purchase the good up-front (Sole Smith n.d.). Indeed, an interest in consuming the goods tends to motivate many sellers to join these companies, because as sales consultants they can purchase the products at reduced rates (D'Antonio 2019, 6). Finally, starting up a business requires an initial investment of capital, which presumes a degree of financial freedom at the outset that might be out of reach for military families because they tend to earn less than civilian families (Baldor 2016; Daigle 2013; Dunn, Urban and Wang 2011). Said another way, entrepreneurialism may not be the liberating

and empowering solution it is made out to be. Wendy Brown reminds us that "inequality, not equality is the medium and relation of competing capitals…when we are figured as human capital in all that we do and in every venue, equality ceases to be our presumed natural relation with one another" (Brown 2015, 38). Put differently, per neoliberalism, one's success is likely at the expense of another's failure; in the context of the military one spouse/entrepreneur's success is at the expense of another.

Although self-employed military spouses are contributing to the family economically, they are likely to remain entrenched in social and cultural constructs of the economically dependent military spouse whose financial contributions to the family are superfluous. That is to say, home-based employment or entrepreneurialism does not "contradict social norms regarding women's economic participation" (Boeri 2018, 169) or their participation in, and contribution to, militaries. The paid work solutions promoted by the CAF do not defy gender norms because, through entrepreneurialism, women's economic status is not likely to result in intra household power (Kantor 2003). Patriarchal norms around wage earners in the family have particular meaning for the (re)production of militarized masculinity, because the military member as primary breadwinner necessitates a reliance on the military member and the institution by the spouse for economic wellbeing. A respondent notes the importance of making her husband feel needed, economically and otherwise:

> Those who can't make it…you have to be so flexible. When I talk to my coworkers about life, they're blown away 'cause I'm a planner and I'm organized but with my husband's [career] I can't plan. Flexibility [is] paramount. [You need to] be independent and switch gears right away. And be dependent again because my spouse needs that, he needs to feel needed. (Spanner, Interview 11)

Through economic dependence of the military spouse, the military is assured of the family's loyalty and the provision of unpaid labour in support of its operational effectiveness. It follows that the male breadwinner model of the family, where the military service member's career is at the centre, is upheld and (re)produced as the CAF privileges mobile home-based businesses as the solution to spousal employment difficulties.

In this contemporary moment, where military life is characterized by the fusing of neoliberalism and militarization, the military spouse who develops the entrepreneurial

self for the purpose of thriving in military life—both in the context of employment and resilience via military life generally—is idealized. As a result, military spouses who are not engaging in employment solutions that reconcile military requirements as a form of self-governance are marked as deviant:

> The neoliberal project's constant effort to romanticize entrepreneurship comes at the expense of those who work hard every day, not to fulfill themselves or their passion, not to become rich, but merely to survive on a day-by-day basis. The more glamorous the images of female entrepreneurship…become, the more ordinary female workers are trivialized and marginalized. Women presented themselves as empowered and that they did so by constructing the figure of the oppressed, "other" woman as a passive victim of patriarchy. (Keren 2016, 112)

It follows, then, that the military spouse who is not doing enough to reduce their employment challenge is less deserving of support and appreciation. Privileging the entrepreneurial military spouse has a moralizing impact, which produces inequalities between military spouses. Of course, "successful female entrepreneurs are most often represented by white middle-class women, and contrast against those reliant on social support, often represented as racialized, lacking self-control, and discipline" (Wilton 2017, 198). The consequence of the individual and competitive approach to spousal employment via entrepreneurialism is that military spouses cease to be understood as a collective, with the potential for political struggle. Within such a regime, gender inequality among, and within, military spouses is depoliticized, and the adage of the personal is political, and in this case the personal is international, "is inverted and hollowed" (Keren 2016, 199). That is to say, military spouses are reduced to individuals, whose "politics" become a question of capital, markets, and individual solutions. Accordingly, there is little space to consider the structural inequalities that inform the experiences of gender subjects in families, especially military ones, and in the market, especially entrepreneurs. Where military spouses are compelled to invest in themselves as entrepreneurs as a means to liberate themselves from the insecurities of military life and markets, they become more useful to the military. The CAF's employment supports and resources for spouses celebrate neoliberal principles. Accordingly, the social reproductive labour provided by military spouses, and the gendering of military families, are being secured in new ways.

Conclusion

The CAF's efforts to offset military spousal employment challenges suggest a rewriting of gender labour expectations in military families that are more compatible with modern family arrangements. However, privileging mobile paid work and self-employment for military spouses upholds the gendered work practices within the military family in new ways. While the military spouse may contribute financially to their family, entrepreneurialism and mobile employment do not dismantle the military spouse's availability and responsibility to provide unpaid labour in support of the military; rather, it secures it. These militarized manoeuvres operate through neoliberalism, which celebrates empowerment, choice, and the market as solutions to social and political constraints associated with service life. Consequently, neoliberalism conceals the cunningness of contemporary militarization of Canadian military spouse's lives. Alongside the CAF's employment supports that sustain and reinforce the gendering of unpaid and paid work in military families is an expectation that enhances the spouse's ability to keep the home fires burning: resilience. The next chapter looks at the institutionalization of resilience, and its gendered implications for the member and family.

Chapter 3
Thriving under Pressure:
Gendering Resilience in the Canadian Armed Forces

> We need to continue striving for a type of excellence that goes beyond technical proficiency or treating each other with dignity and respect—those are just minimum requirements. Because our operational success depends so heavily on the individual character of our people, I count on all of you to approach everything you do with a warrior mentality of resilience, courage and esteem.
> —General Jonathan Vance, Chief of Defence Staff, Canadian Armed Forces, Holiday Message 2017

> [The military] needs a PR twist that looks good. "Resilience" is an amazing word to use. However, I think we're resilient without support. I'm lucky because I'm well informed, and I do my own research. A lot of families out there don't have the time—they have five screaming kids and don't have time to go on the internet to look [up] PTSD. Resilience, ugh. It's almost [an expectation of] "go with the flow." "Resilience" is used not because the military has made us resilient, but because you just go with it.
> —Spanner, Interview 12

Resilience is central to the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) institutional response and cultural ethos to address mental health issues and produce military members and military families who can withstand the challenges associated with military life. A resilient Force and military family enhances the CAF's operational readiness, especially the capacity to weather multiple deployments, which have characterized the post-9/11 era. Resilience refers to the ability to thrive in the face of adversity, threats, and disasters. Colloquially, resilience is likened to the capacity to "bounce back" after hardship, if not flourish in the face of hardship. For the purpose of enhancing the wellbeing of the CAF community, defence policy commits to supporting its members and families by promoting their resilience (National Defence 2017d, 19). Resilience, as an institutional response and ethos, began circulating in the CAF in 2009 in response to the 2008 Canadian Forces Ombudsperson Report. The report highlighted the growing number of Operational Stress Injuries (OSIs), especially depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), resulting from the then ongoing war in Afghanistan (CF Ombudsman 2008). The most

pervasive and wide-ranging program that institutionalizes resilience in the Canadian
Armed Forces is the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR), which "mentally prepares"
members and their families for the "challenges they may encounter," with the goal of
"improving short-term performance and long-term mental health outcomes" (Government
of Canada 2015). The expectation of the resilient military family is reinforced by the
Family Covenant, which at once acknowledges and calls on military families to be
resilient for the purpose of operational readiness (CFMWS, n.d.(a)).[14] Today, resilience is
a foremost quality of the ideal CAF member and military family. Rather than enhance the
wellbeing of individuals in the military community, however, resilience training and
ethos place additional responsibility on military members and their families, especially
military spouses, for their mental wellbeing.

 This chapter considers the gendered power relations that are (re)produced by
resilience rather than the scientific and psychological validity of resilience vis-à-vis
mental health and wellbeing. I argue that through resilience training, the CAF
institutionalizes gendered forms of resilience, where a feminine resilience required of the
military family is necessary to sustain the modern version of militarized masculinity,
which calls for a different kind of resilience. Institutionalizing resilience departs from,
and expands on, previous iterations of militarized masculinity and the expectation of the
self-reliant Canadian military wife that were typical of the 1990s (Harrison and Laliberté
1994). Resilience in the CAF idealizes a form of militarized masculinity characterized by
emotional introspection. In the face of stress and psychological injury, the model CAF
member "works it out" rather than "sucks it up" (Howell 2015). Alongside this
modernized version of militarized masculinity is a feminine resilience. Resilience
training enlists military families, particularly female spouses, to enhance their capacity to
foster a stable home life and sustain intimate relationships and provide emotional care
work. Increasingly, military family members are called upon to be resilient as caregivers
of members with Operational Stress Injuries (OSIs),[15] deepening the care expectations of

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[14] Operational readiness is defined as "the degree to which an individual is psychologically prepared to
deploy and conduct operations, and to withstand the mental challenges of an operation which includes
separation from family and other support groups" (Sharpe and English 2006, 1).

[15] An OSI is any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from operational duties performed in the
course of military service. "OSI" is a more comprehensive term than "PTSD"; it may be thought of as an
umbrella term for PTSD, other anxiety disorders, and depression. It recharacterizes these conditions as

military families, especially spouses. The CAF's resilience training is characterized by neoliberal principles that make individual military members and their families responsible for their own mental wellbeing and success in military life, liberating the state from such responsibilities. Resilience's foundation in neoliberal principles places more responsibility on military spouses to provide unpaid labour in support of operational readiness, which, in turn, more deeply embed gendered dynamics of care because of their association with individual responsibility and survival.

This chapter proceeds with a review of the concept of resilience in the context of global politics and security. Next, I trace the ways in which resilience is a component of and makes possible neoliberalism. The chapter then describes how resilience, gender, and neoliberalism shape the ideal military service member of the CAF. As will be seen, resilience and neoliberalism combine to produce a version of militarized masculinity that is effective in the contemporary security context. A resilient military family is necessary to cultivate and sustain resilient military service members. I examine the materials that train the military family in resilience to demonstrate how they rely on gendered care dynamics in the family. The conjugal couple is central to the resilient military, as discussed in the subsequent section. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the CAF's resources for military caregivers, which centre resilience capabilities. Formalizing the military family as caregivers, through institutional training and resources, normalizes a feminine resilience associated with care to rehabilitate a militarized masculinity characterized by resilience in combat.

Theorizing Resilience

The language of resilience permeates global politics and institutions, offering a normative policy response to mitigate risks, ensure preparedness, and respond to catastrophe in an ever unpredictable, insecure global climate. It is used to refer to environmental degradation and natural disasters, the instability of global financial markets, and national security despite terrorism and the rise of violent, non-state actors. For instance, resilience was a central feature of the Rio+20 Earth Summit report, *Resilient People, Resilient*

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injury, which is more in keeping with current thinking. "OSI" is not a legal or a medical term. Unlike "PTSD," it is a strictly military term, used by Canada and NATO (National Defence 2008).

Planet. "Resilient Dynamism" was the theme of the World Economic Summit in 2013, and the World Bank's *World Development Report 2014: Risk and Opportunity* emphasized resilience as a central theme (Felli 2016, 268). In response to growing insecurities, states, institutions, policies, infrastructures, and individuals must now be resilient. Consequently, many policies and institutional frameworks are "reorienting toward a horizon of critical future events that (we are told) we cannot predict or prevent, but merely adapt to by 'building resilience'" (Walker and Cooper 2011, 144). Jeremy Walker and Melinda Cooper argue that use of the term "resilience" in relation to national security has multiplied following the War on Terror and the United States' Homeland Security's National Strategy (2011, 153). Uncertainty about the security of borders, who is deemed the enemy, where the battlefield begins and ends, as well as new military strategies such as counterinsurgency, require new approaches, skills, and priorities by states and militaries. Julian Reid argues that, whereas the subjectivity and rationality of Western states in the decades following the Cold War were constructed around security, at present Western states are increasingly embracing resilience as foundational to their subjectivity (2013, 355). Resilience has become the concept "against which all such institutions, practices, and subjectivities are increasingly legitimized" (Reid 2013, 359).

Resilience originates in the field of ecology, specifically the work of Crawford S. Holling (1973). Ecology, as a field of study, replaced the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "idea of a transcendental ordering of nature by a divine Creator…with a model of immanent self-ordering through competition" (Zebrowski 2013, 161). Stability and equilibrium of ecological systems, and their ability to return to their original state following external disruption was an assumption that guided the field of ecology in the early to mid-twentieth century. Politics at this time was concerned with the succession of ecosystems in relation to the colonization of land, including plant and vegetation. Accordingly, the state intervened to protect ecological systems from external shock, and to enhance the system's ability to return to equilibrium following a shock (Zebrowksi 2013, 164).

In "Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems," Holling (1973) challenges the notion of an ecosystem's "return to equilibrium" by drawing on chaos, complexity, and self-organizing systems to reconceptualize the ways in which the security and

sustainability of ecosystems ought to be understood. Rather than emphasize equilibrium, Holling considered the conditions that allow ecosystems to *persist* (1973, 13). Persistence is the essence of what he later refers to as "resilience." Holling argues that the points around which a system recalibrates following a disturbance change, and that any external interference should be concerned with enhancing a system's ability to persist under change (1973, 21). Thus, governance of these systems ought not to predict the future but devise a scheme wherein systems can absorb and withstand shocks, and accommodate future unforeseen events (Holling 1973, 21). Consequently, researchers concerned with resilience consider three points:

> (i) the question of persistence and change in natural ecosystems;
>
> (ii) the conditions specifying the maximum displacement a system can suffer while still being able to return to equilibrium once a disturbance has passed; and
>
> (iii) the opportunities for reorganization and recombination that emerge from exposure to disturbances. (Bourbeau 2015, 376)

With a view to persist, resilience increases the capacity of a system to withstand shocks, but, more importantly, permits the system to "quickly and efficiently reorganize so as to capitalize on emerging opportunities" (Zebrowski 2013, 166–67). That is to say, resilience sees threats and shocks as an opportunity for living things to strengthen themselves, or to be enhanced. Adaptability following external shocks, for the purpose of withstanding future shocks, enables living things not only to persist but to *thrive*. The resilient system thrives in the face of danger and distress.

In politics, then, resilience regularly refers to the ways in which states, institutions, and individuals ought to adapt, but, more importantly, be renewed and strengthened in the face of threats and disasters. In global politics, and in security in particular, the complex ecological concept is briefly mentioned in resilience rhetoric but not engaged with in any philosophical detail (Joseph 2013, 43). Rather, resilience narratives in global politics are almost always framed positively, and as the optimal, common-sense policy response to insecurity. Thus, states and institutions implement strategies that anticipate and enhance the ability to take shocks, such that all can "live freely and with confidence in a world of potential risks" (Lentzos and Rose 2009, 243). Instead of securing a state, an organization, or a person from risk and uncertainty, the turn to resilience compels us to

embrace risks and uncertainty by learning to adapt to and grow because of them (Reid 2013, 359). Embracing risks as an opportunity for growth and renewal through resilience modifies the subjectivity of actors in global politics (O'Malley 2010, 489).

The resilient actors in global politics must constantly assess their capacity to adapt and withstand shock and thrive under these conditions by turning the gaze inward. The capacity for self-reflection and self-responsibility inherent to resilience mobilizes the subject to think about themself differently. Individual responsibility to govern oneself to prepare for and adapt to risks associated with the social world reduces concerns with the social world (Joseph 2013, 40). In other words, according to resilience logics, it is not "the external" with which global actors must be concerned, but rather one's own capacities. Persisting and thriving in the face of risk and danger requires self-reflection and capacity building through practice. Accordingly, resilience is increasingly approached as something that can be "produced, engineered, reinforced and learned" (Felli 2016, 281). In the CAF, military members and their families are compelled to be resilient to the shocks and threats associated with military life through capacity building and practice. Resilience regimes place the responsibility on individuals to withstand shock and dangers through adequate preparation, while depoliticizing the dangers of the social world. With an emphasis on individual responsibility and depoliticization, resilience is a component of neoliberalism. The relationship between resilience and neoliberalism is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

Resilience and Neoliberalism

The emphasis on individuals to be prepared for, adapt to, and thrive in insecure global political climates not only makes resilience a part of neoliberalism; it also makes neoliberalism possible (Bourbeau 2015; Brassett, Croft, and Vaughan-Williams, 2013; Cannon and Müller-Mahn 2010; Chandler 2012, 2015; Walker and Cooper 2001; Dillon and Reid 2001; Evans and Reid 2013; Harper and Speed 2012; MacKinnon and Derickson 2013; Schott 2013; Muehlenhoff 2017; Neocleous 2013; O'Malley 2010). As mentioned earlier, neoliberalism is characterized by privatization, individualization, and familialization, and the elevation of the markets over the public sector (Brodie 1997, 235–36). Neoliberalism applies market logics to social practices such that the distinction

between the economic and the social becomes blurred and all interactions are informed by rational, cost–benefit analysis (Oksala 2013, 34). Individualism, reason, productivity, competition, and resilience are privileged by neoliberalism. Neoliberal citizenship relies on resilience as a "technology of the self" so that one may "withstand whatever crisis capital undergoes and whatever political measures the state carries out to save it" (Neocleous 2013, 5). Like the resilient international actor who must deal with insecurities of the nation-state and global politics, the economically rational neoliberal subject must overcome the insecurity and instability of capitalism.

Neoliberalism informs how we come to understand ourselves as subjects. Many of the scholars who are critical of the relationship between neoliberalism and resilience draw on Michel Foucault's theory of governmentality and his assessment of neoliberal governmentality in postwar Germany and the American Chicago School of economics (Cannon and Müller-Mahn 2010; Chandler 2012, 2015; Walker and Cooper 2001; Dillon and Reid 2001; Evans and Reid 2013; Joseph 2013; MacKinnon and Derickson 2013; Schott 2013; Muehlenhoff 2017; O'Malley 2010). Foucault understands "government" beyond the political structures and management of the state (1982, 789). Rather, government is how power and knowledge "shape the conduct of individuals, and the possibilities of action of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick" (Foucault 1982, 790; see also Foucault and Senellart 2008, 1–2). Through neoliberal governmentality, economic rationalities govern all spheres of life, not only the economic sphere but also the social, political, and private spheres (Lemke 2001, 197). This means that decisions on every level and on every issue are based on cost–benefit calculations (Muehlenhoff 2017, 156). Governmentality shapes the subjectivities of individuals who come to identify first as economic subjects, or *homo-economicus*, thereby depoliticizing us. Neoliberalism, through resilience, employs discourses of governance that produce autonomous subjects who are "responsible for governing themselves in appropriate ways" (Joseph 2013, 40–41). Through its appeal to freedoms and individuality, "neoliberal rationalities make individuals responsible for their own well-being" (Muehlenhoff 2017, 158), and it is on this logic that resilience also rests:

> Neoliberalism works through the social production of freedom and the "management and organization of the conditions in which one can be free" (Foucault 2008, 63–64). Resilience contributes to this through its stress on

> heightened self-awareness, reflexivity and responsibility. It encourages the idea of active citizenship, whereby people, rather than relying on the state, take responsibility for their own social and economic well-being. In particular, it focuses on the risk and security aspects of this by encouraging preparedness and awareness. (Joseph 2013, 42)

Otherwise stated, through resilience the neoliberal subject is mobilized to be autonomous, self-sufficient, capable of not just withstanding but thriving in situations of insecurity such that they become "free."

What are the consequences of neoliberalism's deployment of resilience? Romain Felli argues that discourses of resilience suggest that there is no rational alternative to resilience, and thus preclude political debate about resilience in the first place (2016, 289). Resilience implies acceptance of the world as perpetually dangerous and beyond our control (Joseph 2013, 42). Accepting perpetual danger and threat, and turning the gaze inward to assess our capacity to persist and thrive through them, depoliticizes the dangers that require one's resilience:

> The resilient subject is a subject which must permanently struggle to accommodate itself to the world. Not a political subject that can conceive of changing the world, its structure, and conditions of possibility, but a subject that accepts the disastrousness of the world it lives in as a condition for partaking of that world and that accepts the necessity of the injunction to change itself in correspondence with threats and dangers now said to be endemic. Building resilient subjects involves the deliberate disabling of the political habits, tendencies, and capacities of peoples and replacing them with adaptive ones. (Reid 2013, 355)

The conditions of our political world remain unchanged when the subject internalizes a neoliberal form of self-governance intent on adapting to whatever challenge exists in the world.

Neoliberalism requires subjects who cooperate in its legitimization and reproduction. Empowerment is instrumental in compelling the subject to embrace rationalities of neoliberal self-governance via resilience: "empowerment works through productive power and changes the subjectivities of individuals who are supposed 'to cast off their status as victims and actively participate in the transformation of their condition'" (Dean 1999, 67 in Muehlenhoff 2017, 157). The question of survival in the face of military challenges, such as PTSD, garners further approval of neoliberal regimes of resilience.

While resilience emphasizes individual responsibility to prepare for and experience risk, the politics of victimhood or structural insecurities that result in victimhood in the first place are "put in the background, or dispensed with altogether" (Felli 2016, 270). Through resilience individuals and groups are not "vulnerable in the face of a specific other or in relation to a specific issue; rather their vulnerability is a result of insufficient resiliency" (Schott 2013, 213). Those who have not risen above and thrived in the face of insecurity have succumbed to their vulnerability as a result of their own failure: the failure to be sufficiently resilient. Within neoliberal rationalities of resilience, vulnerability and victimhood become individualized, and the insufficiently resilient subject becomes the source of criticism. Consequently, resilience regimes absolve the state of responsibility for the vulnerable and for structural inequalities. As it concerns militaries, resilience training has made soldiers and their families accountable for their own mental and emotional wellbeing, while at the same time pardoning the state of the responsibility to care for injured members and depoliticizing the sources of insecurity and injury produced by war making. The lack of adequate institutional support calls upon the family to engage in a gendered form of caring. Before turning to this idea, the chapter considers how resilience, particularly as it concerns mental wellbeing, is modernizing militarized masculinity in the CAF.

Revising Militarized Masculinity: Resilience Training in the CAF
The psychological sciences have enthusiastically embraced resilience as a treatment for mental illness and promoting recovery from traumatic events. Beginning in the 1960s, mainstream psychology promoted the idea of self-healing human beings. Rather than focus on personal deficits, psychological interventions began to concentrate on prevention and recovery, presenting the foundation for personal resilience in therapy (see Harper and Speed 2012, 10). The privileging of resilience in the psy sciences accelerated in the 2000s with the advent of positive psychology developed by Dr. Martin Seligman. Positive psychology is "the study of what is 'right' about people—their positive attributes, psychological assets, and strengths…Its aim is to understand and foster the factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to thrive" (Kobeau et al. 2011, e1). Positive psychology is concerned with positive emotions and attributes, including

"happiness, optimism, joy, fulfillment, and resilience, especially in order to help those who are not mentally ill but are simply 'languishing in life'" (Howell 2014, 20). The plethora of self-help books on the subject of acquiring and strengthening positive psychological assets, especially resilience, is indicative of how intensely both the medical community and individuals have embraced the concept of the self-healing, self-ameliorating human being.

The military and the psychological sciences are deeply allied. Psychology became a distinct, professional field in the United States because of its contribution to the military during the Great War—namely, assessing the proficiency of potential recruits and in boosting morale (Samelson 1977). In the late 2000s, Seligman was approached by the United States' military to consult on the problems of PTSD, suicide, and divorce among soldiers returning from war, as well as the need to have a re-deployable force for the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Seligman and Fowler 2011, 84). Seligman argues that when faced with adversity, only a minority of people succumb to mental health problems such as PTSD. Rather, the majority of humans are "resilient in that they return to their normal level of functioning after a brief period of disruption, and some even grow in the face of adversity, attaining a higher level of functioning" (Seligman and Fowler 2011, 84). Seligman proposed a prevention program that would push people towards growth following adversity, through education, training, and skill building (Seligman and Fowler 2011, 84). This approach to military mental health, grounded in positive psychology, has come to be known as resilience. Consequently, resilience programs in the United States and other Western militaries are "based on the assumption that traumatic events can be dealt with by enhancing service member's abilities to cope with adverse events, in particular by managing their perceptions of such events using techniques like accepting new realities, being positive, challenging negative self-talk and avoiding 'thinking traps'" (Howell 2012, 221; see also Howell 2011).

The attention to resilience and recovery in the human psychological sciences, which has been embraced by militaries, is compatible with neoliberalism because it produces soldiers who are responsible for their own mental readiness and wellbeing. Harper and Speed argue, "self-management and patient choice are key elements of neoliberal health policy, which seek to define service users as responsibilized consumers"

(2012, 14). Responsibilization refers to the "the imposition of responsibility on the same subject that is expected to self-invest in their success" (Keren 2016, 106). Military service members are empowered to enhance their coping abilities and mental readiness and wellbeing through resilience training. Resilience is no longer an innate human attribute but a set of coping strategies of skills that can be learned through governing the self in particular ways (O'Malley 2010, 489). Pat O'Malley argues that in Western militaries, resilience as a set of cognitive skills that can be learned has replaced an emphasis on fortitude and has become linked with the soldier's innateness:

> In recent years discourses of "resilience" have emerged in which elements formerly identified as human "attributes," such as courage, will-power, fortitude and character, have been reconfigured as "coping strategies" or "skills" that can be learned by anyone. In turn, these attributes no longer appear as adamantine elements deeply inscribed in the moral soul. Rather they appear as readily acquired, scientifically tested and mutable cognitive manoeuvres appropriate to the governance of the self in conditions of uncertainty. (2010, 489)

Modern Western militaries treat resilience training similar to physical training and strength and it is being pursued as the common sense approach to resolving crises of PTSD and suicide rates (Crabtree-Nelson and DeYoung 2017; Gewirtz and Youssef 2016; Lagacé-Roy and Bélanger 2016; MacDermid 2011; Meredith 2011; Sinclair and Thomas 2013). Indeed, the CAF's R2MR resilience training for military members likens the program to training for a marathon (National Defence 2015).

The R2MR program, where service members practice and acquire resilience through self-directed training, represents the institutionalization of resilience in the CAF. Managing stress is a fundamental component of R2MR. The stress management techniques taught to the military member include "maintaining a healthy lifestyle" through "ensuring adequate sleep, exercise and healthy diet help the body to better manage stress" (National Defence 2016g). Here members are reminded that "one of the first things that people tend to let go of during times of stress is proper nutrition and exercise" (National Defence 2016g). Other stress management techniques include "focus on (the) task at hand; controlled breathing; nurture a support system; recognize limits and take breaks; rest, relaxation and recreation; talk to someone, ask for help; tune into own signs of distress; and make self care a priority" (National Defence 2016g).

Producing the resilient military member requires intervention by the individual

member and intervention by the state, represented by the military. The CAF intervenes to produce the resilient member by institutionalizing resilience training as a form of support. This is the paradox of autonomy that characterizes neoliberalism: the state intervenes to foster autonomous subjects who will be independent from state support (Felli 2016, 282). Said differently, the military intervenes with "support" for mental wellbeing only insofar as it produces members who will be responsible for their own mental wellbeing, enabling them to serve optimally. Consequently, this strategy relieves the state from supporting members in more substantial ways. The stress management strategies in R2MR, which emphasize techniques of the self, are designed to encourage members to adapt to the system through individual acclimatization. Through resilience training, CAF members are socialized to look first and foremost within to be able to adapt and thrive in military service.

The contemporary attention to mental health in Western militaries, including the CAF, might initially appear to be progressive. Militaries have been historically reluctant to address mental health issues, largely because of their association with vulnerability and femininity. However, resilience's focus on individual responsibility for preventing mental injury diverts attention from the causes of mental injury suffered in war and war making. Thus, the sources of insecurity associated with military service, which may make certain people and groups vulnerable to mental health issues, are depoliticized. For example, the R2MR training program includes a model on "barriers to care," defined as that which "prevents members from seeking mental health care when they could benefit from the service available to them" (National Defence 2016a). Barriers to care include the following: "prefer to manage it themselves; fear of long-term consequences on career; fear of stigma; belief treatment wouldn't help; too busy/didn't bother; fear care not confidential" (*sic*) (National Defence 2016a). These barriers to care are failures on part of the service member, rather than structural, political, or cultural ones that would call for the CAF's attention and intervention. The barrier is not the CAF's culture and history of stigmatizing mental health issues, which has had and continues to have career ramifications, as identified by a respondent:

> We have a friend with severe PTSD. It's blatantly obvious to everyone but him. Because he's [in the] infantry, he won't talk to anyone…[The CAF] has come a long way, but the stigma is still there, especially for the men. The women get a

break in a lot of ways. The culture [promotes] a man's man, [who is] masculine [and] doesn't need help. When they do need help, in certain platoons, it puts a target on them, so they're stalled for promotions or may be passed over for promotion, or barred from doing certain things [like going] on tour. It's [a] case-by-case [basis]. It really depends on the willingness of the member to seek out the help and put up with the fact that some of the guys in charge are a little more old-fashioned. [The stigma] comes from the top. A lot of the big guys, not all of them, are old-school guys…and have that mentality about it. There's some guys in command still struggling with the fact that there are women in the military and [women] have been in [the military] for a long time. (Spanner, Interview 15)

The R2MR documents divert attention away from the toxic and persistent gender culture of military mental health by identifying the barriers to care as the member's fear of stigma. The burden, then, is placed on the member to acclimatize to the risk of stigmatization and potential career ramifications through self-adjustment, rather than on the CAF to address the culture of stigma that exists within the institution. Indeed, the passage above reflects a widespread internalization of self-responsibility, wherein the member's "willingness to seek out help" is of paramount importance to undoing mental health stigma, despite the consequences on their career. Moreover, the R2MR training program materials make service members themselves responsible for shifting the culture associated with stigma surrounding mental health: "There have been efforts in the Canadian Armed Forces to overcome stigma relating to mental health. Change is a process and eradicating the stigma around mental health issues is something every CAF member can participate in. This is your opportunity to be the difference" (National Defence 2016a; see also National Defence 2016b). It is up to the military member to engineer an environment that is conducive for them to develop resilience to mental health injuries. Indeed, this responsibility is framed in the R2MR as an opportunity to "be the difference." As a result, the job requirements, structural inequalities, and cultural expectations associated with military service that may be contributing to mental un-wellness in the first place, including gender performance and embodiment (Brown 2012; Belking 2012; Eichler 2012; King 2016; MacKenzie 2015; Parpart and Patridge 2014), are obscured and depoliticized.

The institutionalization of resilience by the CAF is reforming ideal performances of militarized masculinity. Recall that "militarized masculinity" refers to the idea that "traits stereotypically associated with masculinity can be acquired and prove through

military services or action, and in combat in particular" (Eichler 2014, 81). Contemporary Western militaries institutionalize resilience training as military strategy so that they can effectively fight "new wars" (Kaldor 1999), which requires an "emotionally agile" force (Howell 2015, 142). The post-9/11 security context in which many Western militaries find themselves of fighting the so-called War on Terror and shifts to counterinsurgency tactics, coupled with an international commitment to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), have resulted in constructions of militarized masculinities that are softer, more diplomatic, and more humanitarian than previous iterations. Contemporary warfare, especially counterinsurgency, involves "more complex forms of military engagement, with a focus on winning the hearts and minds of local populations, collaborative partnerships between Coalition Forces, and long-term post-intervention governance" (Bell 2011, 310) as well as "the militarization of aid activities and traditionally civilian spheres of activities" (Howell 2014, 23). Effective interactions with Iraqi and Afghan soldiers and civilians by Western militaries demand compassionate soldiering that emphasizes "relations of equality, empathy, care, respect and recognition of similarities and shared experiences" (Duncanson 2013, 148–49). Building mentally resilient soldiers who display "mental agility, emotional stability such that they can act quickly, rationally and potentially humanely" (Howell 2014, 22) is more than a cost-savings measure; it is about military strategy and the privileging of a new military masculinity:

> In Western military contexts, psychology is increasingly being used to foster certain kinds of soldiers who govern their psyches through therapeutic encounters, rather than repressing traumatic memory. Stoicism and repression are no longer seen as fully effective for managing and retaining soldiers. Western militaries now need a new kind of man: one who looks inwards, who works through their emotions, and governs their interior life in order to be emotionally stable, and therefore mission-ready. (Howell 2015, 145)

The CAF's resilience resources and training, which focus on self-care and introspection, are evident of this shift. Resilience training, with its emphasis on therapeutic techniques of the self, rooted in positive psychology, produces an ideal soldier who does not just "suck it up," but rather "works it out" (Howell 2015, 146). Thus, ideal militarized masculinity is characterized by emotional introspection and responsibility for one's mental health. The ideal member will embrace techniques of the self to prevent OSIs, especially psychological and emotional ones.

The military member who lives up to this version of modern militarized masculinity is normalized in part because of the medicalization of mental health and that underpins resilience training by the CAF:

> Leaders should remember that the more troops know about normal reactions to stress, the more resilient they will be at dealing with the stress of military operations…In fact, evidence has shown that while most persons may experience some physical or emotional symptoms after an exposure to a potentially traumatizing event, the great majority of these persons will recover. It is therefore imperative that CF personnel at all levels refrain from assuming that the normal human response to potentially traumatizing events will result in a requirement for medical attention. (National Defence 2016e)

Grounding resilience in science supports the idea that a resilient subject will "normally" be able to prevent their own mental illness and stave off the negative impacts of stressful events, or at the very least, be able to recover. Accordingly, the CAF further idealizes a militarized masculinity, characterized by psychological resilience—a member who will move quickly and autonomously through a recovery processes without relying on structural supports from the state.

The contemporary construct of militarized masculinity conceals the circumstances that produce the requirement of resilience in the first place—namely, the violence, fear, and death that military service and deployment can entail. The R2MR training program materials refer broadly to the "stressors associated with military life" as the conditions that require resilience. Referred to only as "potential traumatizing" or "adverse events," these "stressors of military life" are not specified in the R2MR training program (National Defence 2016c, 2016e, 2017d). Instead, R2MR mentions only the "uniqueness of military life," which takes the resilience requirements out of context of war making: "Along these lines there are some foundational mental health concepts that are universal and can be applied and adapted to various types of situations; while others are more specifically designed to be used in highly stressful situations" (National Defence 2016c). Given this vague description of "highly stressful moments," a civilian could read the R2MR training materials and apply the resilience strategies to their own stress management and mental readiness "training." There is lack of direct engagement with the essence of the "stressful" events or "adverse situations" that are specific to military service, such as the requirement to kill adversaries in close combat or the fear of being hit

by a roadside bomb, which are then minimized as stress. Through logics of resilience, the dangers or threats are not of concern, it is about how individuals prevent the psychological consequences of stress through self-training. Consequently, the dangers faced by CAF members in service are accepted as inevitable, accommodated to, and enabled to persist.

Resilience calls on members to adapt to the risks associated with military service, which is presented as an opportunity to be strengthened from these experiences, recalling the adage "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger." A respondent notes that in certain units and depending on the leadership, a notion remains that mental injury "is part of the job and members [just] have to deal with it" (Spanner, Interview 13). Within resilience regimes, then, there is little room for the vulnerable or injured because one is only vulnerable as a result of their insufficient resilience. Despite a change in rhetoric and institutional initiatives that address mental health in the CAF, the outcome of resilience is that the military member ought to overcome trauma related to military service and the corresponding mental health injury. Some service members refer to those who fail to overcome psychological or emotional injury as "broken toys," or "being fucked up like a soup sandwich" (Spanner, Interview 5). Of course, such language challenges the very feasibility of resilience; some injuries, members find, cannot be recovered from. One respondent argues that the implications of the current discourse of resilience are similar to military mental health outcomes of previous eras:

> [Resilience] forces the person to feel that they need to have resilience, and to not acknowledge to themselves what they're going through or what they've experienced. If they're having nightmares, man up, still the military culture...It's so engrained. The word "resilience" seems very archaic to me; very "chin up boys, we can get through this," just don't talk about anything and you'll be fine…I don't like that sort of pressure being put on them to be this resilient, non-feeling mechanical soldier. I don't think that's healthy for anyone. (Spanner, Interview 14)

Resilience's grounding in neoliberalism places a greater demand on service members' mental fortitude, because they are now required to prevent and overcome service-related mental health injury. In this way, contemporary wars place greater demands on the psyche of soldiers, requiring them to be mentally fit, mentally tough, mentally resilient, as well as stoic (O'Malley 2010). Military members who succumb to psychological

injuries have failed because of their lack of adequate preparation, skill building, and personal investment. The mentally injured member has failed to perform proper militarized masculinity.

Furthermore, traumatic events and mental health injuries for military personnel might be informed by gender. Mortality rates of CAF personnel and veterans reveal that male veterans are more likely to die by suicide than similarly aged males in the general population, and compared to female personnel and veterans (National Defence 2017b, 14). Factors that compound rates of suicide among male veterans include having non-commissioned member status, fewer than ten years of service, medical release, and involuntary release (National Defence 2017b, 14). The valorization of militarized masculinity makes certain bodies more vulnerable than others. Attention should be given to the gendered expectations that members ought to "thrive" in the face of close combat and war making, and embrace these challenges as an opportunity for personal improvement. The Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada's *Joint Suicide Prevention Strategy* (National Defence 2017b) focuses on resilience and recovery, rather than on the potential cultural and political sources of military suicide. David Harper and Ewan Speed argue that, "by co-opting recovery, and focusing on individuals, there is a neglect of the social and material context of emotional distress" (2012, 19). Perhaps the fragile ideal that the military member is expected to embody—a self-governing, autonomous, resilient militarized masculinity—is precisely the social and material context that is leading to distress in the first place, and one which calls for political alternatives.

PTSD among military members is most often misunderstood as being primarily related to trauma experienced in combat. Instead, PTSD among military service people is also related to traumatic experiences living up to, and within, military cultures. Trauma and PTSD of this type disproportionately affects minorities, such as women and racialized Others. For example, Canadian Reservist Corporal Nathan Caribou, who was Cree, took his own life in 2017 following harassment and bullying by comrades (Barghout 2018). Studies suggest that the PTSD experienced by female soldiers is not from "trauma related to combat, but rather from fear, pain, and anxiety that results from sexual harassment and abuse experienced within a military setting; while soldiers of

colour report that their emotional pain is often directly related to their discovery that, once deployed on missions, they were tasked with the most dangerous duties and more often put at risk more than their white comrades" (Whitworth 2008, 110–11). The focus on resilience vis-à-vis mental health in the military obscures not only the political and social elements of war making, but also the ways in which gender intersects with war making and renders certain bodies within militaries more vulnerable to mental health injuries than others. Romaine Felli argues that resilience is a method "to protect the status quo; to resist or accommodate change; and to enhance stability rather than dynamic responses" (2016, 273–74). Because the responsibility for mental health, and thriving in the military more generally, is individualized, structural inequalities within the institution are upheld.

The contemporary iteration of militarized masculinity is sustained through a revised dynamic in the military family, as it concerns the appropriation of gendered labour and ideas about masculinity and femininity. Currently, resilience regimes in militaries persuade families, especially spouses, to internalize the responsibility to adapt to the challenges of military life, such that they can continue to sustain and enhance the military's operational readiness by fostering a family and home environment that enhances the resilience of the member. These contributions, often unpaid, draw on gendered expectations of labour and kinship, but are reinforced and more deeply rooted through neoliberalism, which dictates that individuals are be responsible for their wellbeing and success. It is to this idea that the chapter now turns.

Institutionalizing the Self-Reliant Spouse

Earlier work on Canadian military families reveals that the ideal military wife of the 1990s was bound up in a myth of self-reliance. Simply put, military wives "could handle anything life threw at them" (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 83). The self-reliant military wife myth circulated within Canadian military headquarters as a pervasive assumption with real implications—namely, the expectation that wives internalize self-reliance in support of deployment readiness (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 83). This wifely expectation was secured through social pressures, including praise, criticism, and self-censorship. Much of what constituted the self-reliant spouse of previous decades involved

undertaking the roles of both husband and wife during deployments, including traditionally masculine tasks of managing household finances, taking care of insurance, and being able to fix the plumbing and car issues (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 84; Enloe 2000, 163). Despite the apparent fluidity of gender roles in the household, the self-reliant spouse of previous decades had "responsibility without control" (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 66). That is, the authority over the household and family remained the purview of the military man, especially once he returned from deployment or exercise. The patriarchal structure of contemporary military family authority is renewed through the Family Care Plan (FCP), discussed in Chapter 1. The self-reliant military spouse is essential for operational readiness; their responsibility for organizing home life around deployment allows the member to concentrate totally on service.

Current strategies to develop the self-reliant military spouse involve not only social pressure but also the institutionalization of the requirement to be self-reliant. Military spouses are encouraged to develop their self-reliance through training programs and self-directed resources. Today's self-reliant military spouse also invokes a new rhetoric: they are now expected and trained to be *resilient*. Resilience is a modernized discourse and institutional approach with enhanced expectations. Through resilience, the ideal military spouse not only withstands "anything life throws at them" (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 83), but "bounces back" and thrives in the face of military difficulty through self-management and strategies associated with positive psychology (see Edmonton MFRC, n.d.(d)). The ideal military spouse comes to see military hardships as an opportunity for personal growth. The expectation of the self-reliant military spouse is institutionalized under the guise of CAF support for family wellbeing, and represents one of the newest strategies of securing the labour and commitment of military spouses. As indicated throughout this study, institutional support for military families has been effective in generating and sustaining the commitment of military spouses in the name of operational effectiveness, often under the cover of empowerment and autonomy (see also Horn 2010). The contemporary resilience regimes expand the expectations of military spouses beyond reorganizing the management of the household during separation to include a reordering of the psyche.

The institutionalization of resilience among military families militarizes the spouse's mental wellbeing and the relationship they have with themselves. Militarization refers to the ways in which people, activities, and things become controlled by the military and how militaristic ideas "creep" into the everyday, which may be hard to see or appear non-threatening (Enloe 2000, 3). Through resilience training, military family members nurture their own wellbeing by reordering their thought processes and mindsets in order to be more productive members of the military community. Thus, resilience training militarizes the very core of military family members. The R2MR, discussed previously and in relation to service members, is also offered to military family members. Military families are trained in resilience so that they "may acquire skills and guidance to mitigate the stress of deployment," including pre- and post-deployment strategies (National Defence 2016d). Resilience towards deployment is the focus of the training, confirming the family's importance for operational readiness. The philosophy of R2MR for families, as well as members, is structured around "the big four," which include "goal setting (to promote motivation and provide direction); mental rehearsal or visualization, to predict possible problems and working out a solution in advance to manage arousal levels; self talk to manage negative thoughts; and arousal management through (tactical) breathing" (National Defence 2016h). Through resilience training, the idea that the military needs a self-sufficient spouse creeps into their internal dialogue and shapes that person's ideas of how they ought to relate to themself. Resilience training more deeply embeds the expectation of a self-sufficient military spouse because this role is now formally institutionalized, and results in a reordering of the mind for militarized ends.

The neoliberal principles that inform, and are reproduced by, the institutionalization of resilience in military families more profoundly embed militarization while demanding even more of military spouses. Prevention is the philosophy and rationale behind the R2MR program, where the capacity to withstand military stressors, especially deployment, is based on personal preparation and the acquisition of skills. The responsibility for wellbeing is placed firmly on the individuals, who reorder themselves in the face of deployment challenges. In that way, the CAF "institutionalizes a form a social rule based on rationality of competition, enterprise, and individualized responsibility" entirely consistent with neoliberal principles (Joseph 2013,

42). The R2MR program for military families draws on the analogy of a highway to highlight how they can be resilient through deployment, while emphasizing individual responsibility:

> To understand the challenges of the deployment cycle, it is useful to use the analogy of a highway. Imagine your family is driving on a highway. While you are driving at a cruising speed, you learn that the military member will be deployed abroad in a couple of months. You may have never driven this highway or this may be the third or fourth time for you. You know it may be a long and bumpy ride! Of course you have an idea of the itinerary (timing, training, holiday, etc.) but you have no control over the road conditions: weather, forecast, traffic jams, accidents, road construction, detours, etc. To get to the destination, you will need some maps (information) and vehicle maintenance (tools). The military member will also require information and tools—and some of this information will be similar to what you are receiving and other information will be unique to their role in the mission. This analogy illustrates the importance of regular checks and maintenance in preparation for and all along the drive. (National Defence 2016d)

The highway analogy acknowledges that deployment, represented by the road, will be a bumpy ride but through self-governance—namely, preparation and skill building—the driver can mitigate any obstacles. Therefore, how the driver experiences the bumps is a direct result of their preparation and skill, or lack thereof. The driver becomes responsible for the "bumps" in the same way as the neoliberal citizen becomes responsible for their success or failures in the markets. As the individual driver is responsible for their experiences throughout the trip, the conditions of the road are displaced from political or collective view.

The individualization of wellbeing and success, which is engrained throughout family resilience materials and represented in the highway analogy, relies on personal solutions rather than institutional changes. As Thomas Lemke suggests, neoliberalism "shifts the responsibility for social risks…into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of 'self-care'" (2001, 201). Self-care features prominently in the R2MR program for families and members, other resilience resources for military families (see FOCUS 2017; Kingston MFRC, n.d.; Ottawa Public Health et al. 2016), and among social media platforms for military spouses (see Reccewife 2017). Self-care is celebrated as the method to prevent stress associated with deployment, and includes techniques such as "maintaining a healthy lifestyle" through

"ensuring adequate sleep, exercise and healthy diet [to] help the body to better manage stress" (National Defence 2016c). Military spouses internalize the requirement to be resilient and embrace techniques of self-care out of a sense of survival:

> You have to be [resilient]. You don't have an option. What are you going to do? Crumble into a ball of nothing? I still have a kid to look after. I have a house to run. I have a business to run. I have no choice but to do it. For my sanity I run on the treadmill in the basement. (Spanner, Interview 1)

The focus on self-care disassociates stress and difficulty from the operational requirements of the military, or structural relationships of power in militaries; it depoliticizes them. Accordingly, military deployments and their burdens on the family are naturalized, while the military is absolved of the responsibility to provide more substantial solutions to alleviate deployment challenges for military families.

Resilience training for military families, while informed by neoliberalism, is structured around a gendered family dynamic—namely, the team approach to the military (man's) job: "his job is also her job" (Weinstein and White 1997, 2). The resilience regime, as illustrated by the highway analogy, formalizes the whole family approach to the service member's career and to operational effectiveness by calling upon the military family to manage the deployment road effectively. Military families are told that by embracing the whole family approach to the military member's job, they can secure their wellbeing. The wellbeing of the family car, which is presumably driven by the military spouse, becomes formally incorporated into military operations and effectiveness:

> Every time the military member goes on training, he/she is taking an off ramp to drive on a different road while the family continues on the highway. You will both need to adjust your driving speed every time he/she takes the off ramp and when the military member merges back onto the family highway. It is easy to understand that the road conditions on the two highways are different; while on training the member is psychologically no longer in the family vehicle as he/she is focused on the mission while the family focuses on their own mission at home. (National Defence 2016d)

The above description necessitates and reaffirms the military person's non-responsibility for the home front and the family on the basis of gendered labour in the family, and a whole family commitment to the military person's career. Resilience training normalizes a situation in which the military member will come in and out of the "family car," while demanding that the stability of the "family car" be secured during the service member's

absence. Indeed, the condition of stability of the family car, which enables the member to enter and exit smoothly, is essential to the member's metaphorical travels and job performance. A respondent reflects on the member's requirement to be come in and out of family life and its relationship to job performance:

> When I had my youngest son, they pulled him [my husband] out of training in the field. [The military] sent him to the hospital. I had the baby just before midnight, [and] he left me at two am 'cause he had to be back at work at six [am]. Then he was gone. [He] wasn't allowed to come home for two weeks. [The Chain of Command] said, "You can stay for five days, you're entitled to, but if you do, you can't deploy." [My husband] had to choose, but it wasn't really a choice. (Spanner, Interview 11)

The resilient military family, who accommodates the entries and exits of the member into the family car and adopts a whole family approach service life, is essential to both operational effectiveness and the military members' career progression. It is not uncommon for family events, such as births, to be missed by service members, which raises questions from military spouses about the CAF's genuine concern for family wellbeing. A respondent recalls a different birth experience:

> There's a girl that I heard [about] who had a baby. Her husband was able to come out of the field for the birth, but then had to go back into the field a day later. I understand [that] the demand on military members could be life-and-death situations, but I think this guy was [on] training, on course for [the] Special Forces. So, he needed to learn what they were teaching and I feel like sometimes they [the CAF] are not accommodating for the stupidest reasons. [The CAF] says [that] they're all for the family, but you're not, because you do stupid things like this. They have to go to the field for an exercise and aren't allowed to come home or talk on the phone. (Spanner, Interview 22)

Through resilience training, the family is compelled to adjust to these military requirements, or is militarized, on the promise that they can ensure their wellbeing through self-adjustment. It is the formalization of expectation, through resilience training, that embeds these expectations more deeply. To be resilient is to adjust to and thrive in the face of military operational requirements.

The underlying message of the highway analogy, and exemplified by the birth stories above, is that the member's entries and exits, and the family members who stay in family car, require different types of resilience. The military family requires resilience to the entries and exits of the member, who needs a resilience to disassociate from the family. The member's resilience is secured because of the accommodations offered by

the family and the family car's stability. Consequently, through resilience training, even more is demanded of the military spouse, who acquires a personal and family resilience in support of the member's resilience. A respondent considers the difficulties of being resilient herself, for her family and for the member:

> You're expected to be strong for your husband. When they're overseas, they're having a rough time [and] seeing potentially seeing horrible things; you're expected to be that stronghold for them—that support. But then I think, "Well, what about us then?" We're holding them down, the kids down, holding the house down, and holding ourselves [down]. Not that I'm saying "feel bad for us," it's [just] very demanding. (Spanner, Interview 22)

Spouses appear to internalize a responsibility for the resilience of the member, by supporting a resilient "family car," on the logic that the member's sacrifices and challenges as more important than their own. As a result, the idea that military service is necessary and honourable is sustained through a gendered form of resilience, labour, and family dynamics.

The resilient military family contributes to the career progression of the service member by embracing a gendered division of labour, a spousal responsibility for the stability of the family car. The militarization of the psyche of family members, through resilience training, compels spouses to internalize a responsibility for the home front, so that the member can optimally serve:

> I contribute [to the Forces] because my husband is married and he couldn't do his job if I wasn't willing to do mine. One of the biggest challenge I've had working is convincing the chain of command that families contribute to operational readiness of the Forces. Because if I'm not resilient enough to take care of my family without him, then they're not going to have soldiers able to go [on deployment]. If one day I said "I'm not doing this anymore," then the Forces would have one less combat warrant officer who is op- ready to leave. (Spanner, Interview 10)

Resilience augments the decades-old standard of the ideal spouse who "comes to her own conclusion that the most important thing for her own and her family's wellbeing is that her husband perform his military job well" (Enloe 2000, 162), because self-reliance, intensified as resilience, is how to ensure personal and family wellbeing. Resilience is framed as an individual opportunity to reduce one's stress and acquire practical skills to face military difficulty. An opportunity for self-improvement is the logic behind the highway analogy, which encourages military families to develop their tools for the family

car. Partnering with military families, by incorporating them into resilience regimes, is effective because the support and labour that follows from them in the name of operational effectiveness appears natural. Structuring military family "support programs" through resilience training, where success and survival are acquired through individual techniques, obscures the ways in which these gendered scripts of caring "both normalize and conceal women's emotional work" (Basham and Catignani 2018, 160). The contemporary militarizing of spouses' lives in Canadian military families secures their commitment to the military on the basis of long-held beliefs at the intersections of gender, kinship, and caring, and the trope of the supportive spouse, as well as new logics of survival, success, and individualism embedded in neoliberalism.

Resilient Marriages, Resilient Forces

The CAF needs resilient families, which are secured by resilient marriages and conjugal relationships, because this family arrangement sustains a robust and operational force. Studies show that military members' satisfaction with their conjugal relationships, perceived spousal support, and spousal support for the member's career is positively correlated with the member's personal wellbeing, as well as "organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment, morale and turnover intentions" (Laplante and Goldenberg 2018, 30). Military spouses recognize that a strong marriage in particular safeguards the mental resilience of the member spouse:

> Technically I'm serving twenty-four hours, 365 [days a year]. You have to be that for the member. Without a strong base you watch many of the members fall down. That's when you run into drug problems, the mental health problems because they don't have that solid base. When you have a spouse…you [are] stronger…because there's always that support system there. You're more willing to work through stuff like PTSD. (Spanner, Interview 15)

Put differently, the military needs supportive spouses who structure their activities, identities, and efforts in support of the military member. The supports offered by militaries to keep military marriages intact suggest that the CAF would be not able to meet its institutional requirements without the commitments and unpaid labour of military spouses. In fact, resilience programs for militaries were developed, in part, because of the problem of divorce among military members (Seligman and Fowler 2011, 84). As will be seen below, resilience resources for military marriages reinforce a

heteronormative family arrangement, characterized by gendered practices. Zoe Wool reminds us that militaries are "deeply invested in exemplary forms of normativity—especially those addressed to embodiments of gender" (2015, 27), and these norms are reinforced by supporting military marriages via resilience.

The R2MR program includes resources for the conjugal military couple with a section of the training program titled "Reuniting with Your Partner or Spouse" (National Defence 2016f), which paints a normative picture of intimacy in military marriages. The purpose of this section is to facilitate the reintegration of the service member back into the home following deployment. Here, intimacy among military couples is a matter of military concern. Tips for a successful transition include "Ease back into intimacy. It's not easy to regain physical and emotional closeness after stressful situations," and "Tone down the fantasy—often how we structure it in our heads is much different in reality!" (National Defence 2016f). Similarly, military caregivers are provided with resources about how to navigate intimate relationships, including emotional and sexual intimacy, with their partners who have OSIs. Military caregivers are educated about the reasons individuals with OSIs withdraw from intimacy. The guide suggests various positive psychology coping mechanisms for the caregiver/partner, such as coping through positive thinking and self-talk: "I have a right to my emotions" and "I have the right to have my needs met" (Government of Canada 2019b). It follows that caregivers should learn to survive military marriages by "recognizing what your needs are" and "communicating them"; "seek[ing] support from trusted friend, family member or professional"; and "effective communication, such as using 'I'" (Government of Canada 2019b). Despite an acknowledgement of military spouse's needs in marriages, they are being socialized to accept a military marriage/conjugal relationship characterized by a lack of intimacy, both sexual and emotional. Self-sacrifice in military marriage by the military spouse, perhaps in the form of celibacy, becomes formalized. This expectation, now a part of resilience schemes, works alongside the social expectation of monogamy by military wives, and an associated condemnation of military wives who are unfaithful (Spanner, Interview 21) (see Chapter 4 for more details). Normalizing sexual self-sacrifice by military spouses is contrast against the military's concern with ensuring service member's ongoing sexual practices, such as military control and or organization of prostitution (Enloe 1988;

Goldstein 2001), and rehabilitating sexual performance of military members after war (Linker 2011). That is to say, the exemplary form of gender in military marriages privileges the military member's intimate needs while the military spouse defers her needs to accommodate the member.

The resilient military marriage requires a resilient spouse. In the resilience resources outlined above, discussions of marriage is directed at military families and caregivers—not the military member. This placement suggests that it is the military spouse who needs to accommodate and adjust to the service member and military life. Alongside the neoliberal principle of individual responsibility, the military spouse ought to manage their relationship with the service member through self-adjustment and by applying the concepts of positive psychology, such as positive self-talk as discussed above. These coping strategies are based on acknowledging the "need for change within the self" (Government of Canada 2019b). Military spouses who embrace internal techniques to be more amenable to the pressures associated with military marriages, such as loss of intimacy and self-sacrifice, are idealized in these documents. Internalizing this expectation is evident among military spouses:

> First and foremost in military [marriage], you are not first, you are second sometimes third…and you have to be content with that. Because at the end of the day, he's gotta pick the army over me. (Spanner, Interview 15)

These resources normalize the military marriage as challenging and require the civilian spouse to accept the burdens of military relationships by adapting to them. The experience of a respondent who sought marital counselling offered by the CAF exemplifies this requirement:

> Marriage counselling was very focused on the military member and what would benefit the military member's service. One of my issues was [that I was] exhausted and I was trying to get someone to tell [my husband] that he had to do more [in the home]. [The counsellor] fired back and said, "Well, you know, he does have a job that requires a great deal of concentration and he has to be very cautious…so your exceptions of him might be too much." Not quite what I was hoping for, [to] put it mildly. (Spanner, Interview 27)

These institutional supports suppose that military service is valuable and necessary, and that, naturally, the military spouse will self-sacrifice in terms of intimacy, caregiving, and so on.

Military resilience programming treats military marriages and the intimate lives of its members as a matter of military concern, an institutional resource. As resilience programs harness military marriages for military purposes, conjugal relationships are being militarized. For example, a previous training program, launched in 2006, was called "Basic Relationship Training," a play on Basic Training for Recruits; the program provided military couples with relationship skills (National Defence 2006 in Howell 2015, 149). Military spouses understand that their contribution to the military through marriage fosters the mental resilience of the member in particular:

> [I read an] article recently [that] having support at home is the first line of defence of PTSD. Studies show [that] members who have support before and after they leave [on deployment] and come home to a family environment that is stable, [they] have lower chance of PTSD. We see that with the members that come back [to no support]. [However,] families can't be to blame; sometimes there's nothing that could have been done. [But] it helps with the resiliency of the member...[to have a] supportive family. [And] culturally, relationship-wise, we think we should leave unhappy relationships. [But] being happy all the time versus being abused isn't the same thing. (Spanner, Interview 10)

A resilient military marriage secures the emotional and material labour of the military spouse, which promotes morale and sustains a deployable force. Significantly, through resilience ethos the military spouse assumes responsibility for preventing operational stress injuries by embracing gendered practices of care—an enhanced responsibility, to be sure. The resilient military marriage, as characterized above, reinforces gendered images of conjugal relationships exemplified by a doting and nurturing civilian spouse, who need not be "happy all the time." In a sense, it echoes the "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" ethos behind the resilience required of members in combat. Resilience training and ethos aimed at maintaining military marriages encourages spouses to take on the challenges of a military marriage, so long as the marriage is not "abusive." It bears mention that we know that violence in military marriages is experienced at a higher rate than in the civilian sector because of the gendered culture in militaries (Harrison 2002 and 2003). The nuclear family arrangement is recognized by some respondents as being essential to resilience:

> You get us, that are generally pretty stable and have their stuff together, or you get people who get pregnant and divorced and [all] within six-months 'cause they met at eighteen on training…It's so variable. (Spanner, Interview 8)

The military and the community perpetuate the idealization of the conjugal couple in military families, in part through the contemporary ethos and institutionalization of resilience. Sustaining the resilient military member requires the support of the resilient military spouse.

"Supporting" Military Caregivers

Institutionalizing resilience training assures the ongoing contributions of military spouses as caregivers who support and repair the resilience of injured and ill military members. In this way, the military family's resilience is mobilized to restore militarized masculinity, which is now fused with resilience in combat through emotional introspection and enabled by coming "in and out of the family car," as discussed earlier. Partnering with and providing "support" for military families through resilience training and resources gives particular attention to military caregivers. As previously noted, the CAF defines a caregiver as "someone, which is invariably the immediate family living within the household, who provides support to those who are most vulnerable and adversely impacted by particular and extended challenges of military or civilian life" (CFMWS 2019a). This definition, together with the attention to military marriages outlined above, suggests that the military caregiver is most often the military spouse. Research on contemporary military families indicates that 13 percent have caregiver responsibilities (CFMWS 2019e, 7). Institutional support for military caregivers "assists [the caregiver] in regaining a sense of wellness and balance" by giving them resources to help them develop their resilience (CFMWS 2019a). Specific resources include the *Operational Stress Injury Resource for Caregivers* (Government of Canada 2019b), and the *Mental Health Caregiver Guide*, which is a collaboration between Ottawa Public Health, the Canadian Mental Health Association–Ottawa and National, Mental Illness Caregivers Association, and Military Family Services (Ottawa Public Health et al. 2016). Formalizing the partnership with military caregivers is a modern militarizing tactic that secures military spouses', especially women's, labour and identities with a view to sustain and repair a healthy, resilient force.

Resources that promote resilience in military families, and specifically identify and support military caregivers, normalize and reinforce the association of the military spouse

with caregiving. While this work may be difficult, there is an expectation by the CAF that it will be undertaken because of the caregiver's emotional relationship to the injured or ill member: "being a caregiver to a loved one can leave a person feeling isolated, burnt out, exhausted and overwhelmed if you don't manage the stress properly" (CFMWS 2019a). Fusing caregiving with love presumes that, and calls upon, this care to be undertaken through gendered scripts of caring—namely, feminine nurturing, self-sacrifice, unpaid status. After all, love and care conventionally accompany kinship, especially between spouses. Here, caregiving is not seen as work; instead, it is perceived as "interpersonal intimacy or love" rather than labour (Erikson 2005, 349). Indeed, these documents do not recognize military caregiving as work. Moreover, as the CAF understands caregiving to take place in the home, the gendered practice of care that sustain the Forces is (re)positioned in the private sphere.

Alongside gendered scripts of caring, the CAF's supports for military families as caregivers are informed by neoliberalism. With neoliberalism, military caregivers are incorporated into resilience regimes based on the idea that caregiving is an *opportunity* that offers fulfillment and personal growth. As neoliberalism encourages individuals to see all interactions as market-based, caregiving is framed as an activity from which the caregiver will receive a return, especially when caregiving is coupled with resilience. The *Mental Health Caregiver Guide* suggests that by embracing resilience training, "you will learn new skills and build a stronger relationship with the person you care for" (Ottawa Public Health et al. 2016, 11). The "caregiving as opportunity" rhetoric links resilience and caregiving to improving relationships of kinship, and thus reaffirms the military spouse/caregiver's sense of self and personal value with gendered practices and identities. For example, the FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress) Program integrates self-improvement with caring for the family; according to their website, the program "helps build on current strengths and teach new strategies to enhance communication and problem solving, goal setting and creating a shared family story" (FOCUS 2017). Similarly, the CAF's website for military caregivers' resources begins by stating that "caring for your loved one is a precious and rewarding experience, but one not without its challenges" (CFMWS 2019a). That the military spouse can improve themself by acquiring resilience skills that enable them to care for others invokes a gendered ethics of

care where one's value, identity, and morality are relational and communal (Gilligan 1982; Held 2006). Notably, this articulation of military caregiver resilience is different from the resilience required of the military member, whose self-governance enables them to thrive in the face of military stressors by being able to withdraw from family relationships. As the military caregiver contributes to rebuilding the resilience of the member by being resilient themselves—a contribution that is constructed as an individual opportunity—they are folded ever more officially into the operational effectiveness of the organization on the basis of gendered practices of care.

Through these resources, the military caregiver is encouraged to develop their own tools in order to be a more productive caregiver, despite, if not in light of, challenges. In the neoliberal spirit, the self is viewed as a resource, which can be made more productive through self-governance. At the same time, the military caregiver is made responsible for preventing their own burnout and exhaustion by managing their stress properly. The tips provided by the CAF to caregivers include "give yourself a break; take care of your health; spread the responsibility; maintain personal relationships; reward yourself in little ways; talk to supportive family and friends; and say 'yes' when someone offers assistance" (CFMWS 2019a). These supposed tips are all meant to engineer autonomous caregivers who will self-govern in a manner that enables them to continue caregiving. Self-care also features prominently in these documents, because "caring for you; that's right, YOU! Keeping yourself healthy both physically and emotionally will allow you to be the best caregiver you can be" (Ottawa Public Health et al. 2016, 10).

By enhancing the military caregivers' ability to continue caring through self-directed skill building, the state/military is absolved of providing substantial support services for its ill and injured members. The goal and structure of the *Mental Health Caregiver Guide* is described as follows:

> This guide is intended to provide you, the caregiver, with helpful tips, tools, and information. We encourage you to "build your own toolbox" using the various activities in this guide. These activities are designed to help you think about what you are learning in greater depth and to put some tools in place to help with your learning. Some information may seem simple or obvious, but it is a great starting point. The information is based on things you can control, and things that you can do to complement a treatment plan, promote recovery, or while waiting for services. (Ottawa Public Health et al. 2016, 5)

The focus here is on how the caregiver can reorder themself so that their caregiving ability is sustained, if not enhanced. It merits mention that reading these documents and participating in the guide's activities requires time and labour of the caregiver, which is likely scarce. Throughout these resource documents, the autonomous, responsible caregiver who embraces personal solutions to institutional problems—such as, a lack of more robust support for military members who are suffering from OSIs *and* the lack of robust institutional support for the caregivers who fill this void—is idealized, and therefore provides the means for these dynamics to persist. A respondent reflects on the insufficiency of institutional resources, despite the CAF's interventions in mental health rehabilitation, which calls on families to fill the void:

> The [Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU)[16]] unit is understaffed for the required need. So, soldiers get pissed because they're not getting the support they need. Then the staff themselves get burnt out, get compassion fatigue, and develop mental health issues because…they can't keep up. The services are there, it's just they're being so taxed out that they cant keep up…[and] the family fills in this burden…I have a friend who went through that. It took a good two to three years before her husband was able to identify that [he] needed help. She was the one to talk to him, but he would never talk to her. She was carrying everything. Her concerns, the household concerns, his concerns, like everything. She was getting…she was depressed, beaten down. Once he actually went to JPSU, although things weren't as fast as they would [have] liked, they were getting support and she was getting support. She had weekly meetings with some type of counsellor, to talk to. (Spanner, Interview 22)

Military caregivers who become more resilient in their caregiving more effectively fill the gaps of support left by the state. Accordingly, the resilient and evermore effective caregiver legitimizes inadequate institutional support to persist. However, inadequate support also characterized the earlier Keynesian era, such as the denial of benefits to Indigenous WWII veterans, treatment for psychologically injured WWII veterans that did more harm than good, and the lack of any military family support until 1991, as discussed in Chapter 1. This analysis of resilience materials and discourses is meant to reveal the new ways in which military families, members, and veterans are being neglected, and the logics upon which this neglect depends. Resilience regimes, of which neoliberalism is a

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[16] This unit helps ill or injured CAF members with recovery and rehabilitation, with the primary aim of returning to duty.

part, pardons the state from providing adequate support because they prescribe individual responsibility and personal empowerment.

Engineering resilient family-member caregivers is a cost-saving measure for the military; this strategy simultaneously relieves the military of the responsibility to provide this care *and* protects the value of the military member as an investment and resource. The more resilient a family, the less likely the member will leave the military. Moreover, as military families are deployed as caregivers in the provision of mental health support and emotional stability, the likelihood that military service member will be able to return to the field after experiencing an OSI increases:

> [The ideal military family is] a family that is self-sufficient, that self-cares, where the husband will never have a problem going to work. He will come back and we will deal with his PTSD, because I've trained myself in PTSD. We have the whole package. If they can have a thousand like me, I'm pretty sure they would be in heaven…I just learned to live with it. And that's the thing: we're all money. We're transactions; we're numbers, we're assets. (Spanner, Interview 24)

The military member who receives support and care in the home following an OSI is more likely to be able to return to duty. The military's asset remains valuable, despite the "damage" that they incur as a result of service, because of the military spouse's resilience. In other words, partnering with military caregivers in resilience permits the retreat of the state, as the military spouse fills the support void following gender norms and neoliberalism.

Perhaps most importantly, the institutionalization of resilience among military families produces, maintains, and restores militarized masculinity, which is now informed by gendered ideas of resilience. The military caregiver/spouse embodies a feminine resilience; this caregiver keeps up morale for their family and the member while maintaining the home fires when the service member is deployed. They will lovingly provide care to the ill and injured, all the while viewing this work as a means of self-improvement. This gendered version of resilience is essential in the literal (re)construction of militarized masculinity, fostering a home life, and relationships— including marriage and caregiving—that facilitate the member to be resilient for war making. As the military family is supported in a particular version of resilience, masculinity's and militarism's privilege are sustained anew.

Conclusion

The institutionalization of resilience in the CAF, through neoliberal rationalities, places the onus (now more than ever) on military members and families to thrive in the face of psychological and emotional stressors associated with military service. Through resilience programs and ethos, the military family is being harnessed by the CAF to keep the institution running smoothly by contributing to a resilient and, consequently, deployable force. In this way, the military family is also being enlisted to support and (re)produce a version of militarized masculinity that is bound up in resilience and neoliberal citizenship. While on the surface there appears to be progress, insofar as the military addresses mental health and provides support for military families, the institutionalization of resilience enables the ongoing gendered militarization of military spouses' labour under the pretext of wellbeing. Resilience enables the state to reduce more robust or substantial support for mental health and wellbeing for its military members and families. Instead, resilience regimes encourage individuals in the military community to support themselves through their personal relationships. The following chapter examines the ways in which the military community makes their own systems of support, with military spouses at the centre.

Chapter 4
"Taking Care of Their Own":
Gendering Informal Systems of Support in the Military Community

> We serve in so many ways. We're the ones helping the new guy, the new family. I've been the one bringing the new spouses into the fold. I'm helping them get on so their husband can go do what he needs to do, and is not dealing with a wife saying, "I'm leaving you, I can't handle this." For the person who joins, if the spouse has an easier time joining the lifestyle, it'll be better for everyone around. I spend a lot of time helping my community, being there and bringing new people into the fold, because I didn't get that; no one did that for me. I give them what I would have wanted.
> —Spanner, Interview 16

> The military has definitely forced me to change my perception of [what a] family is, what it will look like. I talk to my girlfriends all the time; I have friends that I've made that I'll be closer with, 100 percent, than a lot of my family, because they've been there.
> —Spanner, Interview 2

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) adheres to the idea that it must "take care of their own." "Taking Care of Our Own" is the title of video series produced by the Department of National Defence in 2013 to share information with Canadians about the military. The video's central message is captured in its conclusion, where a female narrator remarks, "Our soldiers and military families are the foundation of the Army's success and provide outstanding service to Canada and Canadians. In return, the Canadian Army cares for them in many ways" (National Defence 2013). Versions of the refrain "caring for our own" circulate in official CAF policies, including Canada's defence policy *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (2017d, 30); in statements by federal Minister of Defence Harjit Sajjan, who notes that, in the implementation of the defence policy, the "number one focus is caring for our people" (Sajjan 2019a); and amongst the community of military families (Spanner, Interview 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10).

The CAF also subscribes to the idea that the military is itself "one big family" (see Falvey 2017). For example, the most popular and widely circulated blog for Canadian military families, *She Is Fierce* (a title that echoes the resilience theme discussed in Chapter 3), welcomes new spouses to the community with a post titled

"Advice to the New Military Spouse from Your New Family" (Reccewife 2018). Veteran transition[17] materials acknowledge, "serving in the Canadian Armed Forces is unlike any other job [because] when you enlist you gain an instant family" (Veterans Affairs 2018). The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs 1998 report, which was the impetus for Defence Administrative Order and Directive 5044-1 Families (National Defence 2000) discussed in Chapter 1, indicates that a "Family Network" is essential to sustaining military families' wellbeing and morale. The Canadian Armed Forces Family Network enumerates the connections that military families make in support of their wellness, including the institution, the community, and families and friends (see National Defence 2000; MFS, n.d.(b), 13). These connections comprise their family network, their military family. Developing a cohesive military community, where military families are supported and committed to one another, boosts morale and increases loyalty to the CAF, thus strengthening operational effectiveness. By operating as "one big family," military families are facilitated in being the "strength behind the uniform."

The CAF's axioms "we take care of our own" and "the military is one big family" are challenged by a central theme that emerged from the interviews conducted for this study: families and spouses—not the military—do the care work to support one another. In particular, informal relationships and friendships with other military spouses provide the most effective and meaningful sources of support to navigate the challenges of military life. This is an especially important finding given the CAF's recent and increased attention to the wellbeing of military families and corresponding initiatives, which have been discussed throughout this dissertation.

This chapter investigates how the informal systems of support in the CAF are developed and maintained by the relationships, labour, and everyday activities of military family members. "Support," for the purpose of chapter, refers to any assistance that eases the burdens of military life. Much of this labour involves social reproduction—that is, the practices that maintain and reproduce people (Luxton 1980, 166–67), which tends to be unpaid and undertaken by women in the home (Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas 2014, 90).

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[17] Veteran transition refers to leaving service life and transitioning to civilian life.

Support can include emotional support, such as helping a spouse who suffers from PTSD to fall asleep over the phone (Spanner, Interview 24); physical labour, such as bringing over wine and Timbits for a spouse who has just moved (Spanner, Interview 21); and providing financial assistance, such as paying for groceries for a family who struggles to "get by" on the income of a low ranking, non-commissioned member (Spanner, Interview 1). These activities and relationships challenge what constitutes a family, because kinship and support is taking place outside of the nuclear family, and is often structured around female friendship, which might challenge patriarchy. However, these practices are deeply indebted to the labour of military spouses and gendered ideas of the family, pointing to a tension in these systems of support. For the purpose of this chapter, I term this informal system of support the "military community as family" model, and argue that it is sustained by feminized practices of care between military spouses, especially women. While military families have long engaged in informal practices of support, such as the welcome wagon and warm lines,[18] the contemporary logics through which individuals embrace (or not) the military community as family model are increasingly informed by neoliberal principles of self-sufficiency, resilience, and survival. While these practices of support might be understood as a form a resistance to militarism and neoliberalism, they also secure the spouse's commitment to and labour for the military through gendered scripts of labour and a centrality of the nuclear family.

Drawing on interview data, this chapter begins by discussing the ways in which military families support one another and how the "military community as family" is developed. Then, I evaluate how the military community support system is based on and reproduces feminized practices of care. This section considers how informal systems of support between military spouses constitute resistance to militarism's reliance on patriarchal forms of the family, largely because these care practices centre women's agency and friendship. However, these subversive practices of support between military spouses also privilege the military service member and the military marriage, and thus

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[18] Welcome wagons refer the process of welcoming a newly posted military family to community through introductions and gifts. A warm line refers to a telephone communication system, where military wives would provide support to one another, usually hierarchical on the basis of the husband's rank. Interview respondents report that these practices are less and less common.

affirm reliance of feminized practices of informal and unpaid labour in militaries. The chapter concludes by examining the contemporary influence of neoliberalism on the military community as family model. The responsibility for wellbeing is individualized through neoliberalism, and this responsibility calls for the development of informal systems of support. Rather than being "one big family," the informal systems of support in the military are many, sometimes overlapping, and based on choices about whom to include in one's community. Deciding whom to include in one's system of support is based on neoliberal qualities of self-sufficiency, resilience, and positivity. The formation of informal systems of support divides military spouses by evaluating them against an "ideal military spouse," who embraces neoliberal citizenship, like seeing military challenges as an opportunity for self-improvement. The military community as family model is essential to military family wellbeing; through its practices, the military and military service are being shored up by gendered practices and identities in informal relationships and spaces.

Developing the "Military Community as Family" Model

The "military community as family" model, the term I use throughout this chapter to refer to the informal systems of support among military families, is made possible by ideas and practices of social reproduction, solidarity, and belonging. These systems of support occur through practices of sharing holidays together (Spanner, Interview 18); being available for last-minute, emergency childcare assistance (Spanner, Interview 2); picking up household items such as food and diapers for other families (Spanner, Interview 15); providing emotional support and comfort to one another during trying times, such as a relocation (Spanner, Interview 21); connecting other spouses to the community (Spanner, Interview 26); and grieving together over the loss of a fellow community member, even if the deceased was not known personally (Spanner, Interview 3). Members of the military community feel a sense of obligation to support one another because of their shared struggles and identities, which are informed by service life and being a *military* spouse. Social practices and relationships within and between military families are shaped by and serve military cohesion. Consistent with other studies (Basham and Catignani 2018; Chisholm and Eichler 2018; Enloe 1988, 2000; Horn 2010;

Hyde 2016), these social practices are informed by gendered norms and power dynamics, which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Frequent relocation is a distinct feature of military life. CAF members will be posted several times during their careers, within Canada or abroad, due to the operational and organizational needs of the military. A member might be moved because of a career opportunity, training, or development, or to fill a vacancy. As a result, military families move three times more frequently than civilian families and have "little input over where they are posted, when they are posted, and for how long" (Daigle 2013, 4). Canadian military families identify the mobility requirement as the most unsettling feature of military life (Daigle 2013, 4). It is the loss of community and of family that makes military moves so difficult:

> [The hardest part about the military life is] the isolation. I think isolation is a big problem, and I'm feeling it, even though I have coworkers, which is more than some military spouses [have]. Friends and family—they don't live near me…You move away from your family not by choice, and maybe a core friend unit. (Spanner, Interview 17)

Military spouses are useful to the military to the extent that they embrace moving for the service member, but they become a problem if they become a "drag" on the soldier's mobility (Enloe 2000, 168). The same respondent quoted above echoes this sentiment; "the ideal [CAF] military family is one that can move around the country with no care in the world" (Spanner, Interview 17). The ideal military family, then, is one which embraces moving, despite its challenges. Displacing military families from their established networks—extended family or broader social communities—may result in stronger identification to the military community and life by necessity, which will therefore facilitate the mobility of the spouse. Re-establishing a community, a military community as family model, serves the wellbeing of military families and the CAF because it aids in relocation and thus operational effectiveness.

By displacing military families from their broader kinship structures (chosen and biological), the military community becomes the stand-in, and many respondents view this as a benefit to military life:

> The beautiful thing about the military is that you gain another family. You have to. You're away from your family for so long; [and you're] often not fortunate

enough to be posted near your family. We're in the middle of our families. (Spanner, Interview 15)

Developing a new and extended family through the military community lessens the isolation that follows the mobility requirements of service life. Thus, many members of the military community redefine what constitutes "family":

> The military definitely forced me to change my perception of what family is, what it will look like. I talk to my girlfriends all the time. I have friends that I've made that I'm 100 percent closer with than a lot of my family because they've been there. When you don't have a family to call…I mean my mom lives across the country, one of my sister's kids gets sick, it's like, "Hey mom, can you come over?" For us it's like, you pack two kids to go up to the hospital, or you go down your list [of friends] and say, "Hey, can you come over?" (Spanner, Interview 2)

As social networks and conceptions of what constitutes "family" are reworked and revolve around the military community, the spouses' loyalty to the military is made more secure (Enloe 2000, 154–97). The military community as family model, as fundamental to the cohesion and legitimization of the institution, is achieved in part because of the mobility requirement of service life. Removing military families from their civilian networks of support encourages them to turn to the military community for support and further identify with and commit to military life. The removal of the military family from civilian support systems necessitates communal forms of support between individual military families.

The CAF's institutionalization of a space that nurtures the "military community as family" points to the strategic importance of community building within the military. In fact, the institutional motivation to create Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) was to improve base–community relations by supporting military families, especially wives, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 80). MFRCs identify as the "heart of the military community, and a place through which one can find their adoptive family":

> Family means everything to the military community. Family can be your parents, children, siblings, aunts, uncles and grandparents. But it can also be your adopted family—friends, neighbours and coworkers, who might not be related to you but are the people you go to for love, support, friendship and favours. These adopted family members are especially important to military families because they might be thousands of kilometres away from their immediate family, new to a community and facing the challenges that come with the military lifestyle. Your friends and coworkers that you meet on the military journey are the ones that

understand what you are going through and will help at a moment's notice with cutting the lawn, fixing the dishwasher or watching your children when you have an emergency. (Devon Taylor, Communications and Development Coordinator at the Trenton MFRC in Rehman 2017b)

The centres are important for fostering the military community as "one big family"; this notion secures the family's commitment to the military lifestyle, to each other, and to the institution.

Frequent moves limit the military family's full integration and association with civilian life and civilian social networks, which often reinforces the military/civilian divide and encourages buy-in with communal forms of care not often seen in civilian communities. The military community as a family is underlined by a distinction between military and civilian lives, practices, and identities. Reinforcing the difference between military and civilian life strengthens the cohesion of the military community as family model. Military family members feel solidarity with their fellows because of their shared identities and struggles, which set them apart from others:

> [The best thing about military life is] the ridiculous and amazing support and community that you find, because no one else will understand what you're going through. I've had friends or even family members say, "Oh, my husband is gone for four days, this sucks." And I think, sarcastically, "Ya, I'm really sorry for your loss—four days, holy smokes." But that's their reality, that's the worst that they've ever experienced, so it's hard...You have to put that into perspective. Like that really sucks, but inside you're like, "you have no idea." All that to say, the other military wives…they understand. (Spanner, Interview 22)

While separation from family is a requirement of other occupations, such as oil workers, it is the compounding dynamics and risks of mobility, unpredictability and danger, and the military's relationship to the state that are unique to military service (Spanner, Interview 21). These particular dynamics result in identification with military life and the community as distinct from civilian life. As one respondent notes, it is only by experiencing military life that one can truly understand its challenges:

> It's hard for people to know what my life is like...They don't understand what's it like to move away from family. Most people I know stay in their hometown or home province. They [civilians] have no idea what happens. I share reunion videos online, or the widow with the casket coming out of the plane. People don't realize that this is something that could happen to you. (Spanner, Interview 4)

The risk, injury and death that accompanies military life increases the stakes of survival for military families, as compared to the civilian population, which promotes communal

practices of care. While military spouses express that civilians cannot truly know the struggles faced by military families, many of them wish that the general public better understood their lives and contributions (Spanner, Interview 2, 13, 14, 23). When military spouses highlight and share information about military life with civilians through social media posts, for example, militarism— that is, the ideology that promotes war making as a solution to conflict and privileges the military in Canada—becomes naturalized and reinforced. At the same time, the ideal military spouse, who is supportive, loyal, and self-sacrificing, becomes visible. This ideal military spouse adheres to gendered relations of power in marriages and families, such as emphasizing the team approach to military service (Weinstein and White 1997, 2). The team approach to military service is facilitated by community attachment through gendered practices of care. The next section considers the essential role of gender in developing and maintaining the military community as family.

Gender and the "Military Community as Family"

Female military spouses in particular recognize the importance of creating their community of support—their military community as family—to overcome the challenges that result from service life. The support systems between military spouses are deemed essential to "making it" in military life (Spanner, Interview 6). In addition to providing social reproductive labour to keep their "home fires burning," as discussed throughout this dissertation, female military spouses support each other:

> [Military spouses] are the people I'll call at 3 in the a.m. With the exception of my sister, [they] are all military spouses. I have a social circle through work, but I wouldn't call them; I'd call a military spouse first. During my husband's second tour, I called [a military spouse] and she came over with wine and cleaned my house and we laughed and cried. She could relate, didn't judge that I was having a break down and my house was a mess. She didn't care. (Spanner, Interview 11)

As has been documented in previous studies (Harrison and Laliberté 1994), social practices of support within the military family community, and between wives in particular, are structured around care work:

> The military family is: if shit hits the fan, we all come together…I need babysitters? Complete strangers, and they'll come together because there are no trust issues. I did that once; I babysat somebody's kids for a week because her husband was deployed and she was injured. I stayed with her kids; I'd never met

her kids before. For a week. That's what we do. It's what we do. (Spanner, Interview 21)

Supporting other military spouses is deeply connected to the identities of many military spouses. As the respondent above emphasizes, "It's what we do" (Spanner, Interview 21). The obligation military spouses feel towards each other is based on gendered ideas of whose responsibility it is to provide stability in the private and civilian sphere. Moreover, a shared identity and common understanding between military spouses, which is contrasted with the civilian identity and civilian experiences as described above, generate an enhanced commitment to one another. Tying the military spousal identity to a responsibility for the home front and care for other spouses normalizes those gendered practices. As this identity is idealized in the military community, it becomes a deeply entrenched expectation of military spouses.

Male military members also support the military community as family model in ways that reaffirm gendered divisions of labour and identities in military homes and communities. At the unit-level,[19] or through informal friendship, military service members organize snow clearing for wives whose husbands are deployed or on exercise. Snow removal was a common cause of distress among female respondents, especially during deployments and if they are responsible for very young children (Spanner, Interview 8, 13, 17, 20, 22). A female military spouse reflects on the value of this support:

> It's so Canadian; my husband organized a snow removal for me when he left, which is supper helpful...The first snow here, a bunch of guys in the unit went to all the houses whose husbands are deployed and they shovelled their walkways and driveways. (Spanner, Interview 22)

These forms of support are similar to "rear parties," which involves members of the regiment who did not deploy or go on exercise working together to assist wives who are coping on their own (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 73). At present, these forms of support appear to be informal, organized not by the commanding officer of the regiment but among members based on informal relationships (Spanner, Interview 13). Shovelling snow for women whose husbands are away on deployment or exercise reaffirms a

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[19] A military unit, or regiment, is the smallest level of division of the CAF, after the regional division and brigade.

gendered division of labour within the military community as family that assigns yard work and manual labour of the home to "husbands." This division of labour is so normalized in the military community that it must be filled by another man when a husband is away. A respondent explains that this support is offered to female spouses, not to male spouses: "people help shovel [the] driveways of the women who are at home without their spouses, rather than the men. No one would go shovel my guy friend's driveway right now" (Spanner, Interview 4). Organizing snow removal for wives supports a particular version of militarized masculinity, characterized by camaraderie and loyalty between military men, which plays out through chivalry towards women, especially spouses. Here, heteronormativity as an essential component of militarized masculinity is reinforced because members fill in as "husband" for their deployed comrade. Moreover, militarized masculinity becomes (re)associated with the gendered division of labour in the home, relieving the feminized spouse of strenuous physical labour.

While gendered dynamics of support in the military community as family are normalized and (re)produced through practices such as organized snow removal, there are also critiques of the gendered dynamics of military life. Indeed, one of the respondents cited above points to the unequal treatment of female and male spouses in relation to snow removal (Spanner, Interview 4). Echoing this critique, a male spouse condemns the differential treatment he received on the basis of gender, when he sought snow removal through an MFRC:

> I heard there was a service that would do your walks. I was going to out of town for a few days and I knew it was going to snow a lot, so I was like, "let's just phone and see what kind of services they offer." As soon as I told them I was a male, they said, "you're a guy why, can't you do it?" I was like, "what type of family support is this? I'm a guy? So you only support women?" They said, "You shouldn't need it - are you disabled?" I said, "Sorry to bother you," click, done…I don't care, if you [need] support, you [need] support. It doesn't matter who [you are]. (Spanner, Interview 12)

The male military spouse defies the gendered dynamics that characterize most military families. But more importantly he defies the ideals of masculinity in the military community, which is characterized by physical labour in the community and ableism. More broadly, critiques of, and resistance to, the military's gendered practices and power

relations means adopting flexible gender roles in the home (Spanner, Interview 10, 11, 15). This flexibility was most often framed as female spouses undertaking traditionally male tasks to make deployments and exercises easier for themselves:

> You have to be incredibly flexible with your gender roles in a marriage because, yes, in the traditional sense, he's the breadwinner, he brings the money home, ok. [But] that's where the tradition stops. We're very much a unit, the roles change all the time. You'll see me taking out the garbage while he's doing the dishes, which makes it easier when he's away because I'm still self sufficient enough to do what I got to do. I was raised by a singled mom myself. (Spanner, Interview 15)

Only one respondent identified as a feminist, which she defined as "adopting more masculine roles [because it] makes me more successful" (Spanner, Interview 11). Military spouses are empowered by their ability to successfully manage deployments, which is enhanced by mastering traditionally masculine household tasks. Critiques of the gendered division of labour in military families, such as these, are in tension with the snow removal support system for military spouses, to be sure. As spouses become more adept with "masculine" household tasks they reaffirm their commitment to keep the home fires burning in support of military operations. While these "subversive" practices within the home are empowering for military spouses, by invoking neoliberal principles of self-sufficiency, they do not disrupt the gendered power relations of military life, which appropriates spouses' labour in, and commitment to, the home front for operational ends. Only one respondent identified outright as "not a feminist," because feminism is incompatible with her belief that "women should be home with the kids, if she can" (Spanner, Interview 24). The same respondent acknowledges that the military is patriarchal and misogynist, but contends: "women and men should complement each other; they shouldn't take over each other; that's how I live and I think the military helps with that" (Spanner, Interview 24). The military community as family operates through practices of care and support in ways that reaffirm essentialist gender norms.

To mitigate the impacts of deployments and relocations, military spouses, especially women, support one another through emotional labour. Military spouses provide emotional support to other spouses in the form of comfort and company. One respondent describes asking a friend to help her avoid feeling alone:

> I'll call my friends at 2 a.m. and I'm like, just sleep with me, and she'll put her phone by her ear and we'll just sleep and hear each other breathe just because you cannot stand to be alone at that precise moment. (Spanner, Interview 24)

As a component of social reproduction, the labour involved in emotion work is not recognized as "work" because of its relationship to intimacy and personal relationships (Erickson 2005). It is further rendered invisible because it is perceived to be what females do "naturally," in private spaces, practices, and relationships. However, this work is essential in sustaining the community of military families and, consequently, the morale of the Forces. The emotion work provided by military spouses is also essential for the wellbeing of the service member, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The practices of providing emotional support for other military spouses and to the military community as family are embedded in gendered dynamics of care, which are essential to "surviving" military life, as described by a respondent:

> Spouses all rally around each other and check in: "How's your day? I'm going to Walmart; do you need anything? Do you need diapers?" I do the same for them. In my little group there are four girls whose husbands are away. So if I'm going to the store, I say, "Hey, I'm going here; do you need anything?" What's another jug of milk? Or [if] your kids are sick, or I'm [going to] see my social worker…My friend just asked when my next appointment was and offered to take my daughter… It's just that support is—it makes it. You don't feel alone. But you have to find that group…It's like dating. (Spanner, Interview 7)

Equating the relationships between military spouses to dating reflects a desire for intimacy and companionship in light of the separation and mobility requirements of military life. When military spouses participate and contribute to the military community as family, their relationships are being structured in response to the difficult requirements of military life. Indeed, the unique challenges of military life compel shared responsibility between families in the military, which are unlike those in civilian spaces. By embracing the military community as the source of support in response to the difficulties associated with that community, the legitimacy of that community, alongside its challenges, are reinforced. What's more, dating is also popularly conceptualized as work, which requires emotional labour. Equating the development and maintenance of the military community as family to dating between spouses reinforces the idea that emotional labour is women's work.

The care that the military community as family provides contributes to the operational readiness of the Forces. As some respondents recognize, contributing to operational readiness is the reason some spouses provide emotional support to others. One respondent, for example, explains,

> We had a really tight, tight group. In my husband's group of guys, all the wives were really tight. And being that my husband was a higher rank [than the other guys], and I, being his wife, would take care of the wives. I would call them, make sure they were ok. If someone was having problems, I would help out as much as possible…Having been over there [deployed in war], I know what its like over there, and to have something weighing on you, to worry—you can't afford it. It's a matter of life or death: you come back alive or you don't. Anything that we can do to make the soldiers' minds at ease and let them know their wives are taken care of, that's what you need to do. So as long as I've been around the unit, as long as we've not been posted away, I've always been a part of making sure we take care of the women. (Spanner, Interview 19)

This sentiment is captured in the colloquial phrase that circulates in the CAF that: "a worried soldier is a dead soldier" (Spanner, Interview 24) which points to the necessity that military members not be burdened with concern for the home front while deployed. The military community as "one big family" relieves the service member of the responsibility for the home front and this liberation is viewed as normal, if not essential. As these examples and other recent research (Hyde 2016; Basham and Catignani 2018) suggest, military operations require that the military spouse be ever ready for domestic disruptions, such as deployments and moves. Moreover, the military spouse is expected to manage these disruptions at the drop of a hat. Victoria Basham and Sergio Catignani draw on the "military readiness" refrain to suggest that militaries require that wives also be in a constant state of "readiness," where their emotional (and other) labour is expected to "smooth out ruptures of military deployments" for the service member, the family, and themselves (2018, 159–60). The mantra that "we care for our own" would be more aptly worded, "*spouses* care for their own."

Although the military community as family model operates through gendered practices of care, it can also disrupt the centrality of the patriarchal nuclear family and the familialization the results from neoliberalism. This support system is centred on women caring for each other and extends kinship beyond heteronormative formations of individual families and households:

I've joked especially this past year, I wish "sister wives" was actually a real thing for us. Husband sharing. Because it's amazing how much less stressful your kids are when there are other kids around, because you all pitch in with each other. We joked they should have a building or an area for wives/families whose husbands are away and we all move in with each other and help take care of everything and everyone. (Spanner, Interview 22)

On the whole, the spouse world is very supportive of each other…We have to be. My friends jokingly called ourselves Army Sister Wives. We're married to the military. It makes sense. We're all married to the same figurative man, if you know what I mean. Guys away, spouses take turn babysitting. One girl would get all seven kids for the day so that everyone else could do something. Or they'd all cook a big dinner, all banding together to get through it. (Spanner, Interview 16)

Practices of support between military spouses represent a form of resistance by the military spouses to reframe what constitutes the family, and their relationships to one another and the military. In the above passages, alternative family arrangements centre female friendship to respond to the problems faced by many military spouses—namely, isolation and challenges with domestic work. Here, possible polygamy is framed as female bonding as opposed to an extension of patriarchal marriage, which may empower women and their agency: "polygamy…[is] a potential site for feminine self-actualization, because this family arrangement benefits them more than the husband" (Luckett 2014, 562). In other words, through these relationships and practices of caring for one another, military spouses may find power through subverting patriarchal power structures of marriage *and* the military. Regardless of the term used, these practices by military spouse organize "family" in ways that transcend traditional notions of the family.

Practices that recast female relationships and family arrangements can be understood as a strategy to deal with the challenges of military life, which are now informed by contemporary gendered practices of neoliberal society. These practices are characterized as a feminized demand to balance work, domesticity, childrearing, and in an increasingly isolating capitalist society (McRobbie 2009; Negra 2009 in Luckett 2014, 562; see also Chapter 2). Throughout this dissertation, I have shown that neoliberal influences, which are perpetuated through CAF policies and programs, compel military families and spouses to be autonomous and self-sufficient in their realization of wellbeing. Instead, care practices between military spouses in the military community as

family may disrupt the neoliberal celebration of individualism by developing community approaches to survival and success.

Although the relationships and practices of care within the military community that reframe what constitutes the family challenge some norms, they also privilege and reaffirm heterosexual marriage because they are structured around the military "man." These configurations of the family render ordinary a dynamic where women ought not rely on their husbands or formal systems of support, which are both scarce resources. Instead, under the conditions of scarce resources, military spouses look to other women in the military community for support. The informal relationships between military spouses reaffirm the military's dependence on feminized practices of care. While female intimacy and friendship provide support and empowerment outside of the heteronormative family, this reordering is less about sex and romance and more about accommodating gendered divisions of labour required of military life:

> If polygamy [or subversive family arrangements] appears an attractive solution for women, it is only because there are significant problems in more hetero-orthodox feminine lifestyles that society fails to address. The importance of female relationships foregrounds how time-starved neoliberal culture's emphasis on the individual isolates women, something with significant consequences for domestic labour, relationships and recreation, and femininity itself. (Luckett 2014, 574)

The military community as family functions because military wives restructure their relationships to each other in order to keep their households and heteronormative marriages functioning. So while these practices of care between women married to service members may challenge the patriarchy and familialization that neoliberalism calls for, they also respond to the requirements of neoliberalism and militarism, thereby legitimizing them. Likewise, the legitimacy of nuclear family is reinforced as respondents dismiss alternative forms of kinship as "jokes" or something to be only imagined (Spanner, Interview 16, 24). Despite the potential for co-living arrangements and alternative kinship structures to better meet the needs of the military community, they are dismissed as jokes. Joking about subversive forms of kinship reveals how powerful the notion of the nuclear family is in society, and in the military in particular. As military spouses sustain their marriages and families *and* the marriages and families of other spouses, the military community as family as a gendered model becomes further

entrenched and commonplace.

The heteroronormative family remains central to the CAF through its policies and programs, despite instances of alternative kinship practices. Consider military-related death and injury, where alternative forms of kinship are not recognized by the CAF. Institutionalized bereavement support, for example, such as communications plans, are offered only to family members, which as noted in the Introduction, are defined by the CAF with conjugality at the centre (spouse or common-law partner); may include dependent children or adults; and where "relation" is recognized through blood, marriage, common-law partnership, and legal adoption (CFMWS 2019c). Importantly, sharing a household is central to the recognition of a family member, with the exception being those living apart for military-related reasons only. These definitions are consistent with Canada's federal Income Tax legislation. However, the military community relies more profoundly on systems of support outside of the nuclear family than civilian communities because of the operational requirements and consequences of service life:

> In the immediate aftermath of my friend's suicide, I was out of town. (He waited for a very specific day. Every friend of his was out.) Our respective military communities banded around us until we were all together. I was able to call a friend to go check on my husband that morning, another picked me up, another one took the dog, took me grocery shopping…A lot of friends have had to lean on me (in return). We had a friend who had two miscarriages; they called my husband and I because we were the only people they knew who didn't have kids, so we were there while it was happening, the immediate aftermath. I was able to take her to the hospital the next day. Things like that. (Spanner, Interview 16)

The same respondent goes on to say that "you fill the role one's blood family would normally fill, but you fill it better because you understand what's happening." This respondent is expressing a longing for their "real" family, who they are separated from because of service requirements. This reflects a normative ideation of the family based on blood lineage, which is contrast and in tension with, the military community as family that develops on the basis of shared identities. Normative formations of the family are also inconsistent with many families outside of the CAF. The same respondent adds, however, "the military doesn't recognize other forms of kin" (Spanner, Interview 16). Military family wellbeing and support may be improved if the CAF recognizes alternative forms of kinship. However, the CAF benefits from a subversive supportive relationship between military families with spouses at the centre, while the nuclear and

heteronormative family is reaffirmed. Consequently, the supports made possible through the military community as family model remain informal and private, such that the labour and commitment by military spouses can be more subtly appropriated for operational goals.

Neoliberalism and the "Military Community as Family"

The model of the military community as family, and its central tenet of "taking care of their own," while gendered, is simultaneously influenced by neoliberal policies and rationalities. Neoliberalism here refers to policies that devolve responsibility for social welfare and reproduction to families or households, the third or voluntary sector, and the private sector (Bezanson 2006, 8). Neoliberalism also shapes a morality that socializes individuals to be self-reliant, flexible, and efficient. When the market is not an option, neoliberalism requires that people rely on "communities, families and friends" instead of the state for social and economic support (Bezanson 2006, 4). This principle is what is at work in the military community as family model, as individuals seek support from informal networks, instead of relying on the CAF. Informal and community support systems in the military are developed in order to supplement the shortcomings of institutional support by the state:

> Several military couples we've interacted with, they are going to be there for us as a couple, not just my spouse. We support each other like family—and it goes both ways. But it's the administration that should be supporting us like family, but they don't. (Spanner, Interview 12)

> It's just me and the pets. I'm the one shovelling the driveway when he's gone, bringing soup to his friends, helping x, y, z. Spouses do everything that a family would normally do, and you can be doing it just for your partner or your partner's friends, or your partner's friends' spouses. It's about being there to support each other, because all the support the guys get at work, the spouses don't get. So like if it were a young guy living in the base, they'd have access to everything; life would be taken care of. But when they live in the Qs[20] and they have a family, they don't have that, so we do it for each other. We go get the extra jobs, go to messes, do bake sales. (Spanner, Interview 16)

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[20] This refers to Private Military Quarters (PMQs). PMQs are housing provided to CAF members and their families.

Despite efforts by the CAF to partner with military families, and to assist them (primarily through investments in MFRCs, and discussed in Chapter 1), many respondents report that these "supports" are inadequate (Spanner, Interview 21) and that the "'family first' mantra (i.e., that the CAF prioritizes family wellbeing) is a joke" (Spanner, Interview 27). Respondents also point out the gendered nature of institutional supports; as the respondent quoted above explains, "all the support the guys get at work, the spouses don't get" (Spanner, Interview 16). To put it another way, despite military spouses' essential contributions to the organization, military spouses receive marginal substantive support as compared to the service member. For example, military members receive health care services, such as a doctor, from the CAF, whereas military families receive health care from the province. This creates great challenges for families in finding and maintaining adequate and consistent health care as they move from province to province (Spanner, Interview 20), which is especially difficult for families that require specialized medical care (Spanner, Interview 6, 15, 21). Although military spouses take on the majority of the burden to re-establish home life following a move (Spanner, Interview 27), they are not full and equal members of the military community, which manifests in institutional entitlements (Gray 2016, 918). Indeed, the CAF, like other militaries, address spousal and family unhappiness only to the extent that it impacts operational effectiveness, especially the service member's ability to do their job (Harrison and Laliberté 1994, 192–98; see also Horn 2010).

The CAF provides support only when it enhances operational effectiveness. This practice is shaped by the contemporary influence of neoliberalism, where institutional support is directed at the development of self-sufficiency among military families. For example, MFRCs provide military families and spouses with the opportunity to create their informal networks of support:

> When the teachers' strike happened, a lot of moms were discussing casual care at the MFRC but that they didn't want to flood it. So we arranged who's watching whose kids and when. We kind of had a rotation going to support each other. (Interview 25)

In this example, the partially state-funded support functions as a tool to develop more self-sufficient military spouses, to reduce their need to rely on these formal supports in the first place. It is an interesting juxtaposition against the initial motivation behind the

creation of MFRCs: to be the hub of the military community as family and source of support. At present, MFRC culture encourages military members to use the MFRC to develop informal support systems. A comment by one respondent who is an MFRC board member exemplifies this imperative. Describing the organization's strategic direction, the respondent remarks:

> We offer respite childcare in extenuating circumstances; but we push people to create their own networks and not to rely on it…Resiliency is the key, but we're too busy in crisis mode rather than teaching resilience. Part of that is we've become used to crisis services, free childcare instead of having to go build a community to go help ourselves. [We can] just walk into an MFRC and get the services we need. It's easier to use respite free childcare than it is for me to find a support group, make friends and trade childcare. If I use respite childcare I don't have to also offer childcare to someone. Some [of the] burden is on us; a lot of it is… resilience [means] making relationships [and] reaching out. (Spanner, Interview 10)

Being resilient, a skill and ethos discussed in Chapter 3, is the logic that promotes familialization and results in increased labour expectations of military spouses. The support service referenced in the passage above is respite care, which is an emergency childcare service, provided by the Morale and Welfare Services, for the first ninety-six hours of an emergency, when the service member is away for service-related reasons for more than thirty days (MWS, n.d.(a)). This provision is consistent with neoliberal policies and moralities because it socializes members to reduce their reliance on the state. To require justification to use public resources suggests that the standard member does not need to use formal services. At the same time social pressure, such as that which circulates in MFRCs, condemns those for relying on these services because they've failed to be adequately resilient, meaning self-supporting be developing relationships and a community.

Neoliberalism creates new forms of selfhood, where people see themselves primarily in entrepreneurial terms (Brown 2015) and embrace a morality of individualized and active responsibility to enhance their own wellbeing (Rottenberg 2014, 421). The entrepreneurial member of the military community as family governs themself so that they may be self-sufficient and productive despite the insecurities of military life. The military family member enhances their wellbeing by developing their informal support networks of care through friendships and community building. Consider this post of thanks to the author of a Canadian military family blog *She Is Fierce*, who is

also recognized as a leader in the community of military spouses:

> You are a leader in community care. For all the negative things I have heard over the years about military spouses, there is nothing quite like the care we can give each other—even when tired, stressed, overwhelmed, frustrated. There is always someone happy to share a meal, help paint and prep for listing, take kids in a pinch or for a much-needed break. I am so thankful for all the amazing people who put themselves out there for others, it truly is how we thrive, or at the very least, survive. (Frank 2019)

The give-and-take of informal care within the military community as family enables the military community to be self-sufficient and to thrive. Here, militarization and neoliberalism are combining to increase the requirements of military spouses, especially women. Militarization, which places demands on the commitments and labour of women, is enhanced through the privatization and individualization of wellbeing, which compels spouses engage in practices of community care. Community care is essential to survival in response to this privatization. As military spouses engage in practices of care for one another, and take on responsibility for their individual and community wellbeing, it permits the ongoing privatization of care, increasing the demands on military families.

Yet the informal practices of support in the military community challenge the principles of individualism and competitiveness, which are central to neoliberalism. Neoliberalism weakens collective practices and social commitments to others (Brown 2015, 2019; Braedley and Luxton 2010; Brodie 2007). By contrast, community practices of care among military spouses suggest solidarity, altruism, and empathy, and a moral concern for the wellbeing of others. The generosity practiced by military spouses, in support of one another, alongside the military's inadequate responsibility for the wellbeing of its families and spouses, may represent a form of resistance by military spouses to neoliberal influences, as it revives the social through collective intervention for improving military family and spousal wellbeing.

However, the individual is not done away with in the military community as family model because "community care" becomes about "self-care." Self-care is an especially important consequence and requirement of neoliberalism, as discussed in Chapter 3, where individuals engage in practices that enhance their ability to withstand and thrive following hardships. Military family members care for others because it enables them to better face military life, which demands so much of them. Consider the

social media post above, in which the author explicitly links the supportive nature of the military spousal community to her ability to "survive, if not thrive" (Frank 2019). This Facebook post was accompanied by an article called "Self-Care Isn't Enough; We Need Community Care to Thrive" (Dockray 2019). Certainly, community care involves empathy, compassion, and selflessness. Against the backdrop of neoliberalism, however, individuals are compelled to engage in community practices of support, in part, because of the returns it provides to them in the face of insecurity, vulnerability, and difficulties, as a comment in response to the *She Is Fierce* post called "To the Spouse Facing Their First Deployment" shows:

> I took a younger spouse under my wing during our husbands' absence. It was her first deployment. But since I was a brand new mom, she helped me with the kid as much as I helped her with the coping and all. I expected to be the one that could help, but she ended up doing so much for me! So gather with other spouses, if you can. (Valerie in Reccewife 2017)

Advocates of community care argue that "the care provider knows that when they will also need care in the future, others will be there for them" (Valerio in Dockray 2019). Moreover, the benefits of participating in communal forms of support are recommended because they improve personal health and wellbeing, including mental health. While perhaps a form of resistance, community care is also consistent with the entrepreneurial neoliberal subject, who optimizes their resources, productivity, and self-sufficiency through personal initiative and innovation (Rottenberg 2014, 422). Here, the act of developing informal systems of care is the resource, which occurs through personal initiative. Within the framework of neoliberalism, self-care and community are not in opposition; rather, they inform each other and make the other possible. Care for others and self-care represent acts of flexibility, self-regulation, and responsibility, which are all valorized in neoliberal regimes (Kennelly 2014 in Lloro-Bidarta and Semenko 2017, 22). Self-care as community care enables the downloading of responsibility for support to the private sphere, and makes individuals responsible for their own wellbeing. All the while these practices are representative of militarization because the family member is reliant on the military community and feminized practices of care within it for their wellbeing. That is to say, the military community as family model represents both a resistance to, and an instantiation of neoliberal familialization.

With its emphasis on individualism and entrepreneurialism, neoliberalism encourages military spouses to be responsible for creating their own informal networks:

> I don't hang out with anyone here outside [of] the [military] community. I make my community on Facebook…[during] posting season, [you should] ask to be let into local groups…[developing your network] starts that way. I did that last year. You're likely to know people on bases [and] after a certain amount of time you build a national network. (Spanner, Interview 16)

> I think [support] depends on the group that you fall into. I think it could even be unit based as well. I read the blog *She is Fierce*, I read her blog a lot and she talks about having a fantastic community, and [that] you gotta get out there and do it [create your community]. I'm like, "Ah dude, I just gotta go out and do it? [But] I'm so cozy at home." It really depends. My husband is not very outgoing either...he's [also] not one to be, like, forging the connections ahead of time, but I mean that's just his personality. (Spanner, Interview 13)

Building informal networks of support becomes a project of improving the self, which is a responsibility of the good neoliberal military spouse. Developing one's own military community as family requires effort, a self-ordering so to speak, such as "making the effort" and "getting involved!" (*Jessica Lynn Writes* 2017). On her blog *Jessica Lynn Writes*, self-described "Air Force wife" Jess describes making friends with military spouses as a strategy of survival: "[Getting through it] It means finding or sometimes creating your own village, and clinging to your military family and friends while you wait for your spouse to return" (2019). Creating these communities is itself labour; it requires time and energy, which is evermore limited in a neoliberal framework, but nonetheless essential for wellbeing and survival and a requirement of military families.

As the creation of informal networks is privileged as the mechanism through which individuals can survive and thrive in military life, those who struggle to create these supports may be left behind and sometimes blamed for this "failure":

> It's all about the support network…[being] in groups, involved with other military families that are resilient. The ones that separate themselves…have mental health issues, or [the] more introverted [spouses] will have issues. They won't have that support. For my resilience, Coffee Connections is important and having friends. I make friends easily. (Spanner, Interview 25)

Developing informal systems of support can be compared to acquiring skills of resilience, where the failure to organize oneself accordingly is a personal shortcoming. Those military families and spouses who struggle, then, have failed to appropriately equip

themselves with the skills and resources to survive—which, in this case, is the development of informal networks. Neoliberalism operates by idealizing "good citizens" for being rational "self-reliant market actors" and punishing "bad citizens" for "personal choices" that lead to mismanaged lives" (Bloch and Taylor 2014, 199). Vulnerability and failure is a personal shortcoming related to, as the interview passage above states "separating oneself from the community," obscuring the structural and political forces that contribute to vulnerability, such as inadequate institutional support and appropriation of feminized labour practices for militarized ends.

The military community as family model ought not be understood as one big family or unified system of support, but rather as a collection of smaller and sometimes overlapping informal networks: micro "military communities as family" models. Some respondents note a shift away from the military community as *one* big family, which characterized previous eras of military life in Canada:

> [It] breaks my heart that there was shift. Before, when I was a kid in the military, a military moving van would pull up and half a dozen neighbors [would] come over with baked goods [and] come visit. I remember moving from Cold Lake to Calgary [when] I was twelve [and] four different families came with food, iced tea, [and] toilet paper.[21] That doesn't happen anymore. My husband and I were part of community council, [to] try to [develop] a better sense of community, but we gave up after two years. [There was] no buy-in. I got money from the MFRC, bought appetizers and had an open house on base at the curling club and no one came. [We even had] free food and no one came. And we went door-to-door, advertising [the event] for weeks…People keep to themselves a lot more than they used to. I have ten families [that] I can count on. Three are neighbors; one family [I met] through social media ([the spouse] was looking for a babysitter [and] so I offered my daughters [to babysit for her]); [and] three are spouses whose husbands work with my husband. (Spanner, Interview 11)

The contemporary military community as family is smaller and more fractured than it once was. As a result, military communit*ies* as family are exclusive. Consistent with neoliberalism, military spouses create their informal systems of supports through choice and on the basis of individual relationships, as these two statements from respondents illustrate:

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[21] This is an example of a welcome wagon.

> You get really good at reading people. Ok yup, I trust you with my kids. Ummm, you're cool for the park, but not for going over to your house. That's how you compartmentalize your people. (Spanner, Interview 2)

> You have to make your own community where you are; otherwise you'll go crazy. But you have to be picky about it. (Spanner, Interview 1)

Following Meg Luxton, informal relationships of care are "based on an individual's relationship with the other people and reflect their personal preferences, moral values and individual proclivities" (2006, 271). Within the framework of neoliberalism, our obligations to others coincide with the development of "communities of choice": "people build their lives according to their own preferences and want to be part of self-chosen, often temporary, communities; which differs from communities of fate characterized by shared fate or destiny, such as kinship" (Meijer, Schout, and Abma 2017, 330–31). Buying into communities of care through choice is where individuals actively take control over their self-preservation and success in the military life.

"Communities of choice" can divide, and many military spouses who responded to this study pointed to the internal divisions among military spouses:

> A lot of other members' wives are quite shy or introverted. I certainly can be, especially in situations where I don't know other people. I also get the sense from them that they look at me as different. That might be my own worry or self-perception. I feel different and I feel they look at me as if I'm different. The other spouses all seem to have little cliques. (Spanner, Interview 14)

> As much as I love the military, spouses are cliquey. It's hard work to get in with them. That's just women in general, lately. I'm choosey with my military family—who I will talk to and trust. I've been at the wrong end of the "mean girl" mentality that some wives get. (Spanner, Interview 11)

As the military community as family model develops on the basis of individual relationships, choice, and effort some military family members risk being left on the margins and consequently more vulnerable to the burdens of military life. Of course, a consequence of neoliberalism is inequality and division (Brown 2015, 38).

In her book entitled *Maneuvers*, Cynthia Enloe suggests that dividing women, especially military wives, is a tactic that reinforces the gendered militarization of women's lives because this division obscures the ways in which these systems operate:

The "maneuvers" of the book's title refer to the efforts that military officials and their civilian supporters have made in order to ensure that each of these groups of women feel special and separate. Militarized officials need women themselves to nurture the boundaries that separate them from one another. Militaries have counted on military officers' wives to look down on the wives of enlisted men, and on all military wives to look down on women working in the discos around a military base…The more distanced each group of women has felt from the other, the less likely any of them would be to notice how the political manipulations of gender affected them all. Thus the less likely any of them are to think about militarism. (Enloe 2000, xiii)

The division amongst military spouses is often informed by policing the parameters of what constitutes the ideal military spouse. The "mean girl" culture reported by some respondents is a modified version of speaking anger or disappointment about women who have fallen short. The "mean girl" culture reflects and expands the community standard that characterized the culture of the early 1990s (see Harrison & Laliberté 1994, 84). The ideal contemporary military spouse departs from the 1990s version by being fully neoliberal: personally responsible, resilient, and properly self-governing. These characteristics form the basis upon which military spouses are nurturing the divisions between themselves. It is the more exclusive and individualized forms of community support, than characterized previous decades, which reinforce this modernized community standard more profoundly.

Much of the membership in military communities as family is informed by attitudes of who can handle military life, and who is sufficiently resourceful, based on the idea that "if I can do it, they can do it." The view that it takes a certain type of person to make it in the military as a spouse is a consistent finding among respondents (Spanner, Interview 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20). This perspective is very much tied to the ability to integrate into the community: "you're either a person who can go out and mingle and shoot the shit, or you're not…and anxiety plays a huge role" (Spanner, Interview 2). With an emphasis on personal attributes, irrespective of systemic relations of power, failure to survive military life and to exhibit the characteristics of the ideal spouse are conceived as a moral failure (see Elias and Roberts 2016). Respondents suggest a judgmental culture between military spouses concerning tenacity to handle the challenges of service life:

> Now it's bitchy online. Typical mean girl at high school. [It's] frustrating for the new girls that are young looking for info—and everyone is like, "Oh, you think this is bad." Well, when you're going through it, it sucks; don't cut it down [just] 'cause it's not a deployment yet. (Spanner, Interview 15)

The passage above reflects policing among military spouses about what is "legitimately" challenging in service life. The celebration of individual responsibility and resilience, inherent to neoliberalism, delegitimizes the challenges and difficulties associated with military life. Many interview respondents report that the most challenging part of military life is other women (Spanner, Interview 5, 14, 15, 24, 27), and in particular "judgement about whether or not they are enough, strong enough, competent enough" (Spanner, Interview 11).

Assessing the competence of military spouses involves scrutinizing military marriages. A military spouse's capacity to persevere in the face of military hardship, such that a marriage can stay intact, is framed as an essential personal quality:

> I really want him to succeed. I've heard from other guys in the military, their ex-wives wanted them to quit and stop and that's why she's now the ex-wife…The thing is moral support and being positive—even if it means staying at this posting for another year, when I want to move elsewhere. (Spanner, Interview 14)

Being the *ex*-wife is a mark against the military spouse for their inability to adapt (see also Chapter 3). Moreover, the success of the military spouse is symbolized by their ability maintain their marriage, and a lasting marriage is attained through the military spouse's support of the military service member's career. That is to say, the team approach to military service is founded in heteronormative kinship and the ideal spouse is one who privileges these dynamics. The ability to self-discipline in a manner that maintains the military marriage is often cast against other military spouses who are insufficiently supportive as a "wives":

> It's service to my husband...I'm there for him…I mean, no marriage is perfect, but when your partner is gone for a long period of time, serving with other men, other women…a lot of wives are not built for it I guess you'd say. They're not. Loneliness overwhelms them [and they think], "What if he's shacked up with one of the girls, what if, what if, what if?" The soldier needs to know that he's going to come home to a secure [environment] and most of the time they're not. It's sad. We call them "Tide Wives"…soap box in the window that means the husband's

> deployed.[22] There's a lot of those; it's not just a rumour…The most important thing is the stability of the home. He's not going to come home to nothing in his house because she's hawked it all. It happens, it happens, and that usually crushes the soldier. That's usually what really makes PTSD go boom because [the member] doesn't know where to turn. (Spanner, Interview 21)

Sexual and romantic fidelity of military wives enables the readiness of the member, who can give his full attention to service (Enloe 2000, 173), and is seen as essential to being a supportive military spouse. Community policing and self-governance contribute to the idealization of the faithful military spouse—an ideal that is further entrenched by resilience resources for military marriages as seen in Chapter 3. Online chat and social media forums that offer deployment advice for military spouses suggest, "don't cheat on/leave your spouse while they are on deployment" because "It's just plain cruel, they have enough on their minds" (Reddit 2014; see also McKinnell 2009). Infidelity is a lack of commitment to the member: "the family is the support—we're that base the military members stand on, so if you're not strong, he's not going to be" (Spanner Interview, 15)—but also to the community as a whole. Thus, the military spousal community supports strong marriages and, in the neoliberal spirit, encourages military spouses to view deployment as an opportunity for self-improvement. Tips for deployment proliferate online. S*he Is Fierce* blog posts, for example, advise using the member's deployment as an opportunity for the spouse to "work out" and become more "fit" (Reccewife 2017, 2018). The ability to navigate the challenges associated with military life requires the military spouse to look inwards and reorient themself to be more adaptable, and, consequently, successful military spouses.

Military spouses also choose their informal support systems and the members of their military community as family based on people's displays of positive attitudes and perseverance:

> It is horrendous these people [who] are not able to see the beauty of the life that we have; [if that's the case] then I don't want to be your friend. I cannot live in a world of negativity. (Spanner, Interview 24)

The ability to thrive in the face of military hardships and to be positive about these hardships is idealized, and aligns with the principles of positive psychology. As discussed

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[22] The soap box in the window is perceived as an invitation for men to pursue a sexual relationship with military wives whose husbands are away.

in Chapter 3, positive psychology cultivates one's capacity to self-heal and self-improve by developing positive emotions, perceptions and thought patterns (Seligman and Fowler 2011; see also Howell 2012). A blog post by a military spouse demonstrates how "positivity" defines the ideal military spouses and is internalized by them as an expectation: "If there's one thing military spouses know, it's how to suck it up and figure out a way to make things happen; we're resilient; we're strong (even in our hard, low, dark days), and we know how to make some delicious lemonade out of lemons" (*Jessica Lynn Writes* 2017). Likewise, a meme shared on Facebook by the author of *She is Fierce* reads: "Awesome things will happen today if you choose not to be a miserable cow," the text of which is imposed over an image of a cow looking directly into the camera (She is Fierce 2019). Through social pressure, military spouses are called on to embrace techniques of positive psychology, such as reorienting one's perception, so that they can be more productive members of the military community. Policing this expectation operates through criticism directed at those who fail to develop positive capacities despite the challenges of military life. In this particular example, use of the term "cow" as condemnation is a gendered form of policing. The term "cow" refers to large female mammals, such as bovines, and is colloquially used to denounce women for being bad-tempered and taking up too much space. This reproduces normative expectations of female decorum, such as being pleasant, while reinforcing the notion that in the military community it is women who need to reorient their capacities through practices like positive thinking. It follows that the challenges associated with military life, such as the demands placed on women in military families, are reoriented into a personal problem requiring personal solutions—all the while being positive. The consequence of valorizing positive military spouses is that it dismisses vulnerability and censures voicing dissatisfaction:

> I feel like sometimes if I were to have a breakdown and start crying because I'm finding this really hard, and to be honest that this really sucks [the community response is] "well, you knew what you were getting into," or "you have to be strong for your husband and your children." I know, thanks. I'm just having a really bad day, or whatever and it really sucks right now, so just let me…To be in this environment, in this community, it's like "don't bring your un-resilient behaviour around here." No one has ever said that, it's just the feeling. (Spanner, Interview 22)

Indeed, some respondents vocalized such an attitude outright:

> Overall, some military wives should have never married [a] military [man]. One of my biggest gripes, and actually I've ended a friendship over it, [is people complaining] "my husband's gone all the time [and] I hate it, blah, blah, blah…" And I said, "Ok, just stop thinking about the dick and more about your career." Like...it's one of my biggest pet peeves…('cause I knew what I was getting into)…is when military spouses say, "I hate when he's always away and he's not home to take care of the kids." And I'm like, oh there's so much wrong with what you just said there. [I have a] very low tolerance for that. (Spanner, Interview 12)

There is social pressure among military spouses to self-discipline so that they may best contribute to the military community by being positive and "making the most of it." It is not about confronting or changing social pressures but rather calling on women in particular to reorganize and self-discipline, on top of what they are already doing. The entrepreneurial subject who takes personal initiative to improve her wellbeing and effectiveness is idealized, leaving little room for other responses to military life and informs communities of choice.

Some respondents choose to be on the outside of, and not embrace, the military community as family. Instead, some respondents seek sources of support and construct their identities outside of the military community entirely:

> [The military spouse blog] *She Is Fierce* irritates me and I can't place why. I think it's a lack of your own identity, but trying to act like you [do] have your own identity. Maybe I want women to be their own person [who are] not defined by someone else. Maybe that's my own bias coming in, projecting what I want on other people and that's not what they want. The women love it [the blog]. They repost it: "20 reasons it's hard to have your husband deployed." Ok fair enough, you have a kid. Yeah, I had to shovel the driveway, but I'm a woman, I can do it myself. It's hard to identify with that. They've constructed their lives around their husband's status, and that's how I'm different…Blogs are not helpful. It's helpful for people who feel really alone, who aren't as lucky as I am to have a network of people outside the military. (Spanner, Interview 9)

> I don't identify as a military spouse at all—I don't think of myself at all as the typical military spouse; I don't live on base, I would never want to live on base. I had my own very separate and independent life before meeting [my husband]. I don't feel the need to participate in all these military spousal activities. I had friends already that generally aren't linked at all to the military. My social circles are outside. (Spanner, Interview 14)

> [I don't identify as a military wife because] It's part of the old boys club; living vicariously through your husband's rank. It comes with the whole package of ideals. You are the women so you do these things and the man does these things; [you] make him a sandwich. It's all packaged. The people I'm friends with are a little more evolved than that. There's meanness about it. (Spanner, Interview 5)

A small portion of military spouses interviewed for this study reject military communities as family, and this rejection is often based on the denunciation of the identity of "military wife." These respondents tend to view military service as employment, rather than an identity: "for him it's just a job; he's not indoctrinated into this, it's just a good job" (Spanner, Interview 5). Accordingly, military service is a means to a financial end for the individual and/or couple (a different invocation of neoliberal principles), in contrast to service in relation to patriotism or a sense of duty. This motivation signals demilitarization, and, in turn, the military spouse's identity, practices, and wellbeing are less associated with the military and her military marriage (Enloe 2000, 291). Importantly, all of the respondents who report opting out of informal systems of support in the military community have what they considered to be careers and are all childless. Militarism is challenged when military spouses privilege their own careers and when there is a reduced care requirement in the military home. Indeed, militarization works best when military spouses prioritize the member's career and structure labour practices accordingly, as discussed throughout this dissertation.

Military spouses who opt out of the military community as family model may be more at risk of experiencing the insecurities of service life. Being at risk of experiencing such insecurities is increased against the backdrop of neoliberalism, wherein the military family's self-sufficiency and survival is very much enhanced by being a part of the military community as family model. The strength of one's informal support systems will differentially impact the experiences of military families as they face the challenges of military life. This finding was consistently reported by respondents and linked to the importance of unit-based support. Units provide support to military spouses and families because their wellbeing informs the strength and resilience of the unit. Accordingly, localized systems of support develop outside of the formal structures of the national military. As the military family is required to move for new postings, their access to informal systems of support will change, leading to variable experiences of support.

Military spouses recognize that their experiences of support from the unit are informed by the service member's career and marriage: "My husband's groups…because I'm attached to one of them (a guy in the unit), I'm enveloped into that" (Spanner, Interview 14). The significance of marriage to military spouses' integration into the unit's systems of support is evident in how inclusion and exclusion in these communities work:

> I can't count the number of times I've heard "you guys are so lucky you're Strathconas[23] because you guys are so well taken care of." [We] are until you're no longer in the circle. If you're not right in the regiment, and you're posted out, like my husband is out right now, you're forgotten. You're not part of the in circle. (Spanner Interview 19)

Because military units, and the responsibility for their wellbeing, are individualized, the "collective" wellbeing of military spouses and families is reduced to their association to the individual service members unit through marriage. Similarly, membership of military spousal social media groups, wherein a great deal of support and information is provided and exchanged, is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure the spouse is posted to that particular location and/or unit (Ottawa Military Spouses 2019). Despite the ways in which the military community as family dismantles traditional versions of the family, membership in these informal systems of support relies on marriage to the service member; the family member's wellbeing remains attached to the nuclear family.

Conclusion

This chapter engages with a central theme among interview respondents: that the greatest sources of support for military families are the informal practices of care between military families, especially spouses. This chapter foregrounds military spouses' voices to emphasize how women in particular contribute to and experience the military community as family model. Doing so gives credence to the CAF's acknowledgement that the military family is the "strength behind the uniform." The military mantra that "we take care of our own" ought to be revised to reflect how military families, especially women, sustain the military community through tangible and emotional labour.

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[23] The Lord Strathcona's Horse Regiment is one of eight units that comprise the Mechanized Brigade Edmonton (see Lord Strathcona's Horse n.d.).

The military depends on the military community as family model and informal networks of care to support operational readiness and war making. We can view these networks as radical for women because they redefine relationships and practices of care outside of the nuclear family. And yet, the military fails to provide institutional acknowledgement and support for the military community as family. Resources and military culture continue to privilege heteronormative families and continue to depend on the labour of spouses, especially women. Indeed, the military community as family model restructures care with a view to keep military marriages intact while privileging and enabling military service, both of which depend on feminized labour and loyalty. Service members and families who resist the military community as family model might be disadvantaged because success and wellbeing in military life depend on this model. Likewise, the informal systems of support in the CAF, which are now informed by neoliberal moralities, call on the Canadian military spouse to do even more for their own wellbeing and for that of others. Military families are indeed the "strength behind the uniform," and do the bulk of "caring for their own."

> She is stronger than she knows, braver than the rest. Though she
> wears no uniform, no ribbons upon her chest. She still serves her
> country, military still runs her life. For she is among the silent ranks,
> as a military wife.
> —Ottawa Military Spouses, 2019

Research Objectives and Summary of Findings

This research investigated the extent to which the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) relies on gendered relations of power and gendered divisions of labour within military families to support operational effectiveness. My thesis was motivated by the scarcity of feminist research on contemporary military families, despite recent and increasing attention to family wellbeing by the CAF and the proliferation gender equality discourses and measures within the institution. I addressed this gap by evaluating how CAF family wellbeing initiatives impact gender relations within military families as well as expectations of these families and spouses. The findings of my research indicate that in partnering with military families and providing institutional supports, which are meant to offset the burden of service life on military families, the CAF's initiatives are reinforcing unequal gender relations and an unequal division of labour in the military and in military families. These circumstances might be placing burdens on military spouses, especially women. As neoliberalism informs CAF policies, programs, and ethos, militarization persists. Thus, the main contribution of my research is the finding that the processes and systems of militarization and neoliberalism bolster one another and (re)produce gender dynamics in relation to war making in new ways.

Neoliberalism refers to policies of reduced public spending that download social services to markets, families, and individuals. It is also an economic rationality that governs all spheres of life, including the social, political, and private, and makes individuals responsibility for their wellbeing and success (Bakker 2007; Brodie 2007 Brown 2015). Neoliberalism's emphasis on individual responsibility to survive and thrive as a form of empowerment obscures how military families are encouraged to adhere to a

gendered division of labour and power dynamics. For example, as military families are empowered to enhance their wellbeing by training in resilience, their feminized practices of, and association with, maintaining the home front (or the "family car") during deployments becomes more productive and secure. Institutional supports are essential to securing the conditions under which military wives' commitment, labour, and loyalty would be maintained (Harrison and Laliberte 1994; see also Horn 2010). Strategies to secure the contributions of military spouses require updating, and these initiatives are often under the cover of "women's liberation" (Enloe 2000, 45). The CAF's family wellbeing initiatives promise liberation from the challenges of military life by encouraging family members to become more flexible and resilient to the military institution's needs, including gender orders in military families. In the spirit of the "people first" philosophy of Canada's defence policy *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, the CAF provides a variety of supports for military families in an attempt to reduce the burdens that military service imposes on their lives. These include services and resources to solve caregiving challenges related to military separation through the Family Care Plan (FCP) (Chapter 1); spousal employment resources, such as databases and training programs (Chapter 2); and strategies to improve mental wellbeing, through resilience training (Chapter 3). The supports for military families privilege individualism, self-reliance, and resilience, and this embrace of neoliberal values enables an ongoing reliance on the labour and commitment of military spouses in more profound ways.

Five themes weave throughout this research. First, the CAF's supports for military family wellbeing establish the foundation from which military families can and will support themselves independently. Romaine Felli refers to this as the paradox of neoliberalism's emphasis on autonomy, where state intervention is sometimes required to produce subjects that do not depend on the state for wellbeing (2016, 282). That is to say, the military provides its members and families with resources and services that socialize them to be responsible for their own wellbeing, so as not to rely on the institution in more substantive ways. For example, the FCP, outlined in Chapter 1, which the CAF represents as a foundational source of institutional support, ensures that the responsibility for caregiving is downloaded from the military to the family. The FCP requires the military family to have a plan in place to cover childcare concerns in case a member is deployed

at the last minute. What's more, being able to provide one's own systems of support, and not rely on the institution, is tied to the member's professional performance. The military member's professional performance requires being absolved of family care by a feminized spouse, an example of how labour and identities in the military family have been militarized alongside gendered logics.

Second, the neoliberal policies and ethos that inform the CAF's family policies and services assume and reproduce the expectation of a "wife at home," an assumption that unburdens the state of providing more substantial supports. The "support" provided by the CAF for military family wellbeing is a long-term cost-saving measure because it reproduces and secures the provision of unpaid labour by military spouses. This dynamic is evident most strongly in the support provided for military family members who are caregivers of injured and ill members in the form of resilience training, discussed in Chapter 3. While resilience resources "support" the military caregiver, this support normalizes and reinforces that care for injured and ill members takes place in the home, through unpaid labour based on gendered expectations of kinship and love. As the military caregiver's capacity to care is rendered more efficient and assured through the caregiver's self-governance, the burden on the military to support injured and ill members is reduced. At the same time, these "supports" for military caregivers ensure a greater return on investment in the military member, who is now more likely to return to service after an operational stress injury because caregiving in the family is in place. Training family caregivers in resilience militarizes kinship and nurture. It does so by socializing family members to contribute to operational effectiveness by improving their caregiving productivity and capabilities, and viewing this as means to their individual wellbeing and self-improvement.

The individualizing strategies and impacts of neoliberalism are a third theme of this research. Members of military families are accountable for their success in military life through appeals to empowerment, freedom, and choice. However, like the success in the market requires a fuller embrace of capitalist principles, success in military life means being more amenable to the requirements of the military, including a gendered division of labour. For example, the emphasis on mobile entrepreneurialism, discussed in Chapter 2, as a privileged solution to military spousal employment difficulties is structured around a

neoliberal celebration of the market, and privileges personal solutions to structural problems. Through these programs and resources, military spouses are encouraged to invest in themselves as a resource and overcome the challenges of military life, such as mobility and separation, by becoming more amenable to those challenges. This strategy enables military spouses to be more available to provide unpaid labour upon which the military relies. Entrepreneurialism is also unlikely to disrupt the male breadwinner model of the family, which is central to constructions of militarized masculinity, given the improbability that home-based businesses will yield economic autonomy (Lamoreaux 2013). The entrepreneurial military spouse is one whose employment "choices" have been militarized—constrained by military life, on the basis that military service is most valuable for the family—which calls for and reinforces a gender division of labour in the family. Neoliberalism's emphasis on individual solutions to these problems renders these dynamics and tactics less obvious. Indeed, militarism and neoliberalism requires cooperation and buy-in from individuals to endure.

Appropriating military spouses' labour and loyalty is most effective when it appears natural and outside of the scope of political critique. A fourth theme of this research is that neoliberalism's influence on contemporary gender relations in CAF families obscures the structural, gendered dynamics that contribute to war making. As the neoliberal subject tries to accommodate themselves to the requirements of military life for the purpose of their individual survival and success, the collective is undone, and the potential for political struggle is reduced. The competitiveness inherent to neoliberalism plays out in clearly in the context of entrepreneurialism (Chapter 2), as well as in adherence to the "ideal spouse," a normative identity that informs informal networks of support (Chapter 4), and contributes to the depoliticization of the struggles with military life and its intersection with gender identities, practices, and power dynamics. Wendy Brown reminds us that "inequality, not equality, is the medium and relation of competing capitals…When we are figured as human capital in all that we do and in every venue, equality ceases to be our presumed natural relation with one another" (2015, 38). In the context of the military, one spouse's success is at the expense of another and the collective of military spouses is thwarted. The gender-neutral language adopted by the CAF, including "military family," military spouse," and "military caregiver," exemplifies

the depoliticization of gender in military families by obscuring structures of power that differently affect an individual's ability to succeed in the economy, or military life. Neoliberalism's emphasis on individual responsibility masks the gender dynamics of military spouses, caregivers, and families, and the gendered contributions to the CAF.

A final, and perhaps most important, theme explored in this research is that the CAF continues to rely women's work and commitments. This research substantiates the CAF mantra that military families are "the strength behind the uniform," that they, too, serve. As one respondent put it,

> The way I feel I serve: it's work. It is work to be in a relationship and when your spouse is away; where you have children and have to be both mom and dad for most of the time…You have to be that base, that safe spot, you have to be home. No matter where you are, you are home to someone. A lot of people don't get that. (Spanner, Interview 15)

Despite the effects of contemporary gender equality and institutional support for the wellbeing for military families, the CAF's expectation of spousal contribution looks much like it did in the 1990s. However, it is the influence of neoliberalism and its invocation of individual responsibility for wellbeing that has newly intensified the burden of care on the military spouse more than in previous decades, securing gendered labour and gendered ideas of families in more profound ways.

Contributions of the Research

Identifying the experiences of Canadian military families through interview testimony is a significant contribution of this research. This data centres the "invisible ranks," which are often sidelined in everyday considerations of defence policies and organizations and instead favour the perspectives of military members, leadership, and political representatives. This research recognizes and prioritizes the experiences and contributions of military families. Indeed, many respondents expressed a desire to be better understood by the civilian community. Consequently, this research provides insights for those interested in a more holistic understanding of the CAF and the Canadian security landscape.

My dissertation brings to the fore a subject of analysis that is not often considered in IR scholarship. Families tend to be dismissed as unimportant to military strategy and

operations. Likewise, militaries themselves are ambiguously placed in political science: not quite a domestic issue, but not fully international. Despite a growth in critical military studies and feminist IR scholarship, both of which consider questions of gender and militaries, the military family has not featured prominently in either of these subfields. Instead gender *in* militaries tends to be the focus of the aforementioned literature. I took this gap as an invitation and attempted to disrupt the binary of civil/military to understand how they are mutually informed and reinforcing.

Consequently, this research contributes to discussions about gender and militarism by enlarging the scope of these dynamics to include gender on the "periphery" of the military—or the "strength behind the uniform." I consider the ways in which gender and militarism operate in two overlapping institutions: the military and the family. Thus, the conclusions of this research can enrich the understandings for scholars and practitioners concerned with gender in the CAF more broadly. Indeed, gender dynamics in the family, the institution that supports the military, informs the gender culture and power relations in the military by reproducing normative labour practices and power dynamics in war making.

This dissertation enriches the understanding and theorizing of contemporary militarization that is central to feminist IR scholarship by considering it alongside neoliberalism. This analytical lens gives new insights into the ways in which military spouses' lives, especially those of women, are being harnessed to support the operational effectiveness of the CAF. I extend the findings advanced in the mid-1990s to consider contemporary effects of gender equality in light of the new concerns for the welfare of military families. I have explored the construction of the contemporary ideal military spouse, including what behaviours and attitudes are currently lauded because they enhance the partner's military service. Resilience, for example, and the perception of service life as an opportunity to improve oneself characterize the ideal military spouse. This research unearths how military spouses are being "maneuvered" (Enloe 2000) through the gendered and neoliberal renderings of volunteerism, entrepreneurialism, and resilience to contribute to the organizational effectiveness of the CAF under the guise of support and empowerment.

Finally, my findings encourage feminist and critical scholars to be wary about

claims of gender progress. I argue that we should be cautious about accepting the state's claims of providing support and care for citizens' wellbeing in a neoliberal climate, which places greater responsibility on individuals, especially women. Rather, we should be curious and critical about what new power dynamics are produced through appeals to wellbeing, empowerment, and gender equality in militaries and otherwise.

Limitations of the Research

This research was informed by twenty-eight in-depth interviews with military family members from across Canada, from all branches of the military—the army, navy, and air force. Interview respondents represented diverse family arrangements, including serving male and female adults, dual-service couples, and families with and without dependent children, and single parents. Identities of the respondents and their families included those who identified as Indigenous, those with disabilities, and members of LGBTQ communities.

Despite the diversity of the interviewee sample, at least in some dimensions, my focus on gender in the analysis may limit the scope of my findings. An intersectional approach to these questions, which urges one to consider how overlapping identity markers compound experiences of oppression and marginalization (Crenshaw 1991), would enrich the findings of this research. Identity markers beyond gender, such as racialized identities, ethnicities, sexualities, class, rank, trade, and abilities, work alongside one another in different ways in the processes of militarization, including in the production of militarized masculinities (Henry 2012, 2017; Sasson-Levy 2016; Lomsky-Feder and Sasson-Levy 2015). Moreover, research on social reproduction in Canada shows that neoliberalism's downloading of social reproduction into the private sphere is differently informed on the basis of racialized identities and ethnicity (Benzanson 2006). It stands to reason that the intersection of racialized identities and gender will have different implications for militarization of military families. As militaries such as the CAF seek to diversify their personnel and foster a more equitable institutional culture, military families of colour might be more compelled to meet the demands of the institution (Enloe 2000, 184), which are characterized by whiteness. For example, successful female entrepreneurship is often portrayed by white middle-class women and

contrasted against racialized women and families who are reliant on social support (Wilton 2017, 198). Furthermore, the idealized nuclear family has been problematized on the basis of presumed whiteness (Nast 2002, 74) and on the premise of "proper" participation in the economy (Bernstein and Reimann 2001, 5). In the framework of neoliberalism, which is characterized by personal responsibility for wellbeing and success, military families of colour might be under more pressure to live up to the self-sufficient, resilient, and entrepreneurial ideal. Relatedly, and especially in light of intersectionality's foundation in black feminist thought, a shortcoming of the interview sample was its relatively homogenous representation of racialized identities. The lack of racial diversity among interviewees is likely a reflection of the CAF, which is overwhelmingly white; in fact, visible minorities represent only 6.5 percent of the Forces (Heer 2017, 2).[24] The military's role in securing the nation against outsiders also gives it the power to define national belonging and social order, on the basis of racialization as well as gender (Enloe 2000, 46). Considering racialized identities alongside gender in military families could lead to insights into the ways in which militarism in Canada reinforces white national identity. This would be an especially productive area of future research given the CAF's strategic interest in leveraging diversity among recruits (National Defence 2017d).[25]

      As discussed in the Introduction, interviewees were recruited through social media, where a snowball method of sampling was employed to assist in outreach. Several research participants shared the interview call-out on their social media platforms, which generated more participation. Advertising on military spouse Facebook groups, many of which are private and require backing from a group member, was a productive recruitment strategy. Given this recruitment strategy, the interview sample likely disproportionately reflects individuals who privilege their military identities. The potential shortcoming of this approach was a respondent group that was more engaged and cooperative in processes of gendered militarization, such as pursuing a home-based

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[24] There is no differentiation between racial identities in the CAF's operationalization of "visible minority," or with respect to the diversity strategy, which aspires to have 11.8 percent representation of visible minorities in the CAF (Heer 2017, 2).
[25] Equity groups identified by the CAF are women, visible minorities, and Indigenous people; these are the target groups for recruitment.

business to accommodate military life and labour requirements. Nonetheless, respondents demonstrated a great deal of variance between celebrating and resisting their military identities and their gendered identities and dynamics. Many respondents indicated that their membership and engagement with social media groups for military spouses was primarily for information purposes. Moreover, the interview data were analyzed alongside institutional policies and programs, which broadened the examination of normative family arrangements in the CAF.

The relationship between military families and the CAF is an ongoing one, subject to continuous change, including new initiatives that attempt to ease the burdens of military family life. Staying abreast of the developments, as *Strong, Secure, Engaged* continued to roll out, required agility and continual intellectual curiosity. However, undertaking this research over the course of the defence consultation, and witnessing new initiatives develop since the 2017 *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, has been insightful in terms of tracking progress and institutional direction. For example, the CAF has provided support to military spousal employment over the last decade, yet the emphasis on entrepreneurialism developed only as I was conducting this research. Thus, this CAF policy shift affected the analytical direction of my work to consider increasingly pervasive neoliberal logics in military family supports.

This research is evaluative, rather than prescriptive, and raises questions about how the CAF ought to better engage with and support military families. As this research does not provide policy or program recommendations, those who are working to resolve gender disparities in the CAF are likely to be left with questions. Of course, recommendations for policy and programs can be inferred from my analysis. For instance, the failure to address military spousal employment in relation to relocation entitlements (as discussed in Chapter 2) could lead to a recommendation to address military spousal employment in isolated postings in the Integrated Relocation Directive (National Defence 2018a). My decision not to suggest practical suggestions to solve unequal gender relations in CAF families, however, is related to an essential theoretical question: Is it possible to support the military family while guarding against the effects of the military's control over the family? More fundamentally, can the influence of service life on the family exist without unequal gender relations? My evaluation of the

contemporary Canadian context suggests not. Indeed, the feminist IR scholarship that this work engages argues that militarization and gender, specifically the valuation of masculinity and devaluation of femininity, are inextricably linked. Consequently, a feminist project ought to be concerned with demilitarization and designing interventions that will reduce individuals' reliance on the military and militaristic ideas for their identities and wellbeing, which is also essential to dismantling gendered hierarchies. Following Cynthia Enloe, what has been militarized can be demilitarized (2000, 291). Such solutions are likely to be in conflict with the strategic interests of the CAF, as they currently stand.

Possibilities for Future Research

The limitations of this research, outlined above, point to several possibilities for future exploration. First, applying a critical whiteness lens to this analysis would be an important and illuminating project to reveal how racialization informs militarism in Canada. As the military defines and maintains a gendered social order, in what ways does it maintain a racialized one, through the military family in particular? As discussed throughout this dissertation, the idealized family form is embodied by patriarchy, but it is also characterized by whiteness, where the "family organization of Indigenous people, African Americans, Mexican American and poor and/or working-class families are benchmarks of what not to be" (Collins 2012, 126). The ideal family should be economically self-sufficient, where their economic wellbeing is assured through a nuclear arrangement and a gendered division of labour (Bernstein and Reimann 2001, 5). Patricia Hill Collins argues there is a "common perception that African Americans live in poverty because they have failed to construct the ideal family: men have shirked their duties as husbands and fathers, leaving women as the heads of households and families" (2012, 126). In what ways, then, does the CAF reaffirm whiteness by calling on families to be self-sufficient and organize labour accordingly, with a view of securing their own wellbeing? One might also consider the ways in which the CAF's embrace of diversity and inclusion initiatives coopts "inclusion" to reaffirm social orders, including racial hierarchies. Investigating how militarism is informed by racialization could give insights into the creation and maintenance of national identity and state authority in Canada.

Future research should consider more equitable ways to partner with military families that do not rely on and reinforce gendered scripts of labour, identities, and power relationships. Such research would provide especially valuable outcomes for CAF leadership, in its attempt to undo toxic gender culture for its members, all the while enhancing recruitment among underrepresented populations. Improving gender representation and gender culture within the CAF requires a more holistic approach—one that considers how gender circulates throughout the military community more broadly, including in the military family and between the family and military service. Such practical research might also contribute to working through the theoretical conundrum of how and whether families can be supported without gendered militarization.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, much of the literature on gender and militaries focuses on gender *in* militaries. The majority of this literature reinforces the distinction between "military" and "civilian" life, focusing on service members' experiences of gender in military spaces and practices, discounting the members' experience of gender in civilian spaces and practices. Blurring these boundaries and undoing the military/civilian binary could offer insights into how militarization operates between and through the military/civilian binary. For example, in what ways do military service members manage their family lives—including division of labour and identities— with their military lives, and how might this contribute to reproducing and or dismantling gendered practices and dynamics within militaries?

Finally, this research provides a foundation to consider the military family in the afterlife of military service. Increasingly, research of military veterans is being undertaken from a gendered perspective. The military veteran experiences gender in complicated ways: as they transition into civilian life, they shed part of their direct association to militarized masculinity; they may be feminized for their new dependence on the state, which might include benefits and/or treatment for injuring following service. But he or she is also an entitled citizen precisely because of their service (Bulmer and Eichler 2017, 169). The afterlife of wars for veterans involve (re)negotiating their gender identities, which can involve reinforcing unequal gender relations, such as veteran benefits that disadvantage the usually female civilian spouse (Ashe 2012; Murray 2011; Nagowski 2005). Successful transition is often measured against restoring broken

masculinity, solved by the veteran's return to the workforce and identity as the breadwinner (Anderson 2011; Cohen 2001; Linker 2011). Yet research suggests that the frequency of "failed transitions," identified by the prevalence of homelessness, substance abuse, unemployment, mental health problems, criminality, and violence among veterans, is on the rise (Brown 2011; Brunger, Serrato, and Ogden 2013). Against the backdrop of neoliberalism and austerity measures, many services for veterans are being downloaded to the third sector and charity work (Bulmer and Eichler 2017, 167; Herman and Yarwood 2015) and to military caregivers. Exploring how gender practices of care in the family extend into veteran transition, specifically the restoration of broken masculinity and the reliance on informal caregiving, could offer insights into how far reaching the family is engaged in supporting militaries through gendered practices and dynamics.

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This research was motivated by a feminist curiosity about feminist IR's relative silence on military families. This silence seemed especially odd to me given the subfield's commitment to understanding how gender hierarchies and women's and men's everyday activities sustain global politics. Following a feminist inquisitiveness about "where the women are in global politics," and in militaries in particular, has been fulfilling and frustrating because, as the saying goes, "the more things change, the more they stay the same." While the CAF has paid increased attention to family wellbeing and gender equality via recent initiatives, very little has changed in the everyday lives of women who are married to military members. The CAF still operates on a gendered assumption that women will undertake the majority of unpaid labour, suspend their careers, and be mobile to support their spouse's military service. However, these contributions and commitments are now secured via neoliberal logics, masked as institutional support and concern for the military family's wellbeing. The neoliberal influences on military families make the expectations of individual family members more profound, and mystify gendered relations of power. This project leaves us with the question, how ought the CAF relate to and support military families more equitably? How should families' contributions to the CAF be substantively acknowledged? According to one military spouse I interviewed,

There has to be an incentive to serve, not just "Aw, isn't that nice of you." My

daughter asked, "What's going to happen when dad retires?" And I said. "Well, they'll have everyone come into the boardroom and they will probably have a bouquets of flowers for me, and they'll make a speech [where they'll say] that there's no way that Dad could have done his job if it wasn't for you and me having been there for him for all these years." [My daughter] looked at me, and said, "That's it?" I said, "Yup; they usually have a bouquet of flowers for the wife, and platitudes." Thanks ever so much. (Spanner, Interview 27)

Yet, as this research suggests, greater institutional acknowledgement and support risks placing more responsibility and burden on the military family and spouse, while reproducing gender hierarchies. This study highlights a tension between institutional support and acknowledgement for military spouses by militaries, and the likelihood that these supports and acknowledgements exploit gender relations. I conclude with words from a military spouse, who points to this tension, and suggests a necessity for ongoing feminist inquiry:

I don't want to be acknowledged [because] then it creates things we have to live up to. That's how you feed into the whole ideal spouse stereotype. [But] not acknowledging us is an issue 'cause we do so much. I have to think about it. (Spanner, Interview 16)

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Interview Script

The Military Family's Contributions
- To begin, tell me a bit about yourself and your family. Who makes up your family? What has your experience in service life like been like?
- What distinguishes military family life from civilian family life?
- What is the best thing about being a military family?
- What is the most challenging aspect of being a military family?
- In what ways do you, as a military spouse, support the military?
- In what ways do your children support the CAF?

Military Family Ideals
- What symbolic role does the CAF family have? Consider the family's role in ceremonies such as Remembrance Day or the Highway of Heroes processions, sporting events, and in the media generally.
- What is the culture like, the unspoken traditions, surrounding families' and spouses' relationship to the CAF? How is this culture learned? Modified? Resisted?
- Is there an ideal military family and spouse? What does it/do they look like?
- How do you think the CAF defines the ideal military family?
- Why do you think the military needs families to support it, in the many ways that it does?

CAF Supports and Acknowledgement
- Do you feel that your contributions to the CAF are valued?
- How does the CAF support and recognize the military family?
- Are you satisfied with the support you receive from the CAF?
- What family support programs and services do you use?
- What is your experience with, and opinion of, Military Family Resource Centres? Do you participate in their programs and events? Why or why not?
- What is the culture of volunteering in the CAF?
- In the last couple of years there appears to be a greater ease at talking about and addressing issues of mental health in the CAF. Is the military family supported in mental health, if so how?

Paid Employment
- As a military spouse, what is your experience with paid employment?
- What is the employment experience like for military spouses in your social circle, or those you engage with?
- Do you get a sense that the CAF has a preference about military spouses' engagement in paid employment?
- Does the CAF support military spouses in the challenge associated with finding and maintaining paid work? If so, is this support effective?

The Military Spousal Community
- Have you ever lived on base? What is that experience like? What are military family's perceptions/opinions about military bases?
- Military families are less likely to live on base than ever before (only 15-20% of military families live on base). Given that, coupled with frequent moves, how do contemporary military families develop and connect to a community?
- What sort of military family events does the CAF put on?
- Do you belong to any military family and/or military spouses groups? If so, what are they and do they look like?